

Jenn Kavanaugh, OLM's Youth Minister, asked the Peer Ministry Team to collect questions to learn more about our new Administrator, Fr. Vincent.*

Here is what they wanted to know:

YOUTH GROUP QUESTIONS

FOR FATHER VINCENT

They would all like to know if we can call you Father Vinnie (or if you prefer that we do not).

I love this question. I am actually named after my grandfather (my mother's father) whose name is Vincenzo. My birth name is Vincenzo. Growing up my family and friends and teachers called me Vinnie. As I got older, I began to appreciate more and more the name Vincent. So now I like to be called Father Vincent.

Little Secret: my siblings and my cousins still call me Vinnie! They can't break the habit.

Gianluca T. asks:

Where do you come from?

My grandparents came from Italy and settled in Newark, NJ. I was born in Newark, but my parents moved to Belleville when I was 6 months old. For those of you who don't know where Belleville is, it's Exit 150 off the Garden State Parkway. So, I consider my hometown Belleville. It was a wonderful town to grow up in. I have such great memories of the place I came from.

He also asks what your profession would have been, if not a priest? (I think they would be most interested to know about how your career path changed and why)

So, I have only been a Priest for 4 years. I was ordained to the Priesthood on May 28, 2016. Before the Priesthood, I was a bankruptcy lawyer for 17 years. I enjoyed my law profession, but God was calling me to the Priesthood from the time I was in about 8th grade. But I didn't think God was really serious. The call from God never went away even when I was practicing law; so, in 2010, I decided to answer God's call for me and left my law career and entered the seminary.

Now, if I weren't a lawyer or a Priest, I would be either a history teacher or I would own a coffee shop.

Anna L. would like to know: What is the most difficult part of being a priest for you? What is the most rewarding thing?

Someone once told me that to be a good priest you need to do two things: (1) be there for people at the most difficult and sad times of their lives (it's easy to be there at the happy times); and (2) to make sure that people know that you love them. I try to do this every moment of every day. I think the most difficult part of being a Priest is showing people that God is with them even through the struggles and difficulties of life. Many people think that God abandons them in these times, but God is with us always – even in our struggles. The other difficult thing about being a Priest is finding time for yourself and finding time to recharge your batteries. As a Priest, we are there for our flock always – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. So, finding time for rest and prayer is important.

The most rewarding thing about being a Priest is the blessing of celebrating Mass and bringing Christ to people in the Eucharist, administering the Sacraments to the people of God, hearing confessions, and showing people the love and mercy of God in their lives, anointing the sick and marrying couples. Also, it is rewarding to celebrate funeral Masses. It is a time to help people see the promises of Christ of the resurrection for those we love and for all of us. Eternal life is our reward and we need to strive for that every day of our lives.

Nora K asks: If you could go back in time to your 16-year-old self, what would you tell him about your future self?

Chill out. Be patient with yourself. Don't be so hard on yourself. Forgive yourself. And most importantly, never, ever, ever forget about God in your life. In a world where there are struggles and the world has its ups and downs, God and faith are the constant. God will get you through everything if you lean on His strength and not your strength alone. He is with you...always.

Teens these days are totally consumed by the question, "what am I supposed to do in this life?" It would be wonderful if you could speak to that a little bit in regard to your own faith journey and servanthood.

First, really think about what it is that makes you happy. What do you want to do with your life, and then do it. The sky's the limit. When things get tough, persevere and keep going! If you truly want to do something badly enough, the hard work will be worth it.

Also, make prayer part of your life. Start the day with prayer. Talk to God. Have a constant dialogue with the God who loves you so much. He will give you the peace and guidance you need to navigate life.

Finally, do good for others. Mother Teresa once said "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." We feel good when we do good for others. We feel good when we serve others. In doing good and serving, we show the love of Christ to all those who we meet by our words and our actions.

*The peer ministry team is our group of confirmed High School youth who help facilitate and plan youth activities. They serve as youth group discussion leaders, retreat leaders, ushers, altar servers, and even extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist.