

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTERTIDE (B) (2021)

A) VOCATION

- being called by God for some definite service
- stories of how people in the Bible or the great saints are called by God can make it sound so simple and straightforward.
- We get the impression that everything is perfectly clear, and once the individual knows what God is asking of them, they just get on with it.
- Perhaps for some people, a priestly or religious vocation does spring from some powerful experience in their lives.
- But for many of us it does not happen like that, and the idea of a vocation in the Church is something that only gradually evolves and becomes clear.

B) SEEDS OF MY VOCATION

- the seeds of my vocation as a priest were sown in the home I was born in to: a secure home, with loving and welcoming parents. I was certainly a wanted child.
- I received my religious faith in great part from my mother.
- My father was not a Catholic, but from both my parents I inherited values which I have tried to live by.
- I remember being taken to church when I was very small, and not liking it very much.
- It was not until I was about eight years old that my interest in the Mass and Benediction was awakened.
- That was when the Parish Priest encouraged me to start serving, and I was introduced to the bell and the incense and Latin responses which, in those days I had all to myself. And so I felt very important.

C) EXAMPLE OF PRAYER

- I seem to have been drawn to prayers, and praying, by the example of others: my mother, other parishioners, teachers and priests.
- Later on, at College, I was introduced to various kinds of prayer, reading about it, listening to others talk about it, trying to learn and put it into practice, trying to build up a personal relationship with God.
- But it was especially through meeting and getting to know priests, at church, at school, and when they visited our home, and realising that they seemed to lead happy and fulfilled lives, that I began to consider the possibility of becoming a priest one day.

D) MOTIVES

- I always felt I wanted to spend my life bringing happiness to others.
- I sometimes experienced intense happiness, perhaps it was relief, after I had been to Confession, and I thought that perhaps I could bring happiness to others in the same way.
- Another element in my vocation was the feeling that I would not find fulfilment where so many other people normally did: in a good job, setting up a home and raising a family, making a lot of money, enjoying celebrity and so on.
- Somehow I felt that I only had one life to live and I wanted to give it back to God in some particular way.
- I also felt that I needed to be among people, sharing their lives, being there to help if needed.
- So that is why I have never seriously considered a vocation in a religious order.

E) DECISION

- Those were the kinds of thoughts that went through my mind at different stages of my teenage years.
- But the desire to be a priest did not become really strong or clear until half-way through college.
- And even when I went to the seminary at the age of 22, the idea that I might be a priest one day was still for me just a remote possibility.
- I could not be certain about it until the day of my Ordination.
- And in a real sense, I am still discovering what it means to be a priest.

F) GROWING INTO A VOCATION

- It is as though the call from God and the response from the individual is not something that happens just once, but is renewed day after day.
- In marriage a husband and wife continue to grow in their relationship with one another, and in their journey to God, all through their lives.
- And we hope that it is the same for the priest.
- Through his life of prayer and his pastoral work, he continues to grow as a human being,
- getting to know and understand himself better,
- growing closer to his people, and in his love and understanding towards them,
- and in his own journey of faith, growing closer to God.

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