



The Call to the Priesthood

With the end of classes at Mount Angel Seminary in May our Baker seminarians set off together to promote vocations to the priesthood throughout the Diocese. Starting in The Dalles, they touched down in Bend, Redmond, and Prineville, slipped south to Klamath Falls, then headed north to Ontario, Baker City, La Grande, and Hermiston. In these parishes they shared their vocation stories with youth groups, attended Sunday Mass together, and stayed around to talk with parishioners afterwards. The seminarians themselves came up with this imaginative way to give the priestly calling such widespread exposure. We may hope that their generous enthusiasm will move young men who heard them to follow their footsteps to the seminary in the next few years.

That result would be in keeping with a nationwide rise in priestly ordinations since 2005. According to the 2015 CARA survey 595 new priests are expected to be ordained this year—a 25% increase over 2014. What is behind this hopeful trend? CARA found that *before* they entered the seminary men took care to build their life's foundation on prayer: 70% took part in Eucharistic adoration and regularly prayed the Rosary. Faithful prayer prepared them to answer as Deacon Scott Emerson did when the hour of decision finally came: "It's now or never, Lord. You're clearly saying Yes, and I can't say No any longer, so let's do this."

The CARA survey testifies to the crucial importance of encouragement in this journey to Yes—two or three people who keep the question alive, especially a parish priest. What many young men find attractive in their pastor is priestly *joy*. And not surprisingly. For another recent survey compared the priesthood with other professions and found priests to be "disproportionately happy in their work." Why shouldn't they be? They work for the best Master in the world, and they put their lives at the service of people in whom the Father is "well pleased."

So pray that our seminarians persevere in their journey to priestly joy, and ask the Lord of the Harvest to send other young men soon to join in their company.