

## ***Questions which arise during discernment of a vocation***

*How do I know I have a vocation to the priesthood?*

You may have enjoyed serving Mass as a young person, or perhaps you admired the dedication of a priest you knew; you may feel you would like to give your life to God more fully or in serving others; or again some respected person may have challenged you to think of priesthood - any such experiences can set you thinking about becoming a priest.

However, as Pope Francis says 'Vocations are born in prayer and from prayer and only in prayer can they persevere and bear fruit'

To hear God's call in the heart one needs to spend time in silent prayer. A suitable prayer is that of St Paul 'Lord, what do you want me to do?' Prayerful reading of how God called various people in Scripture can be helpful eg. the call of the apostles Lk5: 1-11. A deep inner peace at the thought of priesthood ( even if you have concerns at a surface level) is a positive indication as is the continual return of thoughts of priesthood in prayer. Every vocation is a unique story.

A vocation to priesthood will need to be discerned finally with the help of a vocations director.

*I think I might have a vocation to the priesthood in the Diocese of Meath.*

*What do I do?*

Talk to someone. Talk to a priest you know, your own parish clergy, chaplain in school or any priest you can identify with. You can also make contact with the vocations directors in the Diocese of Meath. Just because you talk does not mean you commit. You can be assured of a kind ear and good advice.

*What is the procedure for entering seminary?*

Seminary follows the academic cycle, so the beginning of the year is late August or September, depending on the seminary. In order to commence in any given autumn there are a number of important things to consider. After initial contact with the vocations director every applicant is required to do a pre-seminary assessment. After this a meeting with the bishop will precede formal acceptance as a student. This takes time and will need to be completed before early summer.

*I have pursued a career and worked since leaving school. Can an older man study for the priesthood?*

Many men in our diocese have followed the call to priesthood later in life. There is in fact an array of previous professions among the clergy; solicitors, painters, nurses, bus drivers, horticulturalists and retailers to name a few! Every application is taken on its own merits.

*Could God really be calling me?*

I am your average Catholic, middle of road, not exceptionally holy, could I be called to the priesthood? Yes of course! God calls regular men from the family of the Church. We are all called to holiness. We are all a work in progress.

*Is the study part of the formation hard?*

The basic entry requirement is the Leaving Cert. Seminary studies are tailored to suit all levels of academic skill. Priestly training takes anything between five and seven years – sometimes more - depending on the candidate's age and courses he follows. Every assistance is given to students to help them in their studies. If this is a concern make sure to mention it to the vocations director.

*The idea of public speaking seems very challenging to me. Could I still be a priest?*

This can be an understandable concern for someone who may consider himself shy. It can be a daunting prospect. However, bear in mind formation and training for the priesthood is comprehensive. By the end of a seminary journey you will be well equipped, with the grace of God, to stand up and proclaim Jesus is Lord!

*The Next Step*

Being a priest is challenging; there is no escaping that fact. Challenges, however, have never stopped the spread of the Gospel. If the idea of serving God as a priest is attractive to you, take the next step and find out a bit more. A candidate for the priesthood in the Diocese of Meath needs to be an unmarried, baptised man, over the age of 18. He needs to have good physical and psychological health, free from major commitments.

*Contact the Vocations Team*

**Fr. Joe Campbell C.C.,**  
St. Mary's, Drogheda, Co. Louth

Tel 086-603 6506  
email: [frjoecampbell@gmail.com](mailto:frjoecampbell@gmail.com)

**Fr. Shane Crombie C.C.,**  
Tullamore, Co. Offaly

Tel 057-932 1587  
email: [frshane@gmail.com](mailto:frshane@gmail.com)

or contact your own local priest.