

## MARCH 2011 VOCATION CORNER ARTICLE

March has arrived! Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent for Catholics around the world this March 9, 2011, in a manner of speaking, our own “spring training” as we again are given the opportunity by our Faith to reflect more deeply on our personal faith, our relationship with Christ and exactly what we can do to, with greater zeal, continue the daily work of living in the world but not for the world. The work of becoming holy, preparing our selves to one day be with God forever, for that is where perfect happiness and complete fulfillment will be had! Until then we must continue to live our daily life here on earth remembering that we are made for much more than this world can offer and each one of us is called by God to live a particular vocation while we spend time here on earth, journeying toward the eternal life that we have been called to receive in fullness through baptism.

We conclude this month the review of the 20 signs of a vocation to priesthood written about in *Saving a Thousand Souls*; by Father Brett Brannen, Vice Rector at Mount Saint Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg Maryland. Last month we finished with the importance of a candidate being a Christian gentleman.

We move on now to number 17; Events in the life of a good candidate will sometimes point towards priesthood. In this section Fr. Brannen makes two really important points that I think are crucial for men of any age who might be asking the question of themselves, “Am I being called”? or “What sign do I look for”? First, many men often can and do point to one particular event in their lives that started them “down the road” as it were. Secondly, it is important though to realize that it may not always be one event or occurrence, but a culmination of little steps that them may have been taking with out even being aware that throughout it all God was and still is, “calling them”! Do not get hung up looking for one extra-ordinary sign.

Next, a good candidate for diocesan priesthood is able to accept both success and failure peacefully. This is of great importance because as Father Brannen points out in this section, “success is not a Gospel word.” When a man is called to serve Christ, to labor for the Church, to offer himself, his life as a complete sacrifice for the Church, he is not going to always experience great success. Bringing souls to Christ is not easy. Here I will make a brief sports analogy. Often in team sports it’s the high scorer who gets the

glory and the accolades but it is often the quiet playmaker who fans often forget who needs to be strong in humility and endurance. Why? Because they very rarely get the credit! In serving the Church, what Christ asks of certain men is to be His playmaker, make Him present to the souls searching him out. In many cases the people will give credit to the priest but always, the priest must point back to Christ as the one who gets the glory. We are asked to be His instruments, win or lose on a daily basis.

The next sign of a good candidate is a man who has a healthy psycho-sexual development and orientation. Father Brannen speaks here mostly about the healthy, natural attraction to adult females and the importance of control of that attraction by one's will. He notes that having had healthy chaste dating experience is important but not always necessary. It is important also to note that a man should not be addicted to any aberrant sexual behaviors. The question that we as vocation directors must ask and seek out is; can a man show evidence of being able to embrace fully the chaste, celibate life of a priest?

The final sign and I think the most important sign of all; A good candidate for diocesan priesthood is truly open to the will of God for his life. It is in being able to give up one's own will, to embrace the will of another that the beginning of divine love begins to show itself in a relationship. If a man loves his faith, loves the Church, loves God and is trying to discern a call to priesthood he must ask himself this question; Do I love God enough to give up my own desires to embrace His Will for my life now and in eternity? If the answer is yes – call the vocation office!