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A FAMILY OF FAITH INSPIRES A JOURNEY TO PRIESTHOOD

written by Father Caleb Cunningham

Vocations often come from strong Catholic families, and I would say that my family was very instrumental in me answering my call to the priesthood. I grew up on a cattle ranch 30 miles from Jordan Valley, Oregon. Sunday Mass was a priority for my family, even though it took 45 minutes to get to church. That Mass was considered an essential part of our week, definitely influenced me as a youth, as did the importance of faith to my parents. My three siblings and I were also homeschooled, so we learned a lot about the faith through our Catholic curriculum.

Yet, I remember that it wasn't until about high school that I began to have my own personal prayer. My parents gave me a bible and Imitation of Christ, which I began to read. It was, as I began to listen to Jesus in prayer, that I heard the call to the priesthood. I was very hesitant,

I thought I wasn't smart enough, and I was too shy to preach or interact with people. I felt conflicted, thinking myself unable, yet still feeling God's desire.

The influence of our parish priests helped. Being around them as an altar server and beginning to listen to what they said and preached. I remember the African priests talking about missionary work in Africa, which awakened a desire to be a missionary. Then, when American priests came to the parish, I realized that priests didn't just come from other countries. I saw how American priests were able to relate to and influence people more because they were from the same culture, and that helped make me realize even more that maybe the priesthood is what God did want of me.

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UNA FAMILIA DE FE INSPIRA UN CAMINO AL SACERDOCIO

escrito por el Padre Caleb Cunningham

Las vocaciones a menudo provienen de familias católicas fuertes, y yo diría que mi familia fue fundamental para que yo respondiera a mi llamado al sacerdocio. Crecí en un rancho ganadero a 30 millas del Valle del Jordan, Oregon. La Misa dominical era una prioridad para mi familia, a pesar de que tardaba 45 minutos en llegar a la iglesia. Esa Misa fue considerada una parte esencial de nuestra semana, definitivamente influyó en mí cuando era joven, al igual que la importancia de la fe para mis padres. Mis tres hermanos y yo también recibimos educación en casa, por lo que aprendimos mucho sobre la fe a través de nuestro plan de estudios católico.

Sin embargo, recuerdo que no fue sino hasta la secundaria que comencé a tener mi propia oración personal. Mis padres me regalaron una biblia y la Imitación de Cristo, la cual comencé a leer. Fue cuando comencé a escuchar a Jesús en oración, que escuché el llamado al sacerdocio. Dudaba mucho, pensaba que no era lo suficientemente inteligente y era demasiado tímido para predicar o interactuar con la gente. Me sentí en conflicto, creyéndome incapaz, pero aun así sentía el deseo de Dios.

La influencia de nuestros párrocos ayudó. Estar cerca de ellos como monaguillo y comenzar a escuchar lo que decían y predicaban. Recuerdo a los sacerdotes africanos hablando del trabajo misionero en África, lo que despertó el deseo de ser misionero. Luego, cuando llegaron sacerdotes estadounidenses a la parroquia, me di cuenta de que los sacerdotes no venían simplemente de otros países. Vi cómo los sacerdotes estadounidenses podían relacionarse e influir más en las personas porque eran de la misma cultura, y eso me ayudó a darme cuenta aún más de que tal vez el sacerdocio es lo que Dios quería de mí.

Aunque comencé a sentirme cómodo con el llamado de Dios al sacerdocio, todavía tenía miedo de contárselo a alguien y no se lo dije a mis padres hasta que llegó el momento de ir a la universidad. No me sentía listo para ir al seminario, y mis hermanos mayores, que habían asistido a la Universidad Franciscana en Steubenville, Ohio, me hablaron sobre el Programa de Discernimiento Sacerdotal allí. Postulé y fui aceptado. Mi experiencia universitaria fue una parte importante de mi formación. Por primera vez estuve con otros jóvenes de mi edad que también estaban pensando en el sacerdocio y pudimos hablar sobre ello. También crecí en este entorno

universitario, superando poco a poco mi timidez y miedo a hablar en público, haciendo buenos amigos y experimentando la universalidad de la Iglesia Católica.

