



[AM I CALLED?](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [SEMINARIANS](#) | [CALLED BY CHRIST.COM](#)

April 2011

Talking to Family and Friends about Interest in the Priesthood

Maybe you're considering the priesthood and you feel peaceful about following God's call and applying for seminary. But what about your family and friends? What if they don't understand? What if they reject your choice, or - even worse - you?

It's true that breaking the news can sometimes be difficult. When surveyed, over half of the priests ordained in 2010 reported some degree of parental opposition when they first voiced an interest in priesthood.



But the good news is that by the time a man reaches ordination, family and friends almost always "come around" to his decision - mostly because they perceive that he is happy and peaceful. Throughout their ministry, most priests receive tremendous support from their families, even if mom and dad were initially skeptical about the idea of entering seminary.

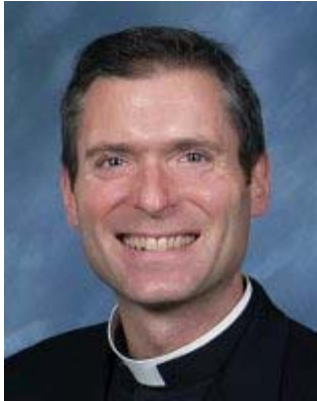
Here are some pointers to consider when it comes time to approach your family and friends.

- **Emphasize God's call, not your decision.** When you talk to people about entering seminary, emphasize that you think this is what God is calling you to do; it's not just an ordinary career

decision. "No one takes this honor upon himself, but only when called by God." Heb 5: 4.

- **Be realistic about people's reactions.** When you announce your intentions, give family and friends plenty of time to process what may seem like difficult news. Assure them you are not abandoning them, but pursuing your vocation. Realize that some people will not accept this news right away – but that over time, most will.
- **Don't talk in absolutes.** Don't say, "I've decided to become a priest." The truth is that you are years away from possible ordination and that only about 60% of men who begin formation are actually ordained. Let people know that you are thinking about going to seminary to *continue to discern* if priesthood is your vocation.
- **Tell people when you are ready.** It's okay to speak freely about your desire to become a priest, but most men feel hesitant about broadcasting their intentions. You may want to wait until you've talked to the vocation director and he indicates that you should apply to seminary. An exception is talking to a trusted person – perhaps your parish priest – who can help during your discernment.
- **Don't be fearful about what others may think.** Speculation about what people might think can be a major source of stress, and can possibly prevent true discernment of God's will for you. Remember that God never speaks through fear!
- **Don't give in to pressure.** Some people may try to dissuade you from pursuing the priesthood, thinking they are helping you. A particularly common reaction is for people to say, "Wait until you are older and have more life experience." In some cases this may be true, but not all. (There are plenty of 18 year old men who enter seminary.) Bottom line: be careful that you prayerfully consider what *God* wants you to do. While you are bound to honor your father and mother, when you become an adult, you must make your own decisions (CCC # 2217) and follow your conscience.
- **Be prepared to accept whatever reactions you will encounter.** Part of the sacrifice of any vocation is accepting the rejections that may occur when you do something out of love for God. Remember that Our Lord suffered rejection while following the Father's will (and from his own disciples!). But also remember that our Lord promised that we would receive one hundred times whatever we leave behind – plus eternal life!

The most important things to remember when talking to your friends and family about your vocational discernment are charity and patience. Parents or friends may be distraught because of misunderstanding, and may just need a little time. In the end, if priesthood is your vocation, the people who love you are likely to accept a life decision that leads to holiness and happiness.



Thank you for taking the time to consider your vocation.

If you think God may be calling you to the serve Him in the ministry of the priesthood, please contact me.

May God bless you!

Fr. Luke Ballman

Vocation Director of the Archdiocese of Atlanta

Archdiocese of Atlanta
Office of Vocations
(404) 920-7460



Email Marketing by

