



Some Vocation Questions and Answers

What exactly is a Vocation?

A vocation is a call from God to do something specifically for God and for His kingdom. The primary vocation of every person is to be holy! It is the divine calling to love and serve God, to obey his commandments, and to cooperate with Christ in the work of redemption by loving and serving others.

How do I know what God is calling me to do?

You must pray, asking God to reveal His plan for you. Do not ask yourself, "What do I want to do with my life?" Rather, you should be thinking and asking: "Jesus, what do You want me to do?" And listen for the answer. Listen with your heart, not just your head!

The Church has been rocked by child-abuse scandals - why would I want to be a Brother?

It is a scandal and a sin that even a single religious has ever hurt a child and we are all deeply ashamed by this. It is unfathomable how religious could outwardly profess to live by the Gospel, and then do something so wicked. The best of us want to be good Brothers - living a life in total harmony with the Gospel and protecting children. There are bad teachers, bad parents, bad police and bad religious - the good ones are all betrayed by a few evil people who will have to answer to God. *We are deeply grieved by the fact that priests and religious workers have caused such abuse and scandal to the young. In many ways the entire Church is viewed with mistrust. This crisis is an appalling sin in the eyes of God.* Pope John Paul II

What is celibacy?

Celibacy is a gift from God and better enables a Brother to live his vocation to offer his life for others. Rather than something negative (giving up marriage), it is a positive calling to love (and in return be loved) in a unique way. Brothers do not get married so as to dedicate themselves completely to Jesus and to His people. The sacrifice of celibacy is a sign to the world that only Jesus can give us the happiness that we all crave. Giving up something as important as marriage and family is a powerful sign to the world that Jesus Christ is real! He is worth living for and sacrificing for. No, it is not easy, but neither is marriage. The fact is, everyone's life requires personal sacrifice. And there is great joy in sacrifice when it is done for Jesus and for others.

I'm not worthy to become a Brother!

Nobody is! If our vocation depended on worthiness, there wouldn't be any Brothers or religious in the world. However that doesn't stop us from making ourselves good and holy people. Holiness (to be like Jesus) is a lifetime endeavor for every person. Don't worry if you don't see yourself as very holy right now. God will form you slowly, day by day and week by week, so that you will be ready to be His instrument when the time comes.

Are most Brothers happy in their vocation?

Most Brothers are very happy in their vocations! The life of a Brother is a very rewarding life, both in this world and in the next. Being a Brother is a great challenge but it is also extremely rewarding. When each day comes to a close, a Brother can say, "Lord, today I spent myself for You."

Can Brothers do anything they want for recreation and fun?

A Brother can do anything he wants for recreation, as long as it is consistent with the Christian life. Many Brothers play golf, basketball, tennis and engage in other sports. Others enjoy movies, plays and reading. Some like to go to baseball games, the opera, swimming or fishing, or travel.

Isn't it lonely being a Brother?

Loneliness is a part of everyone's life, at one time or another. It is part of the human condition. Married people get lonely at times, even though their spouses and children surround them. Brothers are always surrounded by people. This is one of the joys of being a Brother. We are involved with people at the most profound moments of their lives. Loneliness can be part of the life of a Brother too, but when we do experience loneliness, Jesus can fill that void.

How might family and friends react to my decision to consider becoming a Brother?

Most Brothers are fortunate to have families who encouraged them to do whatever made them happy in life. They supported their choices without pushing, but by asking probing questions that make them think more deeply about what they were choosing. Friends' reactions vary a lot – from ridicule, to laying odds on how long you will stay, to refusal to talk about their choices, to quiet support, to high enthusiasm. Obviously, some of those negative reactions are hard to take from good friends whose opinions are valued. Many say, "Do what's best for you."

Do you ever fight with other Brothers?

Hopefully, "fight" is too strong a word; perhaps "disagree" would be better. Brothers are still people and it is natural, expected, and healthy when people share intense feelings about common values and goals together. Presuming the maturity of the people involved, most disagreements can be worked out to the benefit and satisfaction of all. Brothers work at growing in the art of communication, and this demands trust, openness, and willingness to live in the tension involved in talking out differences.

What's the difference between a brother and a priest?

A brother is a layman who commits himself to Christ by the vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience, who lives in religious community, and who works in nearly any ministry: teacher, doctor, serving the homeless, artist, etc. A priest's distinctive role is as minister of the sacraments: celebrating Eucharist, Baptism, and Penance. He does a variety of other works as well, but sacramental life is his special ministry.