

# How to Discern Your Vocation

By Rev. John Trambley, Director of Vocations

When trying to figure out whether you should remain single or enter into the religious life, it is not uncommon to ask God for a sign. Just give me a sign! While it might be helpful if God would simply do that, most of the time God speaks through the people around us.

I had a decent job at KOAT-TV in Albuquerque and a nice place to live. I enjoyed spending time with both family and friends. I was going to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and yet something was missing. Parish prayers for an increase in vocations helped me to understand that there was a need for more priests, but I continued to push the thought out of my mind.

It was the invitation of a priest that helped me to start taking the call seriously.

At the time, I was regularly joining my parents for Mass at Risen Savior Catholic Community. We attended a parish mission together. After that, Monsignor Richard Olona told me he wanted to talk with me. I guessed that he wanted to talk to me about the priesthood, but I didn't follow-up with him or call him. A few weeks later, I was with my parents again at Mass. We had been asked to bring up the gifts. When we brought them up, Monsignor Olona was looking at me and he said, "I still want to talk with you." After Mass, my parents had a lot of fun saying "You're in trouble now! Father wants to talk with you!" So, I called him and we set a date and a time to meet for lunch. Monsignor Olona picked a local Chinese restaurant. During lunch he said I should think about being a priest. Monsignor Olona likes to say that I choked on my egg roll!

Actually, during the lunch he gave me some good advice. He told me to read about the priesthood and to talk with other priests about it. Of course, I didn't do any of those things right away. Instead I threw myself into my job at the television station, but I still had the thought in the back of my mind.

I was also attending Theology on Tap. This is a monthly gathering at a restaurant or a pub

or some other public space where speakers give presentations about the Catholic faith in an atmosphere of food and fellowship. Two speakers in particular stand out in my memory. First, Father Scott Mansfield was a presenter that spoke about his journey from radio DJ at 94 Rock to priesthood. I thought if God can do that, maybe God can also call someone from a television station! The second presenter was from Notre Dame and she said if you are not happy where you are, that might be God telling you something!

I started having some very stressful days at work, so I searched on the internet about vocations. I found the information about the upcoming vocation discernment weekend for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. I thought about going, but I didn't go. The next year, I was once again having some stressful days at work, so I found the vocation discernment weekend information again. This time I printed it out, but I still didn't go. The next year after that I was once again having some stressful days at work, so I found the vocation discernment weekend information yet again. I remember driving with my father and telling him that I saw that the next discernment weekend was coming up but I also gave him all of the reasons I was thinking about not going. He gave me some good advice. He said, "Just go. Either there will be something there for you or there will be nothing there for you, but either way you'll stop talking about it!"

I went to the discernment weekend. It helped me to understand that God wants each one of us to be happy. If you are called to the priesthood and follow the call, there is nothing that will make you happier. Of course, there are challenges, but Archbishop Emeritus Michael Sheehan was very encouraging. He said, despite the challenges, he did not regret becoming a priest. His example and encouragement helped me to say yes to the call.

So, where are you in your discernment? Have you considered coming to the vocation discernment weekend? Do not be afraid. Just come. Who knows? Maybe there will be something there for you as well.

