



Dear Brothers and Sisters at St. Anthony Parish,

My name is Robert, and I am a first-year theologian at Mundelein Seminary. This Christmas season, I pray that you are filled with joy with the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. As you might know, the Office of Vocations in the Diocese of San Jose has begun a new initiative where different parishes “adopt” and pray for a specific seminarian and in kind, the seminarian prays for that specific community. Brothers and sisters, I am humbled to pray with you through this program. Ideally, we would meet in person, but given COVID-19 restrictions and local mandates, I will have to meet you through my words. It’s nice to meet you and before I say anything else, God loves you. I look forward to us getting to know each other as we move forward on our Christian journey.

About me, I’m originally from the greater Los Angeles area. I have three older sisters, two nephews, and two nieces. I’m a godfather to two of them. I moved to the Bay Area to attend college at UC Berkeley where I earned my bachelors in Bioengineering and then I stayed for work. I used to work in Pharmaceuticals and Dermatology as a manufacturing engineer and as a project coordinator. I also helped with Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the diocese as a praise and worship leader and discipleship mentor. My favorite food is anything my mom cooks and some hobbies I enjoy are photography, music, and reading. My home parish is St. Martin of Tours and my confirmation saint is Saint Anthony of Padua.

I’ve been fortunate to have many deep encounters with God, but the one I want to share with you now is about a night I spent in adoration. I consider the night when my love for God was rekindled and where my vocation to the priesthood was recultivated. It was at a time after I graduated college and I was working, but my faith wasn’t as strong. A good friend of mine asked me to go with her to adoration. That evening, I remember sitting in a pew in the back of the church. The only light I recall was the one shining on the monstrance atop the altar. I remember sitting in the dark and then lifting up my eyes to catch a glance at the way the light illuminated our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament. It was as if I had locked eyes with the love of my life from across the room. I just gazed at our Lord in adoration and I believe my Lord looked upon me with affection and love.

I believe in the real presence of our Lord in the Eucharist and so I invite you to participate in adoration when you get the chance. It was in the presence of the Sacrament that I fostered my vocation. I made use of Saint Alphonsus’ devotional prayers to the Blessed Sacrament which, over time, helped me deepen my love for God. I pray that each one of you will have a personal, intimate, and loving relationship with our God. My hope is that by becoming a priest, God-willing, I would be able to help you cultivate such a relationship with Christ Jesus.

Earlier this year, the bishop formally accepted me as a candidate for priesthood. In the letter requesting candidacy, I wrote that I was freely motivated to pursue this vocation for the glory of God, for the desire to serve the People of God, and for the salvation of my own soul. As I continue to pray and reflect with these words in a year of pandemic, social tension, and economic stress, I recognize how the People of God are persevering. It’s been a challenging year, and some have struggled more than others, but Christ reminds me that we endure this together as the Body of Christ. As brothers and sisters in Christ, I’m journeying with you in whatever this year has brought you, both blessings and burdens. Let us support and edify each other through prayer.

Continued prayers as we continue on.

Godspeed,
Robert Lamorena