



# CALLINGS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT VOCATIONS

## Planting seeds of faith and vocations

PEOPLE ARE CALLED TO RELIGIOUS LIFE IN A BROAD RANGE OF WAYS. HOWEVER, HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCES OFTEN SET THE STAGE. FR. ROB KROLL, SJ IS ONE OF FOUR MARQUETTE HIGH GRADUATES FROM THE CLASS OF '83 WHO WERE BECKONED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BECOME JESUIT PRIESTS. ROB OFFERS THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF HOW HE AND HIS CLASSMATES CAME TO KNOW GOD WAS CALLING THEM.



CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY (CLC) GROUP GUIDED BY ED "POPS" LARKIN, SJ, IN 1983. ROB KROLL, SJ '83, IS PICTURED KNEELING IN THE CENTER OF THE FIRST ROW WITH OTHER MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATES.

### By Rob Kroll, SJ

Over the years I've heard the vocation stories of many Jesuits. While God calls each Jesuit personally and uniquely, many of us first hear "the call" whispered during high school. Theology classes, retreats, community service and friendships formed with Jesuit teachers are characteristic elements of many vocation stories. Four of us from the class of 1983, Marquette University High School (Milwaukee), are now Jesuits. Three entered the Wisconsin Province novitiate in St. Paul in August 1987 after college graduation, and are recently ordained priests: Fr. Tom Lawler, Fr. Will Prospero, and myself. The fourth classmate, Janez Sever, whose parents are Slovenian, joined the Slovenian Province in August 1993. Currently he is finishing theology studies in preparation for priesthood. Marquette High contributed in different ways to each of our vocations.



ROB KROLL, SJ

A central Old Testament metaphor of God is that of a lover who repeatedly beckons his beloved spouse Israel. Janez describes as a "romance" his deepening relationship with a personal God, who began calling him at MUHS. "I guess that's where God's courting began to happen," he says. God spoke to Janez by means of one Jesuit in particular. "I was impressed and inspired by the personal example of Fr. Ed Larkin, whom I asked to become my Confirmation sponsor." Janez and several others from our class, including myself, participated in a Christian Life Community (CLC) group guided by "Pops" Larkin, as we affectionately called him. We gathered regularly for Mass and prayer, and for what St. Ignatius →

ÒThe personal experience of God  
through the person of Jesus Christ  
touched me deeply on this retreat and  
has never left meÓ

Ð WILL PROSPERO, SJ

ÒMy heart was  
touched deeply  
by a desire to  
serve God out of  
gratitude for so  
many gifts that I  
had received in  
my young lifeÓ

Ð TOM LAWLER, SJ

Because Marquette High significantly shaped  
my Christian and Jesuit identity, it's a joy to  
return as a priest. With God's help, I try to  
care for students the way my Jesuit teachers  
cared for me.

Please pray that new Jesuit vocations will come  
with the new millennium. To quote our former  
superior general, Fr. Pedro Arrupe: ÓIt is not  
an easy life. It is a wonderful vocation.  
Everything for the greater glory of God. More  
is not possible.Ó

ÒIt is not an easy life  
It is a wonderful  
vocation. Everything for  
the greater glory of God.  
More is not possibleÓ

Ð FR. PEDRO ARRUPE, SJ

ÒI was impressed and inspired by the  
personal example of Fr. Ed LarkÓ.

Ð JANEZ SEVER, SJ



might, for example, talk with people in the same line of work we're considering, make on-the-job-visits, or seek an internship. For those exploring the possibility of a religious or priestly vocation, a personal visit might involve checking out the religious communities we're interested in by, for example, having dinner with a Jesuit community. It can also include experiences like "Come and See Weekends," where a person spends a weekend living in a seminary community to see what it's like from the inside. A discernment retreat is another possibility.

Eventually we get a feel for which vocational option most deeply attracts us, which one is the best fit, has a sense of belonging and rightness about it, and presents the best opportunities for using our gifts in the service of God's people.

Most people experience inner ambivalence as an integral part of this discernment process, and it must be faced. As adolescents, we experience almost infinite possibilities and options. We initiate adulthood by choosing from among these options and following one path – necessarily to the exclusion of others.

