

VOCATION CALL

I received my Catholic faith from my mother who was always involved in the life of the Church and had a great love for it. I did not always think of becoming a priest, however, as I came to the end of my law degree and professional training at Canterbury University in Christchurch I realised that I was not prepared to give my life and energy to a law firm or come other secular organization. I belonged to a Young Worker group at St Therese Lisieux parish in Upper Riccarton and it was through interactions with others there that I realised that my true passion lay in serving the Church and being available to others. I went on my OE the England, but this insight was still there and during a Mass in Chelsea, London, I had a religious experience that confirmed my call. As a result, I contacted Monsignor Dave Bell, the Vocations Director of the Palmerston North Diocese, and I entered the seminary of Holy Cross, Mosgiel in 1995. The rest, as they say, is all history. I encourage all young Catholic men to consider the possibility of a call to the priestly life as it is one of immense challenge and reward. I have no regrets.

Fr. Marcus Francis

The Triple Cs in my Vocation

I finished the Matriculation Exam (High School) in 1990-1991 Academic Year in Yangon. Then I was working as a Lower Clerk at one of the Government Offices. I received the **Call** to the Priesthood, and I left the job and tried to join the Seminary. There came the **Challenge** that I was not accepted by my Parish Priest. But then the **Care of the Lord** was that I was recommended by another Parish Priest from another Parish and I was accepted by the Rector of the Seminary to begin my journey of Vocation to the Priesthood in the year 1992 (16th May).

Despite of so many Triple Cs experiences within 10 years of Seminary days, I survived. However there came a big **Challenge** to my vocation to the priesthood. That is, nine months before my Priestly Ordination, my mother was taken to her heavenly home and the Parish Priest who recommended me to the priestly formation had gone to his heavenly home after three months of my mum's death. But the Lord came to help me with the help of another priest reminding me of Peter's fate in the Story of Jesus' Walking on the Water. I really felt the **Care of the Lord** in that very Big **Challenge** and I continued the **Call**.

I was successfully ordained to the Priesthood on 19th March 2002 after so many Triple Cs experiences in my lives. This is not only my own story, but it is the story of those who are called for a purpose. We have a lot of examples in the Scripture. The same experience is when we say "Yes" to the **Call**, there await the moments of **Challenge** but remember that the **Care of the Lord** is always there. "*Be not afraid. I am with you always!*" (Isaiah 41:10)

Fr. Anthony Htun

I am Fr Trung Nguyen. I was born and raised into a catholic family. I am one of seven children. I was ordained as priest on the 6th of June 2020. Three of my brothers are also training to be priests in Washington DC, Colombia and India. Looking back on my vocation, I think it is based on "two yeses". The first "yes" led me to leave my family at the age of 12 to assist a priest in a parish. The second "yes" led me to Palmerston North Diocese. The question which I usually ask myself. **"What do I look for in my life?"** I have always wanted to be a priest, serving God and His people. It was not easy when I made the decision to leave my family, my friends and country to follow my vocation. Even though I am still a 'baby priest', I have been in New Zealand for nearly nine years. When I look back on my journey, I know that I would not be standing here as a priest without the grace from God, through the prayers of all of you, and especially your help and support. You look after me as your child, talk to me as your friend and love me as you love God. I am always grateful for that. This is my first time celebrate the Good Shepherd Sunday as a priest. I ask you to pray for me and all the priests to be more worthy to serve God and His people faithfully. To the young people, DO NOT BE AFRAID to follow the vocation of priesthood. As a human being, we are limited, we are fragile and not worthy of this vocation but by the grace of God, we become his instruments to spread the good news, bringing God's love to His people through the sacraments and pastoral life.

Fr. Trung Nguyen

Have patience - God isn't finished yet...

When I was growing up, I had always wanted and dreamed about becoming a Priest. After secondary school, I entered the Pacific Regional Seminary in Fiji. I was so convinced and firmly believed that God's calling for me was to dedicate my life and to serve Him through Priesthood. I really looked forward to completing my studies and reach my dream. In total, I spent eight years as a seminarian, five years in theological studies, one year as a Marist spirituality formation, and two years in pastoral work outside the seminary. As I approached my final year before I would reach my childhood dream, and "calling" to become a Priest, I wasn't accepted. I felt frustrated, disappointed, angry and I began to question God and his calling for me. I found this extremely difficult to accept. Had all these years of study and dedication to become a priest gone to waste? I left the seminary with my faith and trust in God that he would reveal his calling for me and I made New Zealand my home. I continued to commit and dedicate myself to serve God and the church through my talents in music. A few years later, I met someone special, we got married and had three beautiful children. Married life was the vocation God called me to all along! Or so thought it was the only vocation that God was calling me to ... God also called me to the vocation of the Order of Permanent Married Deacon and on the 1st July 2018, I was ordained. As I reflect on my life, I still don't fully understand why God planned out my life the way he did. However, I am so humbled, and I know that the will of God is better than any plans I had for myself even though I found it difficult to accept at the time. Today, I am living a happily married life as an Ordained Permanent Married Deacon. If there is one lesson that I would like to share with you from my vocation journey, it's that, God always has a plan for us and no matter how sure we are in our own plans; His plan is always the best. If you want to follow God's Will, remember two things; The **"Determined Will of God"** that He is in control of everything, and the **"Desired Will of God"** that we have a choice to do things our own way or God's way. Blessings,

Rev. Deacon Tevita Faka'osi