



Homily for Invitation to Vocation Discernment

By: Fr. Bill Peckman, Diocese of Jefferson City

If I talk to you or your son about discernment towards seminary, consider it a compliment.

It means I see something good.

It means I see a young man who owns his faith. I see a young man unconcerned with how others, particularly his peers, see that. This tells me he is a young man, if called, who will speak the truth. We don't need any more priests who will compromise the truth to be popular in the eyes of the world or to avoid the confrontations that can arise.

It means I see a masculine young man. I see a warrior. I see a young man who will take his place in that breach between those in his care and those would prey on them. I see a young man who will be a fierce shepherd who will tie his strength to Christ and be the shepherd He is. We don't need any more priests who abandon the flock or prey on the flock.

It means I see a young man who would be a great dad and husband. This is so important. I see a young man who will use his skills to build his family, who would be faithful to His bride, the Church, and who would be the kind of dad in a parish who people would see as a spiritual father. We don't need any more priests who are just the hired help or who are wolves in shepherd's clothing.

It means I see a man who will selflessly give and endure sacrifice and suffering for his beloved. I see a young man with a work ethic.

That doesn't mean I see a perfect man without flaws. But I see a man who doesn't want to be a slave to sin.

Notice I said discern seminary first and not priesthood. I don't want a man who has already ordained himself in his head and sees seminary as an obstacle course to navigate. Such a boy will resist spiritual and personal growth and become a tyrant or neglectful. We have suffered enough at the hands of such boys. I am looking for young men who see that need for ongoing conversion...who possess the humility necessary to serve Christ and His Church.

Going to the seminary isn't a guarantee of ordination but a discernment process seeking God's

will. If that discernment ends in understanding that God's will is elsewhere, so be it. Everything I have described is also necessary to being a great dad, husband, and lay leader.

So if I have talked to you about it...pray and leave your heart open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. If I have talked to your son about it, pray for him and recognize he is God's child placed in your care...lead him where God would have him.

I recruit because I love Christ and His Church. I try to be the kind of man I recruit. I love every parish I ever served and want them to have shepherds after the heart of Christ. My time as a pastor is limited. I want those I have served to have men holier, more courageous, and more fatherly than I am. Those are the men who will serve well and inspire coming generations to serve God and His people as faithful priests.