



ANNOUNCING NEW VOCATIONS WEBSITE

“Let the Lord break through to you!”

- BISHOP SULLIVAN (iRACE4VOCATIONS 2014)

For young men considering the priesthood, sometimes they do not know who to turn to or where to start. Oftentimes, speaking with their parish priest or the vocations director seems too intimidating. Our new website is aimed at providing these men with the tools they need to begin the discernment process. Read our own seminarians’ stories. Join us for prayer, dinner with the bishop or check out one of these features.



Discernment Resources

Within our website, find the resources to help you see if the Lord may be calling you to the priesthood.

Journeys of Faith

A weekly blog (Tuesdays) where our priests and our seminarians share their stories and experiences.

Upcoming Events

*Young Adult Discernment Group
First Thursdays
iRace4Vocations*

📍 631 Market St. Camden, NJ 08102
 ☎ 856.583.2858
 ✉ michael.romano@camdendiocese.org

www.CAMDENPRIEST.org

Seminary requires commitment to constant conversion

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Meeting a group of seminarians who had walked more than 40 miles to see him at the Vatican, Pope Francis told them to give their all to prayer, study and pastoral preparation, or else have the “courage to seek another path.”

“Let’s be truthful here,” he said April 14, “the seminary is not a refuge for the many limitations we might have, a refuge from psychological weaknesses or a refuge because I don’t have the

courage to move on with my life and I’m seeking a place that will defend me.”

“If your seminary were that, the church would be mortgaging its future,” he told students and staff members of the Pontifical Leonian College in Anagni, south of Rome.

A Catholic can serve God and the church in many ways, Pope Francis said. The ministerial priesthood is a specific vocation, a call to be like Jesus, the good shepherd, in the midst of his sheep.

“You are not preparing for a career or to become functionaries in a compa-

“The seminary is not a refuge for the many limitations we might have.”

— Pope Francis

ny or bureaucratic organization,” he said. Too many priests have traveled only “halfway” on their vocational path and are little more than bureaucrats, which “is not good for the church.”

Pope Francis told seminarians that he was not saying they had to be perfect to be worthy seminarians — “just think of the apostles” and how much they had to learn from Jesus.

Putting a modern spin on the apostles’ requests for places of honor beside Jesus, the pope told the seminarians to “think of James and John; one of them wanted to be prime minister and the other the minister of the economy because those were the most important” positions.

Despite the disciples’ misunderstanding about what discipleship meant,

Jesus was patient with them and taught them along the way, the pope said.

A serious commitment to preparing for the priesthood shows in a willingness to be converted a little more each day, he said. That means meditating on the Scriptures, “experiencing the mercy of God in the sacrament of reconciliation in order to become generous and merciful ministers,” going to Mass, receiving the Eucharist and being men of prayer.

Before the call to become shepherds after Christ’s heart, he said, “we might respond like the Virgin Mary did to the angel: ‘But how is this possible?’” Becoming good shepherds in the image of Jesus is something so big and we are so small. Yes, it’s true, it is too big; but it’s not something we do. It’s the work of the Holy Spirit with our cooperation.”

Is the Heart of Christ speaking to your heart?



Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Immaculata, PA

*Joyfully proclaiming
the Gospel message through
our mission...*

To Evangelize, To Catechize, and To Teach



www.ihmimmaculata.org

Contact: Sister Rose Mulligan, IHM or Sister Mary Jo Ely, IHM
610-889-1553 ihmvoc@aol.com

CAN YOU ANSWER GOD’S CALL?



*Come Join Us in Serving
the Heartbeat of the World*

CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEARTS
OF JESUS & MARY - UNITED STATES PROVINCE

WWW.SSCC.ORG
(508)993-2442 EXT. 205

VOCATIONS@SSCC.ORG
(508) 996-5499 FAX

We are Consecrated Women

CALLED INSPIRED MOTIVATED



*We are the Little Servant Sisters
of the Immaculate Conception*

Sharing God’s love for Children, the Poor, the Sick & Elderly!

Come & See our Community!



