

Written Reflection on Priesthood Ordination
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What's the past year been like for you?

This was my last year of seminary so I knew God was going to continue to prepare me for the priesthood in a more immediate way. In years past I knew I would be going back to the seminary the next year, but this time there was a stronger sense of looking ahead to what is coming. I do not think there is a way to fully prepare for ordination perfectly and priesthood leading up to it other than to stay close to the Lord in prayer and be open to whatever graces He wishes to give me in this time. Right now, in the weeks before ordination, it can feel like I am standing in a doorway: I am here, but not quite in the room. I think God can really work in those moments leading up to something like this.

What aspect of the Rite of Ordination are you most looking forward to?

From my experience with being ordained a deacon and what many others have said, the details of the ordination can be a blur. However, I think there are certain details the Holy Spirit helps us to remember afterward for His own reasons; to show us something. What I really remember from my diaconate ordination was the prayer of ordination the bishop prayed over me. Reflecting on it afterwards I thought "here is one of the successors to the Apostles calling me forth to participate in his mission and asking the Holy Spirit to come down on me." This moment just stuck out and I think there might be certain details with my ordination to the priesthood that will be similar.

What are you most looking forward to post-ordination?

After having completed seminary formation in Washington I am just looking forward to working in a parish as a priest somewhere in the diocese. Although, the one thing that stands out in particular is saying Mass. Our whole Christian life flows from and leads back to the Eucharist. My priestly ministry and grace to do all that I will do in the parish will be drawn from the Eucharist, so, I look forward to that.

What suggestion would you offer faithful who may be looking for ways to deepen their relationship with Christ?

Prayer is where we can listen to the Lord and where we can offer ourselves and time to Him. However, that prayer flows from the fact that we have a relationship with Him to begin with, which starts with baptism and continues with the other sacraments. The Eucharist and reconciliation really sustain us and draw us close to God. So, it is really in staying close to Christ's Church and her sacraments that draws us deeper into prayer and relationship with God.

In terms of prayer, I would say Eucharistic adoration and the rosary and meditation in particular are some mainstays. Some people are particularly busy with family and work. I would say, look for even small moments of silence and use it to pray. This could be driving in the car to the store or going to and from work. Look for those moments and enter into conversation with the Lord.

What advice can you offer young people considering religious life?

For people considering a religious vocation I would repeat everything I said to those just trying to draw closer to Christ: stay close to His Church and her sacraments, especially the Eucharist and reconciliation. Go to Mass, not only on Sunday, but whenever you can during the week. Our prayer and relationship with Jesus Christ flows from this.

However, I would say these things are more imperative for someone discerning a religious vocation – going to Mass, Reconciliation and prayer, especially Eucharistic adoration—in silence face to face with the Lord in the Eucharist—the rosary and *Lectio Divina*. Staying close to the Blessed Mother is a must.

I would add to these things spiritual direction. Talk with your pastor at your home parish or a priest. There are many thoughts, feelings and desires that flow through our minds and hearts each day. For someone discerning a religious vocation these will immediately pertain to the choice they make regarding a vocation. Some of those thoughts, feelings and desires are from ourselves, from past wounds, our environment, the people around us, from the Enemy and some are from God, and those are the ones we want to listen to. Talking with a priest or your pastor about these movements of our hearts allows another objective perspective to shed light on them.