QUALITIES OF A PRIESTLY VOCATION

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES THAT DEFINE THE DYNAMIC OF LIVES PATTERNED ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE EUCHARIST
14 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. 15 Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” 16 But Jesus said, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” 17 They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” 18 And he said, “Bring them here to me.” 19 Then he ordered the crowds to recline on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over.
MULTIPLICATION OF LOAVES AND FISH

- Eucharistic Scene
- Even early Church knew that
- Catacombs of Priscilla
EUCHARISTIC MYSTERY IS AT THE HEART OF THE PASSAGE

- Evening (Mt 26:20)
- Take, Blessed, Broke, Gave (Mt 26:26)
- Form of IXTHUS – Acronym for “Jesus Christ Son of God Savior”
"SEND THEM AWAY" -- HOW DO YOU RESPOND WHEN YOU SEE GREAT NEED? BURDEN OR OPPORTUNITY?

When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”
THINK OF HOW EASILY WE CAN SAY “GO AWAY”

- Judgmental and condemnatory attitudes
- Personal mannerisms, idiosyncrasies, even appearance
- “If you look like Rasputin, don’t be surprised if you scare children!”
- Remember St. Paul – Be all things to all men so as not to give offense
THINK OF HOW EASILY WE CAN SAY “GO AWAY”

- Inconsiderate, ungrateful, presumptuous responses (or lack of response) to other’s initiative
- Unnecessarily polarizing or outlandish comments or actions
- Personal presentation that says “I’m better than you” or “you’re not good enough for me” in any way
It is sad for us to see in our own time that indifferentism in its many forms is spreading like an epidemic not only among the laity but also among religious. But God is worthy of glory beyond measure, and therefore it is of absolute and supreme importance to seek that glory with all the power of our feeble resources. Since we are mere creatures we can never return to him all that is his due. The most resplendent manifestation of God’s glory is the salvation of souls, whom Christ redeemed by shedding his blood. To work for the salvation and sanctification of as many souls as possible, therefore, is the preeminent purpose of the apostolic life.
INTEGRATION VS. DISINTEGRATION
IT’S A SPIRITUAL ISSUE, NOT JUST A SOCIAL ISSUE

• *Dia-Balo* = to cast apart
• Satan isolates and separates people
• This happens through our selective, preferential or prejudicial ministry
• It also happens through our disinterest, disassociation, distancing from others
• “Father, may they be one…”

HOW SATAN BRINGS DIVISION TO THE BODY OF CHRIST
"YOU GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT"

- Not what the disciples wanted to hear
- Asked to use their own personal resources (not “find them something” but “You give them something”)
- Priesthood is not for our self-fulfilment but the means of our self-giving.
- What is your image of priesthood?

Let us remember that love lives through sacrifice and is nourished by giving. Without sacrifice, there is no love.
- St. Maximilian Kolbe -
"YOU GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT"

- Feeding with Word so they can know and respond to the Good News of God’s presence, love and Mercy.
- Feeding with Eucharist and the Sacramental life of grace
- Feeding with mentoring and accompaniment
- No expectation for reward, recognition, or respect
WE HAVE ONLY FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH

• Is ministry based on resources or Jesus?
• “Today Lord, I can’t; today Lord, you can; so today, help me let you be God.”
• Can you hear the fear in the disciple’s words?
• How do you identify with the disciple’s fear at Jesus’ challenge?
THE MOST COMMONLY QUOTED SAYING OF JESUS IS, “BE NOT AFRAID”
FEAR CAN PARALYZE DISCIPLES

- Fear of Insufficiency
- Fear of Failure
- Fear of Rejection
- Fear of Hard Work
- Fear of the Cross (Sacrifice)
- Fear of Loss of Freedom

“Only those are afraid who think they are alone”
-- Catherine of Siena

Fear is the enemy of Love
St. Augustine
FEAR CAN PARALYZE DISCIPLES

Fear of Insufficiency –
This is the fear that makes us think what we have to offer is so little and insignificant compared to what others can do.

Atelophobia

[A-tel-o-pho-bia]
The fear of imperfection. The fear of never being good enough.
FEAR CAN PARALYZE DISCIPLES

Fear of Failure --
This is the fear that leads us to never say “yes” unless we are certain we will be successful.
Fear of Rejection –
This is the fear that others may not receive or even welcome our faithful efforts. Related to the fear of rejection is the fear of disagreement, the fear of criticism, and the fear of non-conformity.
FEAR CAN PARALYZE DISCIPLES

**Fear of Hard Work**

The vices of acedia or spiritual sloth can lead a prospective disciple to fall away from following Jesus because of the effort it takes to persevere and overcome challenges so as to grow in faithful friendship with Jesus.
FEAR CAN PARALYZE DISCIPLES

**Fear of the Cross (Sacrifice)**
This is the fear of personal sacrifice and persecution for the sake of following Jesus.

“Are we not perhaps all afraid in some way? If we let Christ enter fully into our lives, if we open ourselves totally to him, are we not afraid that He might take something away from us? Are we not perhaps afraid to give up something significant, something unique, something that makes life so beautiful? Do we not then risk ending up diminished and deprived of our freedom? ... No! If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. “
-- Benedict XVI
FEAR CAN PARALYZE DISCIPLES

**Fear of Loss of Freedom**
This is the fear that in making a commitment we might close ourselves to a future possibility about which we now know nothing.
BRING THEM HERE TO ME…

- Who is the “them” Jesus is referring to?
- We tend to think it’s the loaves and fish
- But in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus then orders “the crowds” to sit on the grass! “Bring THE CROWDS to me”!
BRING THEM HERE TO ME…

- Only Jesus can heal the crowds…
- Only Jesus can feed the crowds…
- The best thing we can do for others, if we really love them, is to bring them to Jesus.
- But sometimes we stop short…

Where are we leading people?
BRING THEM HERE TO ME…

- The Cult of Personality will frustrate the spiritual hunger of those we serve.
- How well do our parish ministries bring people to Jesus?
- How much time and energy is spent on efforts that aren’t effectively bringing people to Jesus?