CONTACT:

Little Servant Sisters
1000 Cropwell Road
Cherry Hill, NJ 08003
856.424.1962

E-Mail: vocations@littleservantsisters.com
www.littleservantsisters.com

You Tube: Little Servant Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
“Be not afraid. Open wide the doors to Christ.” St. John Paul II

God spoke not on my terms, but his

By Carlo Santa Teresa

I am a parishioner at St. Peter's in Merchantville in my first year of formation at the College Seminary of the Immaculate Conception at St. Andrew's Hall at Seton Hall University in South Orange, N.J.

Anyone who knows me knows that I'm not a runner. My endurance is not the best and the only shape I'm in is round. And yet, for almost five years after I graduated high school I ran like no other runner has before. I was running from something that I felt I wanted to do, something that I felt I was supposed to be, and from someone I knew wanted to give me a special task.

I think the first time I felt a vocation to the priesthood was when I was 4 years old. I remember being in the pew and seeing Msgr. Jim Tracy at the altar and thinking there was something different about him.

It wasn't his vestments or that he got up and spoke week after week. There was something more than that, something I wanted to know more about.

As I got older, I learned more about the sacred priesthood, and I came to know and love it more each passing year. And so my senior year of high school I decided to apply for the seminary.

And then I decided not to go.

I wanted to take time to see what else was out in the world and to see if I was meant to do something else. And so I lived my life doing what I wanted to do, meeting new people, seeing new places, living my life on my own terms.

And yet, when it came to my spiritual life, I was being more of a churchman than a disciple. You see, a churchman, as my spiritual director told me, is one who

*It's amazing how much better
you can hear God
when you can't run spiritually or physically.*

spent his time talking about God while a disciple was one who spent his time talking to God and doing the things of God.

And every time I would help out at my parish, helping with the Knights of Columbus, or even at some random event, I would always hear those six words I did not want to hear, "You would make a great priest!" There was even a woman in Nutley, in North Jersey, when I was visiting a seminarian a few years ago who said to me, "You have a priestly feeling about you."

That made me feel so much better.

And then last year, something happened to me that made think about who was really in charge of my life. I was crossing a street in New York City when a taxicab ran a red light and hit me, fracturing my left tibia and fibula. During the weekend spent in the hospital, I spent time talking to God wondering "why me?" and "why did I get away with only a broken leg when it could have been much worse?"

And then, I felt God speak to me not on my terms, but on his. He spoke to me, not through my ears, or even my mind, but through the very depths of my heart. And he had nothing new to say. It was the same call that he gave to his apostles and the many men he has called through the centuries, "Follow me."

It's amazing how much better you can hear God when you can't run spiritually or physically.

And so after I recovered, I met with Father Michael Romano and began the process once again to enter the seminary. I went through the meetings, met with the people on the vocations board, and found that even during that busy time God was with me every step of the way, encouraging me to continue despite the many questions and concerns that I still had, drawing me closer to him and being more receptive and grateful to his invitation to follow him more closely each day.

I have been in the seminary now for almost three months and I can honestly say it has been a great blessing. Knowing that you are doing what God wants you to do, to be where he wants you to be, and to be with other men discerning God's call for them, building strong, lifelong friendships, and even more than that, forming a strong bond with your brother seminarians and seeing how God is working in them.

On a personal note, I feel the greatest blessing is knowing that you live in the same house with Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, being able to pray or just spend time with him, knowing that he is available to me at any time of the day. To have him present in the house you live in. What greater blessing can there be than that?

Through these experiences and these blessings, I owe a great deal of grati-



CARLO SANTA TERESA

tude to you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, for your constant prayers and support. Your prayers do indeed work. Please continue to pray for me and the other seminarians of our diocese, as well as the 30 other men in formation at my seminary. And please pray for more men to answer God's call to serve him as a priest. And to any men that feel the call to serve God as a priest, be generous and say, "yes!"

Take my word for it; you will feel God's grace working in a special way each day. It really is more joy than you think you could ever have and more blessings than you think you can ever receive.

Thank you for the good work that you do to encourage vocations. Continue to strive with your prayers for more men to be generous in saying "yes," for God is never outdone in generosity.

Carlo Santa Teresa is in Second College at The College Seminary of the Immaculate Conception at St. Andrew's Hall, Seton Hall University. His home parish is St. Peter's in Merchantville.

Knights of Columbus sponsor Seminarian Letter Project

"What you are trying to achieve is really special and benefits so many people which is extremely heroic."