Ese llamado de Dios en lo profundo de mí no desaparecía y deseaba seguir el llamado de Dios y servirle. Hablé con mi director espiritual sobre mis pensamientos sobre ser misionero, así como sobre mis pensamientos sobre servir en mi diócesis local. Me ayudó a darme cuenta de que podía ser misionero en mi diócesis de origen, donde había escasez de sacerdotes. Entonces solicité ingresar al seminario de la Diócesis de Baker y fui aceptado.

Ahora, después de cinco meses de ser sacerdote, ha sido una bendición. No siempre es fácil y es sorprendente ver la gran gracia de Dios obrando en las personas a través del sacerdocio. Me he dado cuenta de que no soy yo, sino el sacerdocio de Jesucristo el que obra a través de mí. El sacerdocio es una gran gracia de Dios y aliento a los jóvenes a considerar la pregunta: “¿Dios me está llamando?”

Bishop Cary's Schedule

November 11-12, 2023

40 Days for Life Final Mass, Ontario

November 5 - Eastern Deanery BAA Dinner

November 6 - Northern Deanery BAA Dinner

November 8 - Southern Deanery BAA Dinner

November 12-16

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Meeting - Baltimore, MD

Upcoming Event Dates

November 5, 10:30 a.m.

Diocesan High School Leadership Fall Retreat - La Grande

February 17-18, 2024

Diocesan Young Adult Retreat - Powell Butte

March 8-10, 2024

Idaho Catholic Youth Conference - Nampa, ID

El Padre Cunningham compartió cómo la fe de sus padres lo inspiraron a perseguir el llamado de Dios al sacerdocio. Durante el Simposio Catequético 2021, el Obispo Cary compartió la importancia de la fe de sus padres, y su devoción diaria de arrodillarse y rezar el Rosario como familia después de la cena, le ayudaron a él a crecer en la fe. Las Familias están abiertas a los valores trascendentales... se convierten en el primer y excelentísimo semillero de vocaciones a una vida de consagración al reino de Dios" (*Familiaris consortio*, 53).

Durante esta Semana Nacional de Concienciación Vocacional, comenzar, renovar, o continuar un hábito familiar de rezar juntos a diario. La siguiente oración puede ayudar a su familia a rezar por las vocaciones.

Oración familiar por las vocaciones

Padre, tú llamas a cada uno de nosotros por nombre y nos pides que te sigamos.

Bendice a tu Iglesia y danos dedicados y generosos líderes de nuestras familias y amigos quienes puedan servir a tu pueblo como sacerdotes y religiosas.

Inspíranos mientras crecemos en tu amor y abre nuestros corazones para oír tu llamada.

*Te lo pedimos en nombre de Cristo.
Amén.*

Fr. Cunningham shared how his parent's faith inspired him to pursue God's call to the priesthood. During the 2021 Catechetical Symposium, Bishop Cary shared how the importance of his parent's faith, and their daily devotion to kneel and pray the Rosary as a family after dinner, helped him to grow in faith. Families "open to transcendent values... becomes the primary and most excellent seedbed of vocations to a life of consecration to the kingdom of God" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 53).

During this week of National Awareness of Vocations, begin, renew, or continue a family habit of daily prayer together. The following prayer can help your family pray for vocations.

Family prayer for vocations

Father, you call each one of us by name and ask us to follow you.

Bless your Church and give us dedicated and generous leaders from our families and friends who can serve your people as priests and religious.

Inspire us as we grow in your love and open our hearts to hear your call.

*We ask this in the name of Christ.
Amen.*

A Family of Faith, continued

Even though I began feeling comfortable with God's call to the priesthood, I was still afraid to tell anyone, and I didn't tell my parents until it was time to go to college. I didn't feel ready to go to seminary, and my older siblings, who had attended the Franciscan University at Steubenville, Ohio, told me about the Priestly Discernment Program there. I applied and was accepted. My college experience was an important part of my formation. For the first time, I was with other young men my age who were also having thoughts about the priesthood, and we were able to talk about it. I also grew in this college setting, slowly overcoming my shyness and fear of public speaking, making good friends, and experiencing the universality of the Catholic Church.

