



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

2 October 2019, 9:00 AM

Part 12: The vocation to priesthood

According to God's plan for our happiness and for us to transform the world into the Kingdom of God, some people are called to a permanent commitment in priesthood.

Priesthood begins when a bishop lays his hands on a man's head and prays over him, asking God to consecrate him, set him apart to minister as a priest.

We need priests to preach the full Gospel of Jesus as taught by his Catholic Church, to feed us with the Eucharist, to forgive our sins in Confession, and to strengthen us when we are sick or dying with the Sacrament of Anointing.

And we need priests to prepare us to use our gifts as partners in Church ministry, so more people will enjoy the blessing of following Jesus, and so there will be greater potential to change the world into the Kingdom of God.

Sometimes there is a shortage of priests. When that happens, some say that we would have more priests if we would also ordain women and married men.

But a shortage is not reason enough to do that; there are Protestant churches that don't limit who can be ordained a minister, but they still have shortages.

And because a priest is a visible sign of Christ, who was a male and unmarried, and approached the Church as a husband to his bride, maybe we don't have the freedom to ordain women and married men.

Ordaining only unmarried men doesn't mean that women and single or married people are second-class Church citizens. No, they have a dignity equal to priests, are no less called to holiness and to heaven, and are needed for Church ministry.

Also, if anything, priests are in a manner of speaking beneath women and single or married people: priests are called to be the last of all and the servants of all, after the example of Jesus.

Sometimes people fear that a priest can't be happy because he has to live without a wife and children (and sex), and because he works very hard without a lot of appreciation.

But science proves that happiness and fulfillment happen when one person lives for another or others, giving to, helping out, serving, even sacrificing self for the benefit of another, maybe a spouse, but also maybe people in a parish.

The distinction might be made that married people live for a spouse and children, a more focused love, while a priest lives for a community of persons. Both live for others, and therein find their happiness and a filled-full life.

Instead of asking what you want to do when you grow up, ask what God wants you to be, who God wants you to live for. Is God calling you to priesthood in the Archdiocese of Dubuque?

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque