

Fr. Martin's Reflection – 11/7/21 Bulletin

Jesus said to them: The Harvest is rich, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the harvest-master to send workers to his harvest." Luke 10:2

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend and the following weekend we will be focusing on vocations. I would like to begin with acknowledging that each of us are called by God to witness to the message God has sent to us through God's prophets and through God's son, Jesus Christ. What is that message? **"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."** Jn13:34-35

Many of us experience the living out of this message through the vocations of others – from our parents, teachers, nurses, and doctors and through our first responders when the need arises. We also experience this message of Christ's through our friends, work-colleagues and good and kind neighbors.

All of the above are vocations given to us by God to help make the Kingdom of God a reality in the world around us. God still calls many to a particular vocation, the vocation of Priesthood and Religious Life. Many of us look at the life of the Priest and Religious with earthly eyes, believing it to be an isolated and lonely life devoid of intimacy and love. Yet, the life of the Priest and Religious is the complete opposite, you are invited into the lives of God's people from the joys of conception to the sorrows of earthly death. You celebrate births, baptisms, first Holy Communions, first Confessions, Confirmations, and marriages. You journey with God's people through sudden deaths, terminal illnesses, and the breakdown of relationships. You shower them with God's blessings on their homes, cars, pets, and all they wish God's blessings upon.

So, is the call to the Priesthood and Religious Life a bed of roses? No! It is challenging, demanding and can be all consuming. Delivering God's message in a world that is busy doing other things, to people that don't want to listen, and challenging people to live in a way that they openly resent. Is today any different from the time of Christ? No. Christ and his disciples faced many difficulties and challenges in their public ministry. In Mark 4:3, Jesus tells the parable of the farmer going out to sow seed and describes the different ground the seed falls on. We will face the same challenges today, but Christ also highlights the many people who will joyfully accept God's message—Zacchaeus, Matthew the tax collector, the woman at the well, and Peter stated, 'All those who have left everything and followed Jesus.' Mt 19:27

The weekends of November 6-7 & November 13-14 the Diocese of Trenton will focus on vocations to the priesthood. As Christ call his apostles to follow him, many, if not all, were unlikely candidates to be disciples and yet they were the people Jesus called. I ask you to take a card, some can be found on the seats more can be found at the display, pray with it, and ask God to direct you put forward someone's name on behalf of God or to have the courage to put forward one's own name.

There is a very good likelihood Peter, James, John, or Matthew the Tax Collector would never have become disciples of Jesus if they weren't directly asked by Jesus because they didn't think they were good enough. Sadly many of today's disciples won't answer God's call to the priesthood because they feel the same. Let us reassure them and ask them to follow Christ's calling, and promise them that you will pray for them.

Let me state again, the life of God's priest is far from isolated and lonely; it is extremely busy, challenging and wonderfully fulfilling.

Brothers and Sisters, let us pray for all those discerning the call to the priesthood or religious life. May the Holy Spirit fill them with the courage to say yes and answer God's call.

Fr. Martin