

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

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THE VOCATION SUMMIT...

Last Monday night I had the opportunity of attending what was billed as a "Vocation Summit" at Our Lady Star of the Sea. Present were the Vocation Director of the Archdiocese, Father Christopher Argano, a native Staten Islander and a panel of 3 priests and 3 religious sisters. I and two young people from Saint Charles (happily) were in the audience of about seventy five persons.

Well, there were many excellent questions that were asked and really some great responses on the part of the panel. One of the questions that came up was a natural one: "How did you know that you had a calling to the priesthood or religious life?" One young priest who answered that question was Father David Rider. Father David is currently the Parochial Vicar at Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish.

Before becoming a priest, Father David was a professional dancer on Broadway. But he felt that there was just something missing from his life and that God wanted him to do more. He just did not know what! So, the future Father David went before Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament in his home parish, Regina Coeli in Hyde Park. Like here at Saint Charles, the Church has daily Eucharistic Adoration.

He prayed for a half an hour on his knees and basically said the same prayer over and over again: "Dear Jesus, I will do whatever you want me to do-just please let me know what that is!" Well, at the conclusion of his prayer, he was leaving the Eucharistic Chapel and a lady handed him a note. When Father David opened the note it read: "I think God is calling you to be a Catholic priest." He said that there was no doubt after that. The priesthood was his definite vocation! I guess not everybody gets such a clear sign as that one!

God certainly does give us indications of the course we should follow in this life. The problem is that many of us "tune out" the Lord when it comes to a vocation. So God speaks and not many listen! More listen to the voices of the world and its enticements. I think we can say that vocations are everybody's business.

First of all, we need the priests. This coming May 26th at Saint Patrick's Cathedral, only four diocesan priests will be ordained for the Archdiocese. Really, we should have ten times that number because there is so great a work to be done-over three hundred parishes! And what about the sisters? It was really refreshing to see three young nuns on the panel on Monday night. Think of all the good our Religious Sisters did in the past in the Church and specially here at Saint Charles.

We thank God for Sister Jeanine Conlon who still does such wonderful work in our Parish and who is so dedicated. But alas, Sister Jeanine, I and others eventually need replacements! And that is where you can "come in" and do something that won't cost you a cent-rare in the Church! That "something" is to pray for vocations.

Jesus tells us: "Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Secondly, why not encourage a young man or woman to think about Priesthood or Religious Life? So many of us actively discourage in this regard- "Oh you could never do that!" Maybe they could and should if it is God's will. May the Lord bless you and your families this week!

Sincerely in Christ,
Father Jerome