



Pastor's Column

St. Peter Catholic Church

June 3, 2018 ~ The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Corpus Christi Sunday

Vocations and the Parish Prayer Campaign

Our parish is undergoing a fair amount of transition right now: Sr. Margarite Marie of the Sisters of Mary Mother of Church, having not taken her final perpetual vows, has discerned that she needs to leave the SMMC community and go home to St. Louis to continue her discernment there; at the same time, Peter's pastoral year with us comes to a close, and he has met with Bishop Daly and has decided that he needs to take a year-long leave of absence outside of seminary formation, that he can take another year to discern carefully if God is calling him to the priesthood.

In the midst of this time of our own parish's experience of vocational transitions, the whole diocese is experiencing something of a vocations crisis. The Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church, for example (with Sr. Margarite's departure) are now down to nine members. The diocese, at the present time, has only six seminarians. The new pastoral assignments for our priests have just been announced, and this year, we have nobody being ordained and we have five priests departing from active ministry: two to retirement, two to unspecified medical leave, and one is switching dioceses to Las Vegas.

Some parishioners have remarked to me that I seem to place a lot of emphasis on vocations, and I have been all year long since I began last summer. And that is true. It is because, as I say, we are in the midst of a vocations crisis. I know plenty of young people right here in Spokane who are right there on the cusp of taking the plunge and joining the seminary or the convent in order to take their discernment to the next level...and yet, they hold back. And no matter how much I explain to them that entering the seminary or the convent certainly does *not* mean that they are automatically a priest or a nun, that the whole point of entering seminary or the convent in the first place is so that they can discern God's calling...still, they are hesitant.

Hence my constant prayer that our young people would pray and discern God's will for them in their lives and that they would respond with faith, generosity, and courage.

This leads me to giving an update on our Prayer Campaign. The two prayer boards in the corner in the narthex (for "Prayers Asked" and "Prayers Answered") are literally overflowing with prayer requests; now, prayer requests have to be posted on the tables! This is wonderful! We are letting our prayer requests be made known to our entire parish family in faith, and we are entrusting our personal needs with our brothers and sisters in Christ. And at the same time, we are praying for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

I myself have several prayer requests posted, one of them being for twenty-seven young men for whom I pray each day *by name*, that they discern God's call and that it be the Lord's will that they enter the seminary (and, God-willing, become a priest for Spokane). I am entrusting this very crucial and personal prayer of mine to all of you, and I am so moved with gratitude and hope that you are joining me in offering this prayer, just as I am joining you in offering your prayers, and also rejoicing when I see that your prayers have been answered and you have moved your "Prayer Asked" to "Prayer Answered."

May it be that we continue to hold each other up in prayer and that the Lord will hear and answer our prayers according to His most holy Will.

~ Fr. Lewis