

Father Ed Rama

Many times Priests have told me that from a young age they knew that God was calling them to the Priesthood. As I look back on my own calling, I can recall moments that were very special and spiritual but if God was calling me in my youth He knew that I was not open to His early invitation. It took me many years and many humbling experiences for me to change and to be open to hearing God's call to the Priesthood.

At the age of 20, long before I was a Priest, I decided to start my own cabinetmaking business with the hope of becoming a millionaire. I always loved working with my hands and building things especially out of wood. I recall one day working in the cabinet shop in Queens, I decided to move some of the displays that we had in our showroom. I had forgotten about the silent alarm button on my desk and accidentally hit it setting off the alarm. The alarm company immediately called asking for a password. They told me that the police were notified that it was a false alarm but that I should watch out for the police in case they arrive thinking that a robbery was in progress. Well I kept watch outside looking out for the police but after an hour or so of not seeing them I gave up and decided to go back to work. About 4 hours later I noticed out of the corner of my eye two police officers entering the showroom with their guns drawn. Wow...that will get your heart pumping! I was thinking only one thing, "Don't shoot". The officers said, "We just received a call over our radio, that there was a robbery in progress". (Having three brothers who are police officers I am very sympathetic to all who are in law enforcement.) In our Gospel this weekend Jesus reminds us of the importance of being vigilant and staying awake. He gives us another parable to help us understand the importance of being ready and the promise

of a reward for those who do. He gives us the example of a master going out to a wedding, which in Jesus' time were celebrated for several days and it would be unknown when he would return. The faithful servant remains vigilant, that is, he keeps a lookout for his master's return. It would have been important because the servant would have had to unlock the entrance door from inside, possibly lift a wooden or steel beam to allow entry into the house. There would have been a real concern for one's safety if they were left outside especially in the evening or late hours when thieves and murders were lurking close by. The master promised to reward his servant if he remained vigilant.

In a similar way we are reminded to remain faithful in our spiritual lives. If we remain vigilant the Lord promises us a reward, that He will serve us in the Kingdom of Heaven.

We remain vigilant by working each day to grow in our relationship with the Lord. We keep watch over the things we think, say, and do. We work at growing in virtue, especially loving our God and neighbor. All of us are called to follow the Commandments and the teachings of the Church. We need God's grace to help us to remain faithful and vigilant. We receive those graces through the Sacraments of the Church and through a life of prayer and good works.

All of us struggle with sin, which is a turning away from God. Sin darkens the intellect and weakens the will and makes it very difficult for us to keep watch for our Lord. So many of our Catholics have given up and left the Church. They fail to see the truth and lack the will or strength to persevere. The Sacrament of Reconciliation, a healing sacrament, enlightens the mind and strengthens the will. It helps us to see the truth. It gets our souls right before the Lord so that we can come to the Banquet of the Eucharist and be fed with the Bread of Life.

The Priesthood is such a wonderful gift that God has given to us. Especially through the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Most Holy Eucharist, which are given to us through the Priests, we can receive the grace to remain faithful.

The Lord reminds us that He comes like a thief in the night and we know neither the day nor hour. He tells us this not to frighten us but because He loves us and wants us to be ready for Him.

Pray for an increase of Vocations to the Priesthood.

If God has placed His call on your heart, "Be not afraid" He who has called you will help you with His grace so that you can help others to be ready when He comes. He makes the same promise to all of us, that if we remain faithful and vigilant, He will serve us in the Kingdom of Heaven.