"May your life be filled with love, hope, and happiness as you continue your training."

These were just a few of the encouraging letters sent to seminarians, studying for the priesthood, as part of the New Jersey State Council of the Knights of Columbus' recent

Seminarian Letter Project.

Roman Catholic students and Knights of Columbus wrote letters of support, and offers of prayer to students at numerous seminaries.

Our Lady Needs You For Her Army The Legion of Mary



*The largest lay organization
in the Church. Established in 1921*

Over 10 million members world wide. Our aim is to give glory to God through the actions and lives of our members, through assistance with the spiritual needs of the parish. Over the years thousands of souls have been brought into and back to the church. Answering the Pope's call for evangelization.

"The Legion of Mary presents the true face of the Catholic Church."

-Pope John XXIII

Be a missionary without leaving home.

For more information call:

Tom
McClintock
856-854-4346

Joe
Lang
609-398-9037



CAPE/ATLANTIC SERRA CLUB

DISTRICT 35 • DIOCESE OF CAMDEN

- Our two clubs in Atlantic and Cape May Counties work to help promote and affirm vocations to the priesthood & other forms of religious life.
- Pray that those called by God respond to his voice.
- For information call 609 - 822-6361

The call to the diocesan priesthood

By Adam Cichoski

In one of the great Gospel passages, we hear about the call of Zacchaeus. The evangelist tells us that Jesus intends to pass through the town of Jericho without any real plan of doing anything. However, we soon see that everything has its own purpose and that there really are no accidents.

While he is passing through, a man named Zacchaeus gets the urge to see Jesus. For some reason, we do not know why, his desire is so strong that he is willing to put his life on the line and go out on a limb just to see Jesus.

Jesus, though walking through the midst of a great crowd, easily picks out Zacchaeus and calls him out of the tree and tells them he will stay at his house. This turns out to be a life changing event, and Zacchaeus' conversion begins.

Here we have a great insight on the call to the diocesan priesthood. While not all priests intended to be priests, God singled them out and called them where they were. Some of us called

The decision to enter the seminary is not an easy one, and nobody should do it alone.

may be busy in our own lives and just passing through life. Time flies by us and we don't realize it. However, Jesus is there to call us. Like Zacchaeus, all of us are unworthy of the priesthood. However, God does not call the qualified; God qualifies the called. We need to see in Zacchaeus what we ourselves look like. We are imperfect and in the spirit of the New Evangelization, we are in need of constant conversion.

In this Gospel passage, Christ is seen as the model priest. Priests are called to search out for the one lost sheep, and in this case, the lost sheep was sticking out in the middle of a crowd, but nobody noticed him except Jesus.

Jesus calls this man and comes into his house. Zacchaeus is brought to the real-

ization of all the wrong he has done and freely offers to make up for it. A priest is able to help recognize our sins and then reconcile us with God. He helps us allow Jesus into our own house/hearts and gives us penance to make up for all the sins we have committed.

Many people look at the times we are in, and see how the church seems to be in trouble both financially and spiritually. This persuades many men to shy away from their calling and choose a life that seems to be more acceptable to society. If we look at the Gospel, though, "the Son of Man has come to seek and save what was lost."

We need good men to help bring back those we have lost to these troubled times.

I ask those who have ever thought about the priesthood to come down from the tree you are in and talk to your parish priest or our vocation director



ADAM CICHOSKI

about it. The decision to enter the seminary is not an easy one, and nobody should do it alone. We must listen to God's call. As the evangelist points out, Zacchaeus did not stop and think about the question; he trusted in the Lord and did what he asked.

Please pray that whatever is crowding our hearts will be removed and we will be able to see Jesus like he sees us.

Adam Cichoski is in Second Theology at Immaculate Conception Seminary in South Orange, NJ. His home parish is St. Michael the Archangel in Franklinville.

Forming Priestly Vocations Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Since 1791 St. Mary's Seminary has been training men for the priesthood. Seminarians today come from dioceses across the country, including the Diocese of Camden. The men studying here are a sign of hope for the future of the priesthood. We invite those considering a vocation to visit the seminary.

Please join us in praying for priestly vocations.

