

PRIESTLY LIFE AND VOCATION SUMMIT: FISHERS OF MEN
(ARCH)DIOCESE OF _____

Interviewer name _____ Date of interview _____

Person being interviewed _____

I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you. The purpose of this interview is to help our diocesan community to better understand what has brought forth vocations in the lives of our priests. We want to learn more about what sustains priestly vocations, and what we can do to provide the best support for the growth of seminarians in our diocese. I'm going to ask a few questions. Please take the time needed to give your most candid and thoughtful response. Your comments will remain anonymous, but will help us to prepare for the Inviter Program Workshop in our Diocese. Key themes and ideas as shared will only be used in a way that would not identify any individual. Let's begin.

Beginnings

To start, I'd like to learn about your beginnings in becoming a priest. We know that God works in many different ways. Sometimes a word, a comment, something very small can have a profound life-changing effect on a person.

1. What first awakened in you the realization that God might be calling you to the priesthood?
2. What were your initial excitements and hopes as you began to think more deeply about your vocation?

The Influence and Support of Priests

Priests have a significant impact upon a man's vocation and his response to this calling. Their influence and support make up an important part of a man's discernment.

3. Recall a time when you most felt the support and encouragement of priests when you were thinking about entering the seminary. What did these priests say or do that most helped you?
4. In living your vocation today, what expressions of support and encouragement from your brother priests are most important to you?

The Years of Early Formation

There are many aspects of formation for priesthood. Through prayer, study, relationships, and pastoral experience we grow and develop in deepening our commitment to this vocation.

5. As you look back upon your years of formation, what moments stand out that confirmed and strengthened your understanding of your vocation to priesthood?

Deepening and Sharing Your Spiritual Life:

We long to give our lives and our hearts to something that really matters. We are in a search for God. At the same time, we want to share with others what is deepest within our being: our experience of God's goodness; and the richness of bringing people to God and God to people through Word and Sacrament.

6. What are the experiences or moments in your priesthood that most deeply nurtures and sustains your relationship with God?
7. Describe a time when you knew that your experience of God had to be shared – you just

could not keep it inside you or remain silent. Tell the story of this time, and what most helped you to share the story of your encounter with God.

We are Called into the Ecclesial life of the Church

Even though a vocation to priesthood is given to an individual, it is lived out in relation to the Church – we give ourselves to the Body of Christ and to the People of God. While we are drawn to people who bring out the best in us and who inspire us with their own witness, we are called to serve the needs of all. Our vocation calls a priest to invest himself for others (e.g., in the parish, in the diocese) when responding to the needs of the Church.

8. Describe an experience when you felt a true sense of serving the Church, a time when you and others were truly living the Ecclesial life of the Church. What did people say or do that most helped to bring about this experience?
9. (For Priests from Religious Communities) What aspect or quality of your experience in community has been most life-giving for you in living your vocation as a priest/religious?

Serving in the Person of Christ:

Priests live their lives *in persona Christi*. They live out the message of the Gospel, witness the Good News in their compassion and service to others and bring God's presence and grace into the lives of others through the celebration of the sacraments.

10. Describe a time when you experienced a profound sense of serving in the Person of Christ -- even in the midst of struggles or tragedies. What did people do or say that most helped you experience this reality?
11. What are one or two things you do that helps you to live *in persona Christi* in view of the many demands you face?

Promoting Vocations - Sharing Our Stories

Promoting vocations is the responsibility of the whole Church. While “every vocation to the priestly ministry is an extraordinary gift of God's love...” (Pope John Paul II), the Church courageously witnesses to her mission by proclaiming words of encouragement. Knowing that a joyful life is the most powerful witness, priests need to speak about the joy and meaning of their vocation with others.

12. What do you value most about your vocation to the priesthood? What has made your choice of a vocation "worth it" to you?
13. What would you say, from your own experience, is the most compelling reason that a young man should consider a vocation to the priesthood?
14. Recall a time when you felt yourself being of real help to a young man who was considering a call to the priesthood. What did you say or do that seemed to be most helpful to them?

Wishes and hopes for the future

15. If you could imagine or transform our diocesan efforts to encourage vocations to the priesthood in any way you wished, what three things would you do to heighten the vitality and effectiveness of what we are doing?