Overcoming ambivalence can be especially difficult in considering religious life or priesthood as we address the natural human longing to

## Seven steps to making sound, prayerful life decisions.

*In summarizing the thoughts and issues raised by Fr. Warren's column, seven steps to a good decision come to the fore.*

- 1 Set our priorities in order, keeping before us the purpose for which God created us.
- 2 Pray, pay attention to our inner desires, and enter into spiritual direction.
- 3 Consider our options and explore the various lifestyles, careers, and communities to which we're attracted.
- 4 Get personal experiences with the options to which we are drawn and identify most closely.
- 5 Get a feel for which option is the best fit for us, provides a sense of belonging, and offers the best opportunity for us to serve.
- 6 Then make a decision that entails a leap of faith and trust that we are in God's caring hands.
- 7 Once we make a decision, see if God blesses us with a sense of inner peace and "rightness" over time.

remain at my side and bless my decision. Happily, God has not let me down.

have a life partner and a family. We will almost certainly feel a degree of doubt about this sacrifice and must acknowledge that making it requires a true letting-go.

When I faced this sacrifice and looked into my heart of hearts, I discovered that my deepest desire and longing was to be a Jesuit and a priest. I cannot explain it anymore than a married man can explain his love for his wife above all other women. I just knew this was how God was calling me. I somehow knew this is what I had to do to be true to myself and be genuinely happy by faithfully responding to God's call to me.

And thankfully my decision has been abundantly blessed over the years by a consistent feeling of profound joy and satisfaction in my life and ministry as a Jesuit priest. This is not to say it's always easy, any more than faithfully following any vocation in life, including marriage and parenthood, is without its challenges.

I truly love this way of loving and serving. It's right for me and is how God can best use me, hopefully for His glory, in service of His people.

Still, the final step in making this life-decision required a leap of faith and a trust that God would

## UP COMING EVENTS

MAY 14

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TOUR OF MILWAUKEE JESUIT COMMUNITIES**  
(1:00-4:00 p.m.) The Marquette University and Miguel Pro Jesuit Communities will host open houses as part of a Milwaukee Archdiocesan tour of religious communities to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

JUNE 9

**JESUIT ORDINATION at St. John's Church on Creighton University's campus in Omaha (7:30 p.m.)**

You'd be most welcome to celebrate this joyful occasion with us.

JUNE 27 - 29

**VOCATIONS RETREAT FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND COLLEGE FRESHMEN** at our Jesuit vacation spot on the Chain of Lakes near Waupaca, Wisconsin. It will include sessions regarding the Jesuits and vocational discernment and plenty of time for fun on the lakes.

JUNE 23 - AUG. 6

**"SIX WEEKS A JESUIT" EXPERIENCE IN NEW YORK CITY**  
It's an opportunity to experience Jesuit life for six weeks, living in a Jesuit community and working in a Jesuit ministry.

AUG. 12

**JESUIT VOW MASS at the St. Catherine's College Chapel**  
2004 Randolph Ave., St. Paul, MN  
(10:00 a.m.)

You are invited to celebrate with our vow men and their Jesuit brethren and families.

OCT. 7-9

**"WEEKEND AT THE NOVITIATE"**  
in St. Paul, MN  
This is designed for men thinking seriously about the Jesuits and is a chance to experience something of what the novitiate is like and get to meet the novices and novice directors

*There will be additional opportunities in the fall and beyond, such as Come and See weekends and discernment retreats. Also, you're always welcome to visit and stay with us at one of our Jesuit houses, including our novitiate in St. Paul.*

If necessary, we can assist with a candidate's travel costs to events. There are no fees for the events themselves. Please contact Fr. Warren Szama, SJ, Jesuit vocation director for the Wisconsin Province if you or someone you know is interested in any of these events.

  
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NEAL WILKINSON, SJ (CENTER) IS ORDAINED A DEACON AT MARQUETTE HIGH IN MILWAUKEE ON FEB. 17 IN MILWAUKEE.