

Sunday Homily  
11<sup>th</sup> Week Ordinary Time A  
June 16, 2008

By Deacon Jeff Claar

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of addressing our graduating seniors during the homily of the parish baccalaureate Mass. Graduation is a time for hopes and dreams, and I asked our seniors what do they ultimately hope to be?

So, let me ask you, what do you ultimately hope to be?

I don't know why it is, but our thoughts go first to our occupation. I am sure our seniors have dreams of being successful doctors, teachers, engineers, or a thousand other things. But most of us here are not eighteen anymore. Maybe we're even considered successful doctors, teachers, engineers, or a thousand other things. Maybe we are all of these things, but for some reason we still seem to be searching for something more.

How can that be? How can our ultimate dream of our youth come true, and we are busy living that dream, yet still we feel like there must be more? My friends, I believe our answer is before us in our Scriptures today – and the answer is not what God wants us to do for a job, but who God calls us to be. And ultimately God calls us to be a saint in Heaven with Him.

You see, our mistake is putting most of our time and talent into our avocation, or our job. But God calls us to true happiness through our vocation, which is our state of life that He wants for us. When we are living the vocation He wants for us, and living it according to His will, we are well on our way to true happiness; regardless of where we are on our career path.

You're thinking, "A vocation...who me, I am not a priest, or deacon, or sister, I don't have a vocation!" Oh yes you do. God has a vocation for each of us, and our three choices are: the single life, the married life, and the ordained and consecrated life.

We all begin living the vocation of single life. Some of us remain in that state and some return to that state after the death of their spouse. The single life's greatest gift to others is in time. When we are single we have the time to give back to our families and our parish, and those less fortunate. Sometimes this time is best used with our talents and doing for others. Sometimes this time is best used in prayer, praying for those in need and the ministry of the Church. And sometimes, this time in prayer leads us to another vocation.

Most of us are eventually called to live the vocation of married life. The Church teaches us that marriage is ordered to be for the benefit of the man and woman and for having and bringing up children in the Faith: and in that order. So those of us in the married life, our principle concern must be for the health of our relationship with our spouse. When this relationship is healthy and loving it naturally leads to children.

The greatest gift any parent can give their children is to love and respect your spouse. And especially today on Father's Day, I would encourage all fathers to love and respect the mother of their children. This can be especially challenging where separation and divorce have wounded this vocation. Even more so in this situation, Christian love and respect between the adults is required for the benefit of the children, especially when it may not be deserved.

And finally, some of us are called to the ordained life as a priest or deacon, or to the consecrated life as a sister. This is what we traditionally think of when we say "vocation".

I would imagine that the journey is different, yet somewhat the same for those who are called to live this life. For me, it the beginning was living the life of faith as a married man and being exposed to the good work and example of our priests and deacons here in Sandusky. The idea creeps into your mind and we try to ignore it. But it keeps coming back – yes, I guess the Holy Spirit is persistent in this way. For me, it was always of sense of "yes" and never "no" when I would entertain the thought.

There is probably one or two of you here today who know what I am talking about, but as yet, have not taken that first step. I would say “do not be afraid”. It only takes the courage to begin, and you begin with a simple conversation with your pastor. I still remember my first conversation with Fr. Phil. I told him that I had been thinking about becoming a deacon. And his answer surprised me somewhat, he said, “Ah, that’s good, I had been thinking that you would make a good deacon.” That is how simple it is.

As St. Paul teaches us, there are many parts, but one Body. We all have a role to play, but our role is not our job, it is our vocation. The Church is better, the Church is stronger, and the Church can reach more people when each of us makes our first and best effort to live our vocations better and stronger through the grace of the Sacraments.