



Dear Friends in Christ,

As 2019 approaches its end, I'd like to share with you some highlights from the year. It is a blessing to be in the Office of Vocations where so much of our work allows us to see the excitement and joy of vocations unfolding.

First, we are grateful to have played a role in several new vocations this year, those of both diocesan priests and of women making vows in religious communities. This year we offered our discipleship/discernment program Made for Greatness to parishes and high schools in every region of the archdiocese. We added a second person to the high school outreach team, allowing students to hear more about men's and women's vocations in the Church. We established the St. Joseph Vocation Society, which involves a voluntary daily prayer commitment for vocations. We were blessed with excellent missionaries in our Totus Tuus summer youth program, good men in our Associates Pre-Seminary Formation Program, and strong turnouts at our seminary events (Evenings at the Semi-

nary and Come & See Weekends). We also piloted the Road to Emmaus Hiking Retreat, which was a great opportunity to spend time with God outdoors.

If these programs and events haven't yet reached you, please visit our website, vocationstoronto.ca, for upcoming dates. In addition to all the programs above, we will be expanding Called by Name throughout the archdiocese and offering a Young Disciples Retreat for male and female youth aged 12-17.

Our feature article this month is about the happiness of priests, a fact that too easily gets obscured by other perceptions of this vocation. We hope you enjoy it.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Chris Lemieux
Director, Office of Vocations

Are Priests Happy?



Happiness is a byproduct of a life well lived, a life founded on Christ, striving for holiness in service of others. Rather than something to be pursued, happiness is a matter of putting things in order: Jesus first, others next, and then you. Jesus, others, you. The first letter of each word taken together spells "joy." How do we know this is a recipe for happiness? Because the Bible tells us so.

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ARE PRIESTS HAPPY?

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Lessons from Scripture

God has not left us orphan to figure out through trial and error how to be happy. On the contrary, the Bible is a great instruction manual for it. One thing Scripture tells us is that living morally leads to happiness: “Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked...their delight is in the law of the Lord.... In all that they do, they prosper” (Psalm 1: 1-6). Second, trusting in God leads to happiness: “Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace—in peace because they trust in you” (Isaiah 26: 3-4). Third, joining our will with God’s leads to happiness: “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37: 4). Finally, we can find happiness when we ask God for it: “Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete” (John 16: 24).

Scripture tells us that we can all experience happiness when we trust in God, live by His laws in our lives, and delight in His will. If a man discerns that God is calling him to be a priest, will he be happy? If numbers can tell us anything, it’s very likely!

What Priests can Teach us about Happiness

In fact, priests have a lot to teach the rest of us about happiness. Research* tells us this:

- Priests’ job satisfaction rating at 87% far outweighs the national average of 45%.
- Priests are healthier and less psychologically distressed than the general male population.
- Priests experience significantly greater depth in their personal relationships than their peers.

- If given the chance to do it again, 90% of priests would choose priesthood as their vocation.
- Over 90% of priests say they are happy in their ministry and are satisfied with their lives.

Those are impressive numbers! What can explain them? The lives of priests are built around what we know makes us all happy: intimacy with God, meaningful personal relationships, and being of service to others.

*The data cited here is drawn from a variety of sources explained in Msgr. Stephen J. Rossetti’s book *Why Priests are Happy: A Study of the Psychological and Spiritual Health of Priests* (Ave Maria Press, 2011).

Sacrifice and Joy

Two elements central to every vocation are sacrifice and joy. Something inside us longs to give to others, and it is through giving something up that we are able to do this best. In the case of priesthood, a man gives up family life in order to share in Christ’s redemption of the world. Giving up family life is a significant sacrifice. Yet, the numbers again tell us that celibacy is not an undue burden. In fact, the overwhelming majority of priests believe that celibacy has been a grace for them personally.

The joy we experience when we are living out God’s will for our lives on a daily basis is unlike any other. Every vocation has its challenges, but the peace of being in harmony with the author of our souls is worth finding.

How is God inviting you to share in His work of redemption? ***The Office of Vocations is here to help.***



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

MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2020

An Evening at the Seminary | 4:45 pm

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, dinner with the seminary community, and a seminary tour. More information & registration at www.vocationstoronto.ca.

Made for Greatness:

Becoming Holy Disciples of Christ

Great life decisions grow out of relationship with Jesus. 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.

“The world offers you comfort, but you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness.” -Pope Benedict XVI

