



Dear Friends in Christ,

I hope you've had a relaxing and enjoyable summer. We've had a great one in the Office of Vocations as our summer youth program, Totus Tuus, was a huge success. In collaboration with the Office of Catholic Youth, we hired and trained 20 young adult missionaries to deliver catechetical camps for youth in grades 1-12 throughout the archdiocese. We're grateful for all the parishes who hosted the program, and for what the program again did in the lives of our missionaries: it provided a structured life of intentional prayer, Marian devotion, reception of the Sacraments, fellowship, and an outpouring of service to neighbours. We have found over the years that this structure changes lives. They re-evaluate their priorities, and let the Lord's dream for their lives become their own. Many of our missionaries have gone on to become lay pastoral assistants, youth ministers, religious sisters, and priests. If Totus Tuus sounds like something you're inter-

ested in, we welcome missionary applications in December and January. Check our website, <https://www.totustuustoronto.ca/>, for details.

This month's feature article is thematically linked to our missionaries' outpouring of service. It takes its lead from scripture, when Our Lord tells us that a grain of wheat must die before it can bear fruit (John 12:24). I hope this newsletter proves useful on your path toward God. As always, the Office of Vocations is here to accompany you along the way.

Yours in Christ,

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

## Making a Gift of Oneself

*"Unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." —John 12:24*

Have you ever watched what happens to a seed when it is planted? It undergoes such a transformation that it is no longer recognizable. It slowly breaks open, giving way to roots, its former appearance vanishing. Little green shoots rise above the soil, which could not have sprung from a



hard, closed seed. It was in leaving its limited shell that the seed created new life. So too with us humans. We cannot bear fruit if we refuse to give ourselves to God and others.

The mystery of life and death is part of the human experience. In our daily journey with Jesus,

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## MAKING A GIFT OF ONESELF

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he invites us to let our limited self die so that we can experience greater life. The universal call to holiness requires it: someone robs us and we want to retaliate, but Jesus tells us to give them more than they demand (Matthew 5:39). Someone asks for our help when we'd rather not, but God tells us it's better to give than receive (Acts 20:35). We want to store up riches for ourselves on earth, yet Jesus tells us not to worry about food and shelter (Matthew 6:25-34), so we can prepare treasures in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). Again and again, scripture leads us towards a fuller life beyond the end of our noses.

This death to our limited selves also takes place in our particular vocations. The purpose of a permanent state of life—be it marriage, religious life, consecrated single life, or the priesthood—is to facilitate the sanctifying process of bearing fruit. That hard closed seed in us gets broken open in service of something greater, something granting us more happiness and fulfilment than we could otherwise experience (Mark 10:29-30 and John 12:24).

Who we give ourselves to defines our vocation. Vocation amplifies the relational aspect of our life in Christ, making particular and specific who it is we love and serve and sacrifice for. It's not through abstract thinking that we give ourselves. The fullness of life is found through a daily pattern of giving to those whom God places in our path, whether we're in the mood or not.

Life and death are at the heart of every vocation. In patterning our lives and vocations after Jesus, that total, complete, perfect gift that He made of Himself to us and to Our Heavenly Father, we experience new life. It is in dying to ourselves that we are able to give to others, and bear fruit that will last (John 15:16). Through the inevitable growing pains of allowing our limited selves die to a greater fullness, we can remember that they are part of God's plan for our lives. Jesus came "that we might have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

*The Office of Vocations is here to help.*



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

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2019

**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 in the beautiful seminary chapel, dinner, a talk by the Director of Vocations Fr. Chris Lemieux, and a tour of the seminary.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2019

**Hiking Retreat** | 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

This fall, spend a day with Fr. Chris and other Catholic men in God's great outdoors as we explore where the Lord might be leading us. This retreat for men 18+ includes Holy Mass, a talk, and socializing with others who are discerning their vocations. Register on our website: <https://www.vocationstontoronto.ca/programs>.

"Discernment is not trying to figure out what God is thinking. It is trying to receive what God is giving."

-Fr. Greg Carruthers

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2019

**Young Disciples Retreat** | 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Young disciples aged 13-17, especially those engaged in parish service, are invited to attend a full-day retreat themed "Love in Service." The retreat includes reflection talks, recreational activities, Mass, and lunch. Contact the Office of Vocations at 416-968-0997 for more information.

"We always make the fatal mistake of thinking that it is what we do that matters...when really what matters is what we let God do to us."

-Bishop Fulton Sheen

