

March 27, 2020

Good afternoon my very dear Parishioners,

This morning I was so heartened by good news; yes, by very good news: the joyful announcement that Bishop Burbidge has called the following five men to the Priesthood and is asking us to continue to pray for them as they approach Priesthood Ordination on June 6, 2020.

Rev. Mr. Guillermo Gonzalez
Rev. Mr. Peter McShurley
Rev. Mr. Joseph Moschetto
Rev. Mr. Charles Pavlick
Rev. Mr. James Waalkes

I have to tell you that reading the announcement by our bishop brought a tear to my eye. What's more, Bishop Burbidge is also calling five men to Saint Thomas More Cathedral on May 30, 2020 to present themselves for ordination to the transitional diaconate.

Mr. Jonathan Fioramonti
Mr. John Paul Heisler
Mr. Jonathan Smith
Mr. Joseph Townsend
Mr. Robert Wagner

The call to Holy Orders is always a joyful one, but especially now as we consider that we might be celebrating together again on these great dates. I was going to type "when we get back to normal again" but then I stopped. I think we all know that from now on we will be living a "new normal," and Jesus Christ will be Lord of that "new normal" too.

Through the instrumentality of Bishop Burbidge, God is calling five young men to the priesthood and five young men to the diaconate.

Through the instrumentality of the COVID-19 crisis, is God calling us to the summit of perfection? To those who have *ears to hear* (Mark 4:9), I believe that He is.

We know that God has issued a wake-up call to repentance to men and women of every land and nation. But I also believe that He is calling some of us to rise to the summit of perfection. I say that in light of the teaching of **Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori**:

If we would completely rejoice the heart of God, let us strive in all things to conform ourselves to His divine will. Let us not only strive to conform ourselves, but also to unite ourselves to whatever dispositions God makes of us.

Conformity signifies that we join our wills to the will of God.

Uniformity means more - it means that we make one will of God's will and ours, so that we will only what God wills; that God's will alone, is our will.

***This is the summit of perfection** and to it we should always aspire; this should be the goal of all our works, desires, meditations and prayers. To this end we should always invoke the aid of our holy patrons, our guardian angels, and above all, of our mother Mary, the most perfect of all the saints because she most perfectly embraced the divine will.*

Long before Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, **Saint Maximus the Confessor** (580-662) said something that I think speaks both to the crisis that we're living through now and to the meaning it can have... for those who have *ears to hear* (Luke 8:8):

Those whom Divine Providence is leading towards holiness in this life are tested by the following three tests:

by the gift of agreeable things, such as health, beauty, fine children, money, fame and so on;

by afflictions causing distress, such as the loss of children, money and fame;

and by bodily sufferings, such as disease, torture and so on.

To those in the first category the Lord says, 'If a person does not forsake all that he has, he cannot be My disciple' (Luke 14:33); and to those in the second and third He says, 'You will gain possession of your souls through your patient endurance' (Luke 21:19).

Patient endurance: remember those two words.

For a year or more now I have often reasoned within myself and sometimes said to others that I was "made for these times." But so are you. How do I know that? You don't have to be a **Saint John of the Cross** or a **Doctor Anthony Fauci** to know.

I know because I am here... now... in these times... and so are you. And so is the Lord.

The whole idea of weekend has a new meaning now, but I will say it anyway: TGIF. May God grant each and every one of you a most grace-filled weekend.

With kindest regards and prayers for you, day after day, I am

Your grateful pastor,

Father DeMartino