- God can do infinitely more than we can with what we offer Him
- ”Sacrifice” = to “make Holy”, not “throw away”
- Jesus joins us to Himself as the one perfect eternal and acceptable sacrifice to the Father
- As the bread (and wine) are transformed and given back to us so too are our lives
- We are sent on mission as the Body of Christ
THE EUCHARISTIC CONSECRATION SHOULD CHANGE US

- This is the pivotal moment of change in the passage
- The disciples act very differently after this moment compared to before
- Eucharistic transformation is an ongoing part of our lives and formation – See the Letters of St. Paul and the Acts of the Apostles
(HE) GAVE THEM TO THE DISCIPLES … …AND THE DISCIPLES GAVE THEM TO THE CROWDS

• This is the heart of Eucharistic Ministry!
• The disciples brought the crowds to Jesus. Now they are to bring Jesus to the crowds
• Jesus doesn’t need us … he wants to share his joy with us
• As Jesus gave to the disciples so the disciples passed on to the people.
• What happens if they think the graces are for them alone?! Or their own parish? Or their friends?
MINISTERS OF THE SACRAMENTAL MYSTERY (PRIEST)

Mt 10:8 – “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.”

Priests receive joyfully and share generously the Grace of God for a wounded Church.
MINISTERS OF GOD’S WORD
(PROPHET)

Lk 12:3 – “Therefore whatever you have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which you have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed on the housetops.”

Priests are a spokesperson for God sharing with the People what they themselves had heard.
MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH’S RESOURCES
(KING)

Lk 12:42 – ”Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the Master puts in charge of his servants to give them their portion at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.”

Priests care for all God’s people and administer resources with the universal Church in mind. The 12 disciples fed all 5,000!
MINISTER OF LIVED DISCIPLESHIP FOR OTHERS
(COMPANION, MENTOR AND GUIDE)

1 Pt 4:10 – “As good stewards of the manifold grace of God, each of you should use whatever gift he has received to serve one another.”

Priests take on the “smell of the sheep” and offer their lives as the locus in which God reveals the way of salvation.

1 Thes 2:8 – “We were ready to share with you not only the Gospel of God but also our own selves…”
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.
THEY ALL ATE AND THEY WERE SATISFIED

• “You have formed us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” -- St. Augustine

• Only Jesus could satisfy the hunger of the crowds with Himself in the Eucharist.
When we seek to fill our deepest hungers with accomplishments, entertainment, human relationships, lustful thoughts and actions, positions, possessions, recognition, securing personal comfort, materialism, the internet, or any other way then we inevitably remain unsatisfied and empty. All of this is nothing but junk food.
YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY CAN BE TEMPTED TO FILL THEIR SPIRITUAL HUNGER IN UN-HOLY WAYS

• Lk 4:13 – “When the devil had completed every temptation, he departed Him for a more opportune time.”

• Satan knows our weaknesses. We had better know them as well!

• Tired, angry, hurt, disappointed, frustrated, unappreciated, betrayed, lonely – Nothing satisfies but Jesus.
AND THEY TOOK UP TWELVE BASKETS

- Gathering of all God’s people
- The difficult, the annoying, the willingly wayward
- Emphasis now is on how the disciples were instruments of gathering whereas previously they were agents of scattering
- Gathering those in the pews is easy … but what about those who aren’t there?
AND THEY TOOK UP TWELVE BASKETS

- The Church is gathered through the power of the Eucharist to unite us in Christ.
- Disciples can faithfully gather as they hear and follow the instructions of Jesus in the voice of the primary pastor of the Local Church, the Bishop.
- Gathering takes work as we lead people to discover a hunger for Christ they may not already know and how to satisfy that hunger deeply in the full sacramental life of the Church.
• This is no ordinary Bread!
• Klasmata was the word used in other 1st century Christian writings (Didache) to refer to the fragments of the Eucharist
• This demonstrates the practical care, reverence and respect for the Blessed Sacrament
...FULL OF THE BROKEN PIECES (FRAGMENTS) LEFT OVER

• The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Christian Catholic lives

• Recent PEW Study showing disturbing lack of belief in the Real Presence

• Our love for Jesus must be visibly shown in the care we demonstrate as disciples

• The Divine Presence remains in even the smallest remnants.

• It’s not only about what we do, it’s about WHO we serve
THOSE CALLED BY CHRIST (DISCIPLES) ARE FORMED BY THE MYSTERY THEY RECEIVE

- 1 Cor 4:1-2 – “So then, people ought to regard us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Now it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.”
PRIESTLY DISCIPLES WHO SERVE THE MYSTERY FAITHFULLY AND GENEROUSLY FOR OTHERS

- From scattering to gathering
- From self-concern to selfless concern for others
- From fear to faith
- From possessing to freely giving
- Through offering to transformation
- Serving the Bread of eternal life
- Caring for the Body of Christ in the Eucharist and in the Church
1 Pt 5:2-4 -- Give a shepherd’s care to God’s flock among you, exercising oversight not merely as a duty but willingly under God’s direction, not for shameful profit but eagerly. And do not lord it over those entrusted to you, but be examples to the flock. Then when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that never fades away.