
CALLED BY NAME



It isn't a rare occurrence at this time of the year for young and old to take advantage of the slowness of pace in order to think about what they are to do in the near future. The choices made will colour their future undertakings: the decision to continue one's studies or not, to apply for such and such a job or not... And believers spend a lot of this precious time in trying to discern God's will for their lives, to discover God's call to them, and to better focus on the needs of people today. I invite our Christian communities to carry our young people in their prayers, they who are searching with the hope of discovering their own vocation in order to respond generously, whether it be in the married or single state, or in the religious, priestly, or missionary life.

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?

One of Robert Lebel's songs comes to mind to remind me of the Bible's different vocation stories, especially that of Samuel's call. "Lord, what would you have me do? I don't have much to offer except my singleminded desire to leave you all the space. For a long time now you have been shaping me, betwixt rebellions and sunny days. And now, O God, my God, I abandon myself into your hands. May you henceforth be the site where I shall let my heart be loved; may I not search elsewhere what can come from your grace alone. May all my life be yours, with its winters and its summers, since I have no other will than to live according to your own. You who have allowed me to learn at the feet of hope and the night, I would so want that others too rediscover your fire under the ashes. To those who are dying from waiting for my tenderness to reach them, may it reveal your coming to those who suffer without knowing why. Lord, what will you have me do? I want to live only from you and for you."

IF YOU HEAR...

And this other beautiful song from the same priest-poet rises up like a prayer in me, through the days and nights: "If you hear in the middle of the night someone calling you without ceasing, it could well be God approaching and telling you that he needs your youthfulness. You will then say: 'Here I am, speak to me, I am listening.' If you hear within you a song that is more beautiful than your human songs, maybe it is God who sings, in your happiness, a song that means, 'I love you.' If you hear on your road footsteps that seem to follow you, maybe it is God walking in your steps, as he calls on you to follow him. If you have been hearing within you and from the very beginning a cry that is clearer than all of your dreams, maybe it is God awakening love in you and waiting for you to rise. If you hear around you people seeking for a brother in you, it could well be that it is God talking to you and sending you out, so that they might discover the Father." I want to assure our young people of my daily prayer on their behalf, that they may hear and discover this voice of the Lord. And I am certain that from throughout the diocese prayers are being raised up for all our youth. These moments are sometimes painful to go through, but our youth are never alone in this undertaking.

OPEN DOORS AT THE SEMINARY

Hardly eleven months ago I announced that on August 4, 1995 the diocesan seminary would open its doors. Thank God that this beautiful project dear to the heart of our people has been realised. Thank God also that we have an exceptional seminary team in the person of Fathers Michel Bouffard and Jeff Doucette, and Sister Bertille Beaulieu, who have generously accepted to take on this service on behalf of our entire Church. The team meets every week for decision-making and for preparing the seminary's next stages of development.

The team has already established procedural norms for the acceptance of a future priest, and in the past few months nearly ten young men have showed interest in the priestly life.

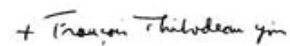
ADMISSION CRITERIA FOR THE SEMINARY

Among the criteria for discerning acceptance or non-acceptance to the seminary are the following: to have at least 20 years of age, have sound physical and emotional health, psychological balance and the maturity expected of one's age group: self-discipline, a knowledge of one's strength and one's limitations, openness to others and good relations with them: members of one's family, friends, fellow men and women, male and female colleagues; have religious convictions marked by the vitality of one's faith, to have carried out the experiment of some kind of concrete commitment, to have a feeling of belonging to the Church, and the ability to discern one's motives: a sincere desire to answer a call of Christ, the gift of self in service to God and the Church, a conviction of the place and importance of prayer, and of reading and meditating on the Word of God, in one's life; consider what the priestly ministry is all about: priest shepherd, diocesan or religious priest, a perception of what the priestly life is all about: role, responsibility, ministry requirements, celibacy. A meeting with a team member will help better discern the stages to be undertaken, from week to week.

FAMILY-SEMINARY, PARISH-SEMINARY

In founding the Edmundston Diocesan Seminary our aim was to respond to the great real need of future priests: at this time, there are only fifteen diocesan priests available for regular parish ministry. It is all together that we must make an effort to challenge and train our future priests. Each family and each parish is called to become like a seminary: a place where each child is invited because of his name as Christian, to grow in all the dimensions of his being, a place where each child is called on to commit himself/herself on behalf of his/her brothers and sisters by discovering the meaning of mutual help and devotedness, a place where the child discovers what faith, hope, and love are all about. The family and the parish come become places where youth discover sharing in the life of the community, in associations and other groups; the family and the parish can become once again the places where youth rediscover the place and the importance of both personal and community prayer.

Have a good week!



+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.
Bishop of Edmundston

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