That call of God deep within me wouldn't go away, and I desired to follow God's call and serve Him. I talked with my spiritual director about thoughts I had of being a missionary, as well as my thoughts of serving in my home diocese. He helped me realize I could be a missionary in my home diocese, so short of priests. So, I applied to seminary for the Diocese of Baker, and I was accepted.

Now, after being a priest for five months, it has been a blessing. It's not always easy, and it is amazing to see the great grace of God working in people through the priesthood. I have realized that it isn't me, but it is the priesthood of Jesus Christ that works through me. The priesthood is a great grace of God, and I encourage young men to consider the question, "Is God calling me?"



IN MEMORIAM

Deceased Bishops & Priests of The Diocese of Baker

JANUARY

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Jan. 5, 1908 | Very Rev. John Heinrich |
| Jan. 5, 1955 | Rev. Edward O'D Hynes |
| Jan. 6, 1985 | Rev. William Coughlin, OFM Cap. |
| Jan. 9, 2018 | Rev. John R. Jasper |
| Jan. 17, 1981 | Most Rev. Francis P. Leipzig* |
| Jan. 17, 2002 | Rev. Robert E. Simard |
| Jan. 20, 1971 | Rev. William Roden |
| Jan. 23, 1934 | Rev. Joseph Schmidt |
| Jan. 24, 1950 | Rev. John Delahunty |
| Jan. 31, 1937 | Rev. M.J. Kelly |
| Jan. 31, 1975 | Rev. Peter J. Duignan |

FEBRUARY

| | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Feb. 1, 1958 | Rev. Patrick J. Stack |
| Feb. 4, 1983 | Rev. David J. Hazen |
| Feb. 8, 1934 | Rev. Thomas M. Neate, S.J. |
| Feb. 9, 1997 | Rev. John Baumgartner |
| Feb. 11, 1937 | Rev. Luke Sheehan, OFM, Cap. |
| Feb. 11, 2007 | Rev. Timothy Collins |
| Feb. 13, 1959 | Rev. Felix Geis |
| Feb. 14, 1948 | Rev. John O'Donovan |
| Feb. 16, 2004 | Rev. Msgr. Bernard Keating |
| Feb. 18, 2011 | Rev. Robert Van Sickler |
| Feb. 22, 1952 | Rev. Thomas Brady |
| Feb. 25, 2005 | Rev. Cletus Kirkpatrick |

MARCH

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Mar. 7, 2020 | Rev. Gerald Condon |
| Mar. 9, 1929 | Rev. Hugh Marshall |
| Mar. 15, 2000 | Rev. Juan Turula, S.J. |
| Mar. 21, 1978 | Rev. Edmund M. Fern |
| Mar. 22, 2010 | Rev. Evangelist Kelly, OFM, Cap. |
| Mar. 23, 2015 | Rev. Leo Weckerle |
| Mar. 24, 1988 | Rev. Patrick J. Lunham |
| Mar. 24, 1991 | Rev. Thomas Endel |
| Mar. 26, 1909 | Rev. John Bradley |
| Mar. 31, 1950 | Most Rev. Leo F. Fahey* |

APRIL

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Apr. 3, 1933 | Rev. Patrick O'Rourke |
| Apr. 3, 1978 | Rev. James M. O'Connor |
| Apr. 8, 1942 | Rev. John Wand |
| Apr. 9, 1928 | Rev. Joseph M. Cataldo, S.J. |
| Apr. 11, 1967 | Rev. Otto Nooy |
| Apr. 12, 1950 | Most Rev. Joseph F. McGrath* |
| Apr. 19, 1995 | Rev. John Murphy M.Afr |
| Apr. 20, 2023 | Rev. Alfred John (AJ) Fisher |
| Apr. 24, 2015 | Most Rev. Thomas J. Connolly* |
| Apr. 26, 1993 | Rev. Msgr. Timothy Casey |

MAY

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| May 4, 2011 | Rev. W. Raymond Jarboe |
| May 6, 1984 | Rev. Msgr. George A. Murphy |
| May 7, 1919 | Rev. John Kerr |
| May 21, 2007 | Rev. Martin Quigley |
| May 23, 2015 | Rev. Thomas Scanlan |
| May 24, 2006 | Rev. Richard J. Conway |
| May 27, 1936 | Rev. Joseph Schell |

