

Homily Sunday, November 1, 2020
Vocations Week – Deacon Don Esler

Today we begin Vocation Awareness Week. Have you ever considered serving the church via a vocation to religious life only to conclude you couldn't "measure up" to the challenge or that you somehow were not "worthy" of the calling? The truth is we all are called to serve in some way. There is no test for righteousness you have to pass first. Rather than focus on your shortcomings, take some time to consider how your gifts, skills, and interests can serve humanity and the church. Discern the call!

When I was discerning the call, I felt like a human yo-yo; Am I worthy of this ministry? Is this something I am truly being called to? But for every time I did not feel worthy, there were times that echoed yes, I am worthy! In times I felt that this was all imagined, people would approach me and say something to give me hope. It was as if they felt that I was called to giving my life to God, more than I was. All I know is that no matter what self imposed obstacle I put up for me, there has always been something or someone that gave me confidence to continue.

Folks have asked me; "What drew you to the Diaconate?" Well, I know what experience ignited the call, but to be honest, it was the Holy Spirit working through that experience is how I stand before you today as Deacon Don.

The experience for me was that of a young 20 year old male who, while visiting friends in Washington D.C. in February of 2008, had a tragic accident and almost did not survive! The accident was simple enough, a slip and fall at the Lincoln Memorial where he hit his head on the marble step. No one knew to go get an exam to see about injury, they proceeded back to his buddy's apartment to get some sleep before his flight back to Detroit the next day.

The next day, the young man was unresponsive and had a blood clot the size of a baseball, with his brain swelling and not knowing if he would live. He was in a coma for a couple of months. His family was actually living Lent!

This young man was my nephew Steve. It was through his pain and suffering, which the Holy Spirit brought me closer to God. The power of prayer

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of many people brought Steve out of his coma just a week or so after Easter. It was glorious!

That event and the people associated with it brought this voice into my head, “**Serve**”. My discernment began with first speaking to my Pastor, experiencing other ministries at Mass; Lector, adult altar server, and fifth grade catechist. I wanted to read every book written on the Diaconate, but was wisely instructed to discern through classes at Sacred Heart Seminary.

It’s a tough road to Ordination; classes, work, home life, and formation days. Every ministry that you have done, you are asked to step away from. At times I didn’t think I would make it. My former Pastor said; “If it was easy, everyone would do it.”

Fast forward to October 6, 2018, lying face down on the marble floor at the Cathedral while the litany of saints was being chanted, I knew in my heart and my head that all of the missed family gatherings, friends parties, and even some lost friends along the way, it was all worth it.

I am blessed to witness weddings, baptize not only babies but older children and adults, and be the shoulder when needed during the sorrowful moments of life.

I am blessed to walk the journey with those adults who desire to become Catholic, to be able to see the light go off during one of the RCIA classes when someone gets the TRUTH.

I am blessed to proclaim the Good News to you when I serve in the Sanctuary at Mass. And to be allowed by Father Jim, one of the best homilists I know, to preach to you is an honor.

If Augustine of Hippo can become a Saint, and I can become a Deacon, just think about **YOUR** possibilities! Don’t focus on shortcomings; take the time to consider how your gifts, skills, and interests can serve humanity and the church. Just remember that everyone’s call is different, the main thing is; **discern the call!**