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HOW MY VOCATION TO PRIESTHOOD COME ABOUT?

Eucharistic celebration can change the whole world

St Paul said, in his first letter to the Corinthians, "For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often you drink it, in remembrance of me". Thus, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes". (ICor 11:23-26). The memorial words and actions of our Lord Jesus Christ are repeatedly celebrated and chanted by the Catholic Church during the celebration of the Eucharist. Eucharistic celebration is the summit of the liturgy of the mass. Whatever other words, songs, and actions in the celebration of the liturgy are there to help the faithful to prepare themselves thoughtfully to participate in the Calvary event which is happening again on the altar. When Jesus Christ was on the cross of Calvary pouring his divine blood, the world was cleansed from its sin and people were restored their original state and dignity that has been corrupted by the original sin. During the Eucharistic celebration priest is renewing that same Calvary event right at the altar. Those people who have strong faith are experiencing what is taking place on the altar and their Christian vocation rooted in the Eucharist. However, I received my call towards priesthood during the celebration of the liturgy.

I was not a devoted and active youth in the parish; however, I was baptized as a Catholic during my childhood. Nevertheless, I knew nothing about the Catholic Church, her practices and traditions. My mother was a devoted and active member in the church, so she wanted to tell me something about Catholic Church, but I was always reluctant and ready to stand against her and the catholic faith. But in secret she was praying for me and the Lord heard her prayer. One very early Sunday morning I got myself ready and told her that I wanted to go with her for the mass. After the Eucharistic celebration I went home as a transformed person.

In the parish I went straight into the Chapel. I sat on the last bench. After two or three minutes the Mass commenced. That was my first time to participate in the Eucharistic celebration. When priest came with the altar boys and the communion ministers, the faithful were standing up so I just followed the group by standing up as well. As I was standing my eyes focused unto the priest. Upon seeing the priest, so many meditative questions were coming into my mind. I started asking myself why this priest came to this very remotest part of my province? What is his work for being here? He is belongs to a different culture and place, so what is he doing in such place like this? If I continued listing the questions. The list could go on, so let me stop here. I was sitting there like an observer and my curiosity about the questions were very high. However, I did not answer those questions but the celebration of the liturgy answered them and my whole being was transformed, and there was a new era in my life.

The priest started the Eucharistic celebration with the sign of the cross and processed on with the liturgy of the word, I was really moved by the liturgical actions that were performed by the priest on the altar. So I followed the faithful in the church. When they stood I also stood, and when they sat or knelt I did the same because I experienced something unique in my life which I had never been experienced before. After the liturgy of the word, the priest celebrated the liturgy of the Eucharist. During the time of consecration, the priest was covered with some kind of different beams surrounding him. The inner voice in me was speaking to me that you are not far from God's light and you can become priest if it is God's will. This voice ignited my heart, and I was thinking of receiving the Blessed Sacrament during the time of communion, but I did not. From the beginning of the Mass I was crying to the end. After the celebration of the Mass I went home right away. In the house I was discussing about what had happened in my life during the celebration of the mass. And I became active Catholic member in the church because Jesus himself called me in the Eucharistic celebration to be his humble servant.

Jesus called different people in various places and situations. Jesus called Saint Mathew

at the tax collecting office and Saint Paul received his call on his way to Damascus, etc. . . . However, I received my call towards the priesthood at the celebration of Jesus' own body and blood in the mass. And I responded to the call wholeheartedly to serve in the vineyard of Christ. Jesus called many people, but he has chosen few as it is written in the scripture, "many are called but few are chosen," to proclaim the Kingdom of heaven here on earth. I could be one of those chosen ones. I am in the discernment process to discern whether my vocation to the priesthood is my call or not.

The six years of being in the seminary formation program in different places aids me in knowing if my vocation is genuine or not. In those years and even now I am treasuring my vocation towards priesthood by thanking him daily, for he has called me to be his servant. I see that call towards the priesthood is a unique one, and it is a call within a call. It demands a lot from those who are on the formation program to become a follower of Christ. There are a lot of challenges, hardships, struggles, and some painful experiences come on my way as a seminarian from both inside and outside of the seminary. Sometimes those kinds of situations struck me down, but I used to recollect back to where I first received my call and that energizes me to think seriously about my vocation.

The call towards the priesthood is honourable and holy in itself, and it requires those who respond the call to uphold the holiness of the call by purifying themselves as holy. To reach the purity of heart, mind and to become holy, it needs self-sacrifice, self-commitment, and self-dedication to the service of Christ by serving others. For me, I am a sinner who responded to the divine call, so I am on a pilgrimage to holiness and to become a priest. I personally see my vocation towards priesthood is that God already called me, but how I respond to that call is all depends on me. The facilitators and the benefactors are providing us seminarians with tools to achieve the goal, which is priesthood. The other people will not shape us but we are going to form ourselves to be good. So I see that the call to the priesthood is all about self-surrender to the will of God.