
“ COME AND SEE ”



I am happy to present you the vocation stories of Monsignor Eymard Desjardins, P.A., and, next week, of Father Rino Albert. With them we thank the Lord who does not cease calling people to follow him.

MSGR. EYMARD DESJARDINS: “ CALL-RESPONSE ”

Lord, I am a bit embarrassed at being asked to place in the light of day this relationship that naturally developed between you, Christ the Priest, and the one you have deigned to call by name, inviting him to share in your one priesthood. – “You have not chosen me; I have chosen you...” (Jn. 15:16a).

In revealing too much, isn't there a risk, Lord, to break the tandem call–response, on one hand, and graciousness–gift, on the other? In giving so much importance to the one called one runs the risk of moving you over a bit, you the Author of all grace. All of this is the mystery in human form. But, then, Lord, is this not a bit in the image of your own incarnation in this world, where it is sometimes very difficult to separate these two realities without misrepresenting the ever-present action of your grace? If I dare look at the human soil where the grace of my priesthood took root, I do so with the conviction of seeing there the presence of your hand leading me at every turn, in my journey. – “Come and see!” (Jn. 1:39)

YOU WERE ALWAYS THERE!

At the age when one awakens to a sense of wonder, when one learns, at home and at school, awkwardly at first, to discover God the Father and to “tame” Him... in the person of the Son, You were always there, but so quiet! Then – Remember, Lord? – when the long period of growth arrived, you made yourself even more discreet. The world of culture was to be topmost on my mind for quite some time. The acquaintance of the great classics, as it spread my horizon, slowly filled a mind ever eager to learn and to know. An introduction to the philosophers crowned a search that was more and more stimulating. It was then that I discovered at one and the same time that man has always yearned for love and happiness, for the beautiful and the good; that he was exhilarated by noble realisations, and crushed under the weight of resounding defeat; still, it was always happiness that he pursued... And that is where you were awaiting me. “Oh, that we might see better times!” (Ps. 4:7). It was with the Author of the beautiful and the good, revealed in His Son Jesus, that I would be gratified. Guided by his Word, strengthened by his eucharistic Presence, I discovered the path to true happiness, a fulfilling but exclusive joy. Demanding, also, to the point of sowing doubt and fear. Lord, you did not stop there, far from it! By having me discover the deeper meaning of my own human experience, you developed in me the awe-filled desire to pass on this treasure to others through the total gift of self. True, an invitation I had tried to ignore, but the battle engaged was truly unequal. The liberating net... had just been cast. “Come, follow me!” (Mt. 19:21)

“ ALL IS GRACE! ”

You knew, Lord, that the risk was not so much on my side... I could always plead your love, which is everlasting (Rm. 8:39). But this treasure you were handing me I would have to, like everyone else, carry it in a “vessel of clay” (2 Cor. 4:7). “Trust me,” you said to me, Lord. Besides, had you not placed along my path many priests who reflected the joy of your presence, a joy which was theirs “as if they saw the invisible”? A constant source of inspiration. “I no longer call you servants but friends” (Jn. 15:16b) “All is grace.” Lord, I stop here, I have already unveiled too much... Sign the text? Before I do, Lord, would you kindly imprint your seal?... But I already hear a voice, soft “as a breeze”: – “Not right now: a little more time, to add a few more details...” Fine, Lord!

+ François Thibodeau

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