



CALLINGS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT VOCATIONS

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Jesuit Brother helps gang members find a way out

By Br. Jim Holub, SJ

As I look back over many years, the story of my call to religious life remains much the same, yet the mystery behind it startles me more than ever.

For each step in the journey there are more influences than I am conscious of. Surely my family is a major factor. My father, a farmer, and my mother, a teacher, were models for me of caring service to everyone, often with great personal sacrifice. Their true gentleness, warmth, the sight of their devotedness to people and children, and the ever-present sense of peace they encouraged inspired me.

I had thought several times about religious life. As I prayed, I felt that religious life encompassed all my dreams: the archaeologist whose research digs deep into the earth, the astronomer who

observes the eternal universe, the person who searches for beauty (something I became intensely interested in while in college!).

Once I had made up my mind, what had seemed unclear till then began to disappear, and I was able to begin to walk towards the deep heart of Christ. There have been many digressions along the way, but the goal I am aiming at continues to shine in the foreground.

After entering the Society of Jesus, and experiencing the Spiritual Exercises during my Long Retreat, I tasted a true happiness that continues to outweigh the sacrifices a vocation to religious life requires.

Why do I remain a Jesuit, and why have I chosen to be a Jesuit Brother? In short, voices. For years now I have been involved in an

inner city ministry that involves working with gang members. At HomeBoyz Interactive we help gang members give up the allure of street life in exchange for job training and spiritual nourishment. Our area of expertise has evolved over the years and now focuses on web site design, strategy, and technology. In the course of participating in this ministry I have helped bury 48 inner city youths whose lives were lost to violence. I still hear their voices and am called through my apostolic work to continue to speak for them to this day.

Why I've been called in this way I don't know. I don't know why they speak to me, why they come around like some lost brother and work upon my consciousness, why they select me to fling them back into some worldly orbit. All I know is that I have to →



BR. JIM HOLUB, SJ (above left) WORKS WITH A FORMER STREET GANG MEMBER AT THE OFFICE OF HOMEBOYZ INTERACTIVE ON MILWAUKEE'S SOUTH SIDE. BR. JIM SAYS HIS LIFE AS A JESUIT HAS BEEN ONE OF SURPRISE AND PERSONAL FULFILLMENT.

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separation between Brother Denny and the people. I believe that was not only because of his warm, caring, humorous personality, but also because of his being a brother.

At the same time, Br. Denny was very much a Jesuit, and people related to him as a spiritual man. He was a central member of our Jesuit community and, in fact, one of our informal leaders. People saw him very much as a Jesuit man of God, and experienced his caring nature as an expression of God's love for them.

The absolute essence of being religious, however, is not so much in what they do as in who they are - their witness of the Gospel values they profess. Like all members of religious congregations, brothers take perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Living these vows in our contemporary materialistic American culture speaks volumes. These vows dismiss the American myth that money, sex, power, possessions and status guarantee happiness and personal fulfillment. Their vows proclaim that true happiness is found in union with God, self-

giving, community, faith, hope, love, service, generosity, sharing their resources and talents with others, working for justice, and solidarity with the poor. These are the things that provide genuine satisfaction and ultimate meaning in life. Religious life is a tremendous gift to God's people for it shows that God's riches are far greater than material wealth. And being a Jesuit brother - or brother or sister in other religious congregations - is certainly a beautiful gift to the world. Religious life is a tremendous gift to God's people for it shows that God's riches are far greater than material wealth. And being a Jesuit brother - or brother or sister in other religious congregations - is certainly a beautiful gift to the world.

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BR. JERRY PELTZ, SJ

Br. Peltz became a Jesuit in 1981 following two years as a volunteer at Holy Rosary Mission in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Since then he has taught math at Holy Rosary and at Creighton in Omaha, where he also served as assistant principal. He is currently assisting Br. Mike V on a low-income housing project in North Omaha.



I like to think of my vocation as a brother like that of the 12 apostles and, most likely, of all the men and women who were the first disciples while Jesus was beginning His ministry to others. They were not ordained, but somehow heard a call from the Lord and tried to follow Him as best they could in their everyday lives. They tried to understand His truth, pass it along, and help others through example and deed, regardless of their differences. They were men and women who would stumble, fall, and get back up. They were confused and inspired, fearful and brave, weak and strong, sinners and saints. They were able to witness Jesus do extraordinary things for ordinary people and in turn, they became people who, on occasion, could do extraordinary things themselves. Ó

THE Jesuits

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Ongoing Vocation Discernment Groups

We have three discernment groups for men considering the Jesuits in Milwaukee, Omaha, and the Twin Cities. For information about the group in Milwaukee, contact Fr. Tim Lannon, SJ at Marquette University (414-288-6386, timothy.lannon@marquette.edu). For the group in Omaha, contact Fr. Dick Hauser, SJ at Creighton University (402-280-3010, hausersj@creighton.edu). For information about the Twin Cities group, contact Fr. Peter Etzel, SJ (651-644-9041, etzel@macalester.edu).

UP COMING EVENTS

FEB. 8

VOCATIONS DISCUSSION over pizza at Marquette University Jesuit Community, 1404 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, 8:00 p.m.

FEB. 16-19

(long Presidents' Day weekend)
DISCERNMENT RETREAT AT THE JESUIT RETREAT HOUSE NEAR DENVER.
We will begin at 5:00 p.m. on Friday and end after lunch on Monday. You will be individually directed in a silent discernment retreat by a young Jesuit in training.

MAR. 23-25

COME AND SEE WEEKEND at the Jesuit house of studies at Loyola U. in Chicago. We will begin at 5:00 p.m. on Friday and end with lunch on Sunday. This will be an opportunity for inquirers to learn more about the Jesuits and Jesuit formation in a community of young Jesuits in early formation.

MAY 31 - JUNE 9

DISCERNMENT RETREAT AT THE CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY RETREAT CENTER in Griswald, Iowa. This will be an 8-day individually directed, silent retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

JUNE 23-27

COME AND SEE VOCATIONS DAYS at our Jesuit vacation spot on the Chain of Lakes near Waupaca, Wisconsin. You can travel to central Wisconsin via the Appleton airport or by driving. Either way arrive in the early evening on Saturday and travel back home on Wednesday morning. The days will be a chance to learn about Jesuit life from young Jesuits in training as well as a few more experienced Jesuits in the relaxed atmosphere of the beautiful lakes of central Wisconsin.

DISCERNMENT RETREATS

June 11-20
June 25 - July 4
July 16-25
August 2-11
September 2-7
All are 8-day retreats except for 4-day September retreat. They are individually directed, silent discernment retreats based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius at our Jesuit Retreat House in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. These tend to fill up early, so let me know as soon as possible if you're interested.

PLEASE NOTE:
There is no charge for any of these events, and we are happy to help men with travel costs to and from these events if needed. Please contact Fr. Warren Sazama, SJ, vocation director for the Wisconsin Province, if you are interested in any of these events.