*Rev. Thomas R. Hurst,
S.S., President-Rector*

St. Mary's Seminary & University
5400 Roland Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21210

www.stmarys.edu
410-864-3602

Vocations are calls to build up God's kingdom

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — A vocation to the priesthood, consecrated life or marriage is a call to center one's life on Christ and build up his kingdom, Pope Francis said.

"The more we unite ourselves to Jesus through prayer, sacred Scripture, the Eucharist, the sacraments celebrated and lived in the church and in fraternity, the more there will grow in us the joy of cooperating with God in the service of the kingdom of mercy and truth, of justice and peace," the pope said in his message for the 2014 World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

All Christians are called to adore the Lord and allow the seed of his word to grow in their lives and be transformed into service of others, the pope said in the message for the day, which will be celebrated May 11 at the Vatican and in many dioceses around the world.

In his message, released at the Vatican Jan. 16, Pope Francis said that while God calls each person individually by name, "no vocation is born of itself or lives for itself."

"A vocation is a fruit that ripens in a well-cultivated field of mutual love that

becomes mutual service," the pope said, and that takes place in the context of an authentic Christian community.

"A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people in the experience of fraternal love," he said. "Did not Jesus say: 'By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'"

Following Christ, the pope said, means that sometimes a believer will have to go "against the tide" of the predominant culture, as well as overcome personal doubts and fears.

While some may be tempted to take the easy way out, Pope Francis said, "the true joy of those who are called consists in believing and experiencing that he, the Lord, is faithful and that with him we can walk, be disciples and witnesses of God's love, open our hearts to great ideals, to great things."

When in the Bible Jesus urges his followers to pray that God will send out laborers for the harvest — a passage seen as a key support for praying for vocations — Jesus also tells his disciples that "the harvest is plenty."

"Who did the work to bring about these results?" the pope asked. "There is only one answer: God."



The race of faith

By Peter G. Sánchez

GLASSBORO — “We are all on the race of faith.”

With these words, Bishop Dennis Sullivan concluded his homily during the liturgy at the third annual iRace4Vocations here at Rowan University on April 27.

Standing on an outdoor stage, joined on the makeshift altar by priests and seminarians of the Diocese of Camden, Bishop Sullivan addressed the hundreds of faithful sitting on lawn chairs or beach blankets, under a shining sun and cool breeze.

The Camden leader began his remarks by referencing the canonizations earlier that day in Rome, where the Catholic Church honored and celebrated Saints John Paul II and John XXIII.

The Glassboro event, organized by the diocesan Office of Vocations, was a family-friendly day to pray for, support, and promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Priests and religious brothers and sisters can “help us become holy,” Bishop Sullivan said, and saints such as John Paul II and John XXIII “remind us that holiness is our goal. We’re called to the same holiness as the saints, who are Christ-like examples, living virtuous, heroic lives.”

“We need priests and religious” in the Camden Diocese, he urged, asking for young men and women in attendance to consider the call, and for parents, teachers and other adults to encourage the youth they encounter in their daily lives.

Bishop Sullivan also recalled the day’s Gospel reading, where the risen Jesus “broke through” to the apostle Thomas, showing the doubting disciple his wounds.

“Just as Jesus broke through to Thomas, we must let the Lord break through to us and touch us with his peace,” he said. “There’s a great joy, and love in the priesthood and religious life.”

Throughout the festive day, participants met and mingled with shining examples of God’s call to holiness, in the forms of diocesan priests, deacons, seminarians, and religious sisters.

Those confirming their registration, or registering for the 5K Run/1 Mile walk, were met by religious sisters, such as Sister Dorothy Aloisio, FMIHM and seminarians such as Adam Cichoski. Before Mass, diocesan



Photo by James A. McBride



Photo by Alan M. Dumoff

priests, including Father Robert Sinatra and Father Edward Friel, offered the sacrament of reconciliation to the young and old. At the liturgy, priests and deacons joined Bishop Sullivan at the altar. During the race, runners or walkers were joined by Father John Rossi and seminarian Peter Gallagher.

The day concluded with a picnic on the lawn, as hungry racers ate hoagies and pretzels. Children danced with religious sisters and priests to the sounds of the group Messenger, and Father Michael Romano, director of the Office of Vocations, introducing the priests, deacons, religious and seminarians to the crowd.

All told, more than 800 attendees enjoyed the day.