JUNE

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| June 1, 2012 | Rev. Daniel Ochiabuto, SMMM |
| June 3, 1939 | Rev. Harold A. Reiley, S.J. |
| June 4, 1945 | Rev. August F. Loeser |
| June 17, 2020 | Rev. Charles Dreisbach |
| June 18, 1965 | Rev. John T. Curran |
| June 28, 1943 | Rev. Denis Sheedy |

JULY

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| July 6, 1975 | Rev. Donal Sullivan, OFM, Cap. |
| July 10, 1973 | Rev. Msgr. Michael J. McMahon |
| July 10, 1989 | Rev. A. Robert Miller |
| July 12, 2017 | Rev. Austin Cribbin |
| July 13, 1920 | Rev. Patrick Driscoll |
| July 14, 1988 | Rev. Leo Stupfel |
| July 24, 1977 | Rev. John M. Kenney |
| July 27, 1946 | Rev. James H. Maloney |
| July 27, 2023 | Rev. Lawrence Bower |

AUGUST

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Aug. 3, 1995 | Rev. Joseph B. Hayes |
| Aug. 10, 1992 | Rev. Charles Graves |
| Aug. 10, 2012 | Rev. Fintan Whelan, OFM, Cap. |
| Aug. 15, 2013 | Rev. Ed O'Keefe |
| Aug. 26, 2005 | Rev. John F. Cunningham |

SEPTEMBER

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Sep. 6, 1978 | Rev. Msgr. Patrick J. Gaire |
| Sep. 10, 2023 | Rev. Cornelius (Con) Kiely |
| Sep. 13, 2006 | Rev. Joseph Kelbel |
| Sep. 16, 1964 | Rev. Vincent Egan |
| Sep. 19, 1964 | Rev. Michael Ahearne |
| Sep. 22, 1992 | Rev. Jocelyn St. Arnaud |
| Sep. 24, 2009 | Rev. Msgr. Matthew Crotty |
| Sep. 27, 2004 | Rev. Carl H. Gillen |
| Sep. 29, 1975 | Rev. Simon Coughlan, OFM Cap. |
| Sep. 30, 1958 | Rev. Robert Kennedy |

OCTOBER

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Oct. 2, 1980 | Rev. John B. O'Connor |
| Oct. 15, 2001 | Rev. Msgr. William S. Stone |
| Oct. 17, 1935 | Rev. Dominic O'Connor, OFM, Cap. |
| Oct. 24, 1908 | Rev. John Joseph Landry, S.J. |
| Oct. 24, 2014 | Rev. Joseph Reinig |
| Oct. 28, 1918 | Rev. John Moriarity |
| Oct. 31, 1996 | Rev. Henry A. Beegan |

NOVEMBER

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| Nov. 2, 1942 | Rev. Michael Dalton |
| Nov. 10, 1976 | Rev. Thomas J. Moore |
| Nov. 14, 1977 | Rev. Francis McCormick |
| Nov. 15, 1975 | Rev. George French, S.J. |
| Nov. 22, 1999 | Rev. Msgr. John F. Phelan |
| Nov. 22, 2007 | Rev. Francis Hebert |

DECEMBER

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Dec. 2, 1918 | Rev. Msgr. Alphonse Bronsgeest |
| Dec. 2, 1941 | Rev. James L. McKenna, S.J. |
| Dec. 2, 1971 | Rev. Benjamin Kiernan |
| Dec. 3, 1927 | Rev. Thomas Cantwell |
| Dec. 4, 2017 | Rev. Flavian Welstead, OFM, Cap. |
| Dec. 8, 1970 | Rev. Celestin Quinlan, OFM Cap. |
| Dec. 11, 1993 | Rev. Msgr. Charles Timothy Grant |
| Dec. 14, 1967 | Rev. Daniel Duffy, OFM Cap. |
| Dec. 15, 1960 | Rev. Thomas McTeigue |
| Dec. 16, 1982 | Rev. John A. O'Brien |
| Dec. 22, 1937 | Rev. James Walsh |
| Dec. 23, 2007 | Rev. Msgr. Raymond Beard |