



Dear Friends in Christ,

This month in the Church we celebrate the World Day for Consecrated Life. What a glorious contribution our consecrated brothers and sisters make to the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The first hospitals and schools were run by religious, and to this day it is because of these religious that so many sick, lonely, and tired are not neglected. To take just one example, look at the Amani Primary School run by the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood in Kenya, feeding and schooling children who would otherwise sniff glue to stave off hunger. We thank God for the many beautiful charisms dotting our earth, lived out by individuals who point to the One True God through their chastity, poverty, and obedience. Pope Francis tells us that consecrated life “frees our affections from every possession in order to fully love God and other people.” True enough.

Chastity and obedience find expression in another vocation as well: priesthood. This month our feature article examines some of the more frequently asked questions about this vocation—though there are so

many that we'll continue answering them in our April 2019 issue. Answers aren't restricted to reading words on a page; sometimes the most important information is found through experience, and it is for this reason that we offer two discernment opportunities for men considering diocesan priesthood: An Evening at the Seminary, February 11, followed by the Come and See Weekend, March 15-17. Check our website for details: <https://www.vocationstoronto.ca/>.

We hope this month finds you full of consolation in the Lord, Who is with you, opening doors and paving roads in your discernment process.

Your Friend in Christ,

Fr. Chris Lemieux
Director, Office of Vocations
Archdiocese of Toronto

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE PRIESTHOOD

1. What does a priest do?

The purpose of a priest is to bring people to Jesus, and Jesus to people. He does this primarily by preaching the Word and offering the Sacrifice of the Mass. His daily life involves administering the sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, and Matrimony (Holy Orders is reserved for bishops to administer)—and caring for the people in their daily needs.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE PRIESTHOOD, PART 1

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2. What exactly is a “vocation?”

A vocation is a call from God to do something specifically for Him and for His kingdom. The primary vocation of every person is to be holy! It is the divine calling to love and serve God, to obey His commandments, and to cooperate with Christ in the work of redemption by loving and serving others. But we are all called to a secondary vocation as well, a “state in life” in which we are to be holy.

3. What are some of these “secondary” vocations that I might be called to follow?

Many people are called to the vocation of marriage, but it is an error to automatically assume that this is your vocation. One may also be called to the vocation of the priesthood, to religious life as a sister or brother, to the diaconate, and some follow Christ in the single state. Remember: It is normal to desire marriage and family. Just because you have this desire does not exclude priesthood.

4. How do I know what God is calling me to do?

You must pray every single day, asking God to reveal His plan for you. Do not ask yourself, “What do I want to do when I grow up?” This is the wrong question because God loves us better than we love ourselves. Rather, try this question: “Jesus, what do You want me to do?” And listen for the answer! The primary locus of revelation is the heart. Listen with your heart! The discernment process

in the priesthood must also include the Church. The local bishop is the one who ultimately decides who is and who is not called. He is assisted in this by the vocation office and the seminary. This whole process is called “discerning one’s vocation.”

5. Can I be happy in my life if I do not follow God’s plan for me?

If you do not follow the vocation for which God made you, you can attain a certain degree of happiness in this world, and still attain salvation (go to heaven), but you can never be as happy as you might have been, had you followed your proper vocation. This is why it is so important that you discern correctly. Of course, there are trials and tribulations in every vocation. To become a priest does not take away all suffering. But there is great joy in laying down one’s life for Jesus!

6. Are most priests happy in their vocations—in their lives and in their work for Christ?

Most priests are extremely happy in their vocations! The life of a priest is a very rewarding one, both in this world and in the next. The media often gives an incorrect impression of priests—that they are unhappy, frustrated, and abusive. This is simply not true.

Stay tuned for FAQ on Priesthood Part 2 ... coming out in our April 2019 issue.



U P C O M I N G E V E N T S

FEBRUARY 11, 2019

An Evening at the Seminary

Have you ever thought about becoming a priest? Spending an evening at the seminary offers discerners a glimpse into the place where priestly formation begins. The evening includes Holy Mass in the beautiful seminary chapel, dinner, a talk by the Director of Vocations Fr. Chris Lemieux, and a tour of the seminary.

Made for Greatness:

Becoming Holy Disciples of Christ

If you are beginning to make important decisions in life, asking yourself, “Where am I going?” Made for Greatness is for you. Check out our website, madeforgreatness.ca, for a parish location near you.

MARCH 15-17, 2019

Come & See Weekend St. Augustine’s Seminary

For men in Grade 12* and older who are considering a possible call to Diocesan Priesthood. Weekend live-in experience includes visits with seminarians, individual prayer, shared meals, the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist, plus recreation with fellow men discerning. Register online at www.vocationstoronto.ca/comeandsee or contact us for more information.

*Men aged 17 require parental consent.

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