

FR. PETER'S HOMILY
THIRTIETH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

“Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God.” This simple truth, brothers and sisters, is a reminder that vocations to the priesthood and religious life do not just fall from heaven but are nurtured in the ordinary circumstances of daily life.

Next Sunday the Diocese of Gary is kicking off a new vocation initiative entitled “Called by Name.”

Cards are available in the pews for you to write the name of a young person whom you think God is inviting to consider the priesthood or religious life.

Our hope is that if young people in the parish are aware that members of their community see qualities in them that would make great priests or religious, then they may feel more open to exploring it and courageous in responding to God’s call.

What are the qualities we look for in a young man or woman considering a vocation?

- At least high school age
- Sunday Mass attendance and reception of the Sacraments
- A life of prayer and a desire for personal holiness
- Integrity and authenticity
- A life of service to others
- Openness to the will of God

Now, we are not looking for perfection.

Remember how in the second reading it refers to the priest as being beset by weakness like their fellow men and women.

As was mentioned, it’s the desire for holiness that we are looking for.

Do you know of a young man in this parish who, with a few more years to mature and learn about the faith, you could see leading this parish community closer to Christ as a priest?

Similarly, do you know of a young person in this parish who you could see thriving in a religious community as a sister, serving the poor or needy in education, healthcare, or community outreach?

Write down their name and whatever contact information you might have for them.

What will happen with the names you submit?

First of all, they will not be made public.

They will be gathered by the Vocations Office and each person will receive a letter of encouragement from Bishop McClory inviting them to opportunities in the future to discern and explore their call from God.

It’s really quite simple, but it can have a huge impact on a young person’s life.

In today’s Gospel the blind man is calling out to Jesus.

Some people try to stop him, but Bartimaeus calls out all the louder.

Then Jesus tells his disciples to call the man over.

Which brings us to one of the most beautiful lines in Scripture:

“Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you.”

It takes courage to respond to the Lord’s call.

That is why our young people need our support in discerning their vocation.

And to our young people present today, I say, "Do not be afraid."

There is an army of people waiting to encourage you, to guide you, and to pray for you.

Two final points.

First, although we are asking for the names of persons high school age and older for this "Called By Name" program, it's never too early to start thinking about and praying about becoming a priest or religious sister.

I decided I wanted to be a priest in the third grade.

Second, we keep using the phrase "young person."

That is not meant to exclude the not-so-young among us.

Sometimes the call to priesthood or religious life comes later.

There is no official cutoff age for entering the seminary (although the religious orders might).

I would say that if you're 50 years old there is a good chance you could succeed in the seminary program.

There is even a special seminary for older vocations.

So, I am asking the unmarried men and women of our parish to pray about whether God might be calling you to a priestly or religious vocation.

And, again, I am asking you, the members of this faith community, to take a card home and pray for guidance in suggesting the name of someone God might be calling.

And please pray for the perseverance of our seminarians, priests, and religious.

We all need each other in order to grow as a healthy and effective Church.