

Let me start off by saying I am not a New Orleans boy, I am not even a Louisiana boy. I am actually a Fightin' Texas Aggie from Dallas, TX. You're probably wondering how I ended up in New Orleans... I'm glad you asked!

When asked about my vocations story, the best way to describe it would be: "BOOM! Holy Spirit!" I never thought I would find myself in New Orleans. Yet, the Lord in his providence brings me to this great city. My freshman year while attending Texas A&M, I would have an encounter with the Lord in the blessed sacrament. It was then and there that I realized this whole "Catholic thing" is real, but I didn't know anything about it. I grew up in the faith, but it was somehow lost on me that as Catholics, we believe that Jesus Christ is present, body, blood, soul, and divinity, in the Eucharist. So, I decided to work getting confirmed, and try to learn more about the faith. Archbishop Aymond was the Bishop of Austin at the time, and he was the one to confirm me.

It was during this time that I began to feel a tug in my heart to pursue the priesthood. I didn't want to pursue it, however, because I didn't feel worthy enough to even be considered for such a calling. After years of running away from it, I came to the realization that my heart would be restless, until it rested in the Lord, and what I believe he made me for. A few years ago, I attended a Mass of thanksgiving for a friend of mine who had just been ordained a priest. The entire time, I found my heart swelling with joy, realizing that after all this time my heart wanted this. You see, I wanted to be the one that says: "This is my body." I wanted to be the one to say, "I absolve you of your sins." I wanted to be the one that prepared a couple for marriage, and then baptize their children. I wanted to be the one that knelt next to that death bed, and prepared a soul for the next life. After all this time, my heart wanted it, and I couldn't run away any longer. So, I reached out to Archbishop Aymond, one thing led to another, and before I knew it, I was accepted as a Seminarian for the Archdiocese of New Orleans! Here I am now in my second year of formation, and I couldn't be happier.

A few quirks about me: *The Dark Night* is probably one of my all-time favorite movies. I love watching and playing sports, in particular watching college football (Gig 'em, Aggies!) and playing rugby. I actually play with the New Orleans Rugby Football Club when I don't have any seminary obligations. I am also a car fanatic, and love researching and reading about the new model vehicles coming out. Last but not least, I'm a huge nerd and love all sorts of video games, books, and plenty of other fun stuff!

I have lived in various places throughout Texas over the past few years, from Dallas where I was born and raised, to Houston, and of course, College Station. New Orleans is my home now, however, and I couldn't be happier. I continue to fall in love with the city and the people more and more each day, and look forward to seeing what the Lord has in store for me here.

Pray for me as I continue this journey, I am only in Pre-Theology II, so I still have at least four more years of discernment and formation. Be assured of my prayers for you all. God bless you!

-Freddy Rodriguez
1 Timothy 1:12-17