“You could see the good spirit” of everyone,” Father Romano said of the event designed to “create and foster a culture of vocations” in the diocese. “The joy of everyone was present and obvious. Everyone left with an uplifted spirit.”

Father Romano thanked Rowan University for their support, along with Creative Juices by Kari, who provided stilt walkers, face painters, and balloon animal-makers; and Father Thomas Barcellona, pastor of Christ the Redeemer in Atco, who helped secure donations for the food provided.

Above, Bishop Sullivan blesses worshippers with holy water during Mass on the lawn. Left, Michael Patterson crosses the finish line as the overall winner in the 5K race.

Jamaila Cuentas, from Our Lady of Hope Parish in Blackwood, came with her sister, Camille, for the Mass, walk and picnic. Praying a rosary while walking, she tried to “remain conscious of what we’re here for.”

“It’s really important for youth to see events like this because it’s for the future of our church,” she said.

Maria Monahan, also from Our Lady of Hope, with her daughter, Gina, and other youth from the parish, echoed Cuentas. “We need young people to come into vocations, and we support it as a community and as a family. We need to let (youth) know how beautiful a life they can have.”

Peter Gallagher, a second year seminarian for the diocese studying at St. Andrew’s at Seton Hall University, called the day one that “promotes openness to God’s call, openness to his will.”

“Families make up most of the participants of this great event. Parents are so important to raise their children to be faithful members of the Church,” he said.

“If we promote a culture that realizes we must obey and say yes to God, the fruits will be incredible, and this is what is going on in our diocese now. This is the key to increase the number of vocations to the priesthood and religious life: if the youth are courageous, then they will have the faith and trust to say yes to their vocation.”

The next iRACE will be held on April 26, 2015; location and time to be determined.



Photos by James A. McBride and Alan M. Dumoff

Priests, deacons, religious sisters, seminarians and candidates take the stage as they are introduced to the crowd at the iRace4Vocations event at Rowan University, Glassboro on April 27.

Girl's vocation effort includes teaching a non-Catholic to pray

By Father Michael M. Romano

After the successful completion of our third annual iRace4Vocations, I wanted to share one of my favorite stories.

I believe that all of us want to see our diocese have more young men enter the seminary and more young women enter the convent, but at times we do not know what role we can play in helping that happen. Maybe the story of this young girl can inspire us.

The main goal of iRace4Vocations is to raise awareness about the vocations to the priesthood and religious life and to raise prayers for those vocations in our diocese. Instead of people soliciting financial pledges for the walk/run, they are asked instead to raise pledges of prayer. In that sense, iRace4Vocations is a "faithraiser" rather than a fundraiser. The top prize is awarded to the three who raise the most prayer pledges: lunch with the bishop.

Last year, one young girl was determined to win that prize. She would go around school asking her classmates to pray for vocations, she would bring her prayer pledge form to family functions and she would even go throughout her neighborhood soliciting prayers for vocations.

When she knocked on the door of one of her neighbors, the woman very kindly said that she could not help because she is not Catholic.

"Anyone can pray," said the young girl. "You don't have to be Catholic to pray."

So the woman asked her what sort of prayer she should say. "Why don't you pray the Our Father a couple of times for vocations?" asked the girl.

The woman responded that she would be glad to, but that she didn't know the Our Father.

Without hesitation, the young girl asked the neighbor for a pencil and a piece of paper. She then proceeded to write out the Our Father for the neighbor who promised to say that prayer every day that week for vocations.

I was so moved when I heard that story. Not only was she bringing vocations to the forefront at school and home by asking people for prayers, but she was also engaging in evangelization to her neighbor and did not even realize it. How could the Lord not hear and answer her prayers? Fortunately, she did win lunch with Bishop Sullivan last year for all the prayer pledges she raised.

In what way can we bring about an awareness of our local church's need for more priests and sisters? How can we raise the subject of a religious vocation to the young people we meet? How can we find ways to creatively engage in evangelization? Perhaps the actions of one young girl can encourage us.

Father Michael M. Romano is the Director of Priestly Vocations for the Diocese of Camden.



Above and left, families and religious sisters enjoy a run and walk on a sunny day as participants in the the annual iRace4Vocations at Rowan University. The event, organized by the diocesan Office of Vocations, is a family-friendly day to pray for, support, and promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life.