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Dear ShoreLines Subscriber, Greetings from vocation.com! We are in the process of transitioning from our old format e-Newsletter to our new format e-Newsletter. Our new format will offer all the same helpful resources and vocation-related content in an easier to use and more interesting package, plus some extra features we are working on. However, to transition to the new distribution system we will need you to confirm your subscription. In order to continue receiving our weekly ShoreLines e-Newsletter, please click the link now. Please feel free to share our link with friends or family that may have an interest in receiving ShoreLines as well. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to [contact us](#). Thank you for your continued support. God bless you,  
The vocation.com Team

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"Do Not Be Afraid!"

*excerpt from Benedict XVI's Homily in Bethlehem's Manger Square  
Pope Benedict XVI*

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"Do not be afraid!" This is the message which the Successor of Saint Peter wishes to leave with you today, echoing the message of the angels and the charge which our beloved Pope John Paul II left with you in the year of the Great Jubilee of Christ's birth. Count on the prayers and solidarity of your brothers and sisters in the universal Church, and work, with concrete initiatives, to consolidate your presence and to offer new possibilities to those tempted to leave. Be a bridge of dialogue and constructive cooperation in the building of a culture of peace to replace the present stalemate of fear, aggression and frustration. Build up your local Churches, making them workshops of dialogue, tolerance and hope, as well as solidarity and practical charity.

Above all, be witnesses to the power of life, the new life brought by the Risen Christ, the life that can illumine and transform even the darkest and most hopeless of human situations. Your homeland needs not only new economic and community structures, but most importantly, we might say, a new "spiritual" infrastructure, capable of galvanizing the energies of all men and women of good will in the service of education, development and the promotion of the common good. You have the human resources to build the culture of peace and mutual respect which will guarantee a better future for your children. This noble enterprise awaits you. Do not be afraid!

## Q & A

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"The Harvest"

*with Fr Anthony Bannon LC*

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**Q.** Dear Fr Anthony,

Men AND women are born in the image of God our Father. Why then, can women not become priests in the Catholic Church, like men can? There is a severe shortage of priests in our area, which can be resolved by allowing women to also become priests.

-Lynette

**A.** Dear Lynette,

You are pointing to a real and pressing problem, the shortage of priests.

However, I believe the approach is what needs more thought. The priesthood is more than a position, a job, in which as long as the person has the right qualifications, gets the proper training and receives a good job-description, he or she, it doesn't matter which, can get the job done.

We are dealing here with something that transcends all our normal, pragmatic parameters. The Mass, which is central to the priesthood, is the reliving of the most unpragmatic action in history, death on the cross in order to give us life, saving the guilty by condemning the innocent. No wonder we have to remind ourselves continually that God's ways are not our ways, and we have to learn over and over again the lesson he

thought his disciples - that they must trust in him even when the storm is raging around our boat and it seems that he is asleep.

We should not be surprised that the solution that Christ offers to a problem seems to us on the surface like it's not going to work - in the case of the shortage of priests, his limiting the priesthood to men alone. The Church does not, and cannot admit women to the priesthood because that's what God decided. It's that simple. Since it is God who freely confers the grace that transforms an ordinary man into a priest at the moment of Ordination, the transformation simply cannot happen against his will. We can go through the actions but he will not confer the grace.

However, it is not simply a question of us being passive in the face of the problem of the shortage of priests, trusting that God will solve it. No. We have to make sure we put into practice the part of the solution that depends on us.

So, what depends on us? Christ told us to pray for workers for his harvest. Do we? Are we willing to give up a son, a brother, a boyfriend who might be called to the priesthood, or are we Vocational NIMBY's?

And then, are we spreading our faith, especially by example? No Christian man, woman or child can put off his baptismal commitment to be an active apostle with the excuse he or she is not a priest. When we live and practice and spread our faith, our prayer for vocations will be all the more sincere, and our acceptance of God's way will be all the more humble, enlightened, peaceful, joyful and fruitful.

God bless,

-Fr Anthony

## Q & A

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"Serve Him the Best You Can"  
*with Fr Anthony Bannon LC*

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**Q.** Dear Fr Anthony,

I feel called to the priesthood, and I have since age twelve. (I am currently sixteen.) However, I am having a hard time discerning whether I am called to an order or not. I feel that I should take vows of poverty, but I don't feel called to any specific order, and do feel called to help ordinary Catholics, or do missionary work.

-Trey

**A.** Dear Trey,

It seems to me that the proper step for you to take now is to start looking actively into some religious orders. If you do not feel a call to a specific order it may be because you don't yet know any orders in any depth. So as to give grace a chance to move your heart, start finding out about the orders you might know of vaguely. I think it's best not to get information on too many at a time, just start off with the ones you have heard of or have come across in passing. As you get the information and read through it you will find that certain elements will begin to come into focus - you will read things and realize that they are not what you are called to, and other certain things will strike a chord with you, at times almost jump off the page at you.

Follow up on these, write back to the order, if possible visit; speak to the priests. All the time be sure in your prayer to ask the Holy Spirit to help you see where he is leading you, and tell him you want to be as

generous as you can with Christ and serve him the best you can.

God bless.

-Fr Anthony

## Meditation - The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

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"Take and Learn to Be Taken"  
Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

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*On the first day of Unleavened Bread when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and say to the owner of the house which he enters, 'The Master says: Where is my dining room in which I can eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room furnished with couches, all prepared. Make the preparations for us there." The disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover. And as they were eating he took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to them. "Take it," he said, "this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them, and all drank from it, and he said to them, "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many. I tell you solemnly, I shall not drink any more wine until the day I drink the new wine in the Kingdom."*

**Introductory Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I consecrate to you these brief moments of prayer. Even as I begin them, I am reminded of that night when you made sure that everything was prepared for the Last Supper, the institution of the Eucharist. There is no reason for me to think that you have any less interest in my encounter with you now since your earnest desire is to come to souls, my soul in particular. In order to come to my soul you conquered sin with your own bloody sacrifice. May I, through my sacrifice, make my soul a place where you can dwell.

**Petition:** Lord, help me to understand that it is in being taken by others, laying my life down for them, that I can take you to myself and you can fill me only with you and with your interests.

**1. All Is Ready.** A man with a water jar, a homeowner busy about preparations, and an upper room already furnished with couches - coincidences? Unlikely. Jesus had carefully arranged everything for this Last Supper. The fullness of his love is shown in planning his expression of that love, and it tells us that instituting the Eucharist was no afterthought but a deliberate, planned action. The disciples found everything as he had told them. Lord Jesus, you have prepared everything in my life with your heart so full of love for me. There is no detail that you have left out - you have looked after everything. Teach me to see your providential hand in my life and to love you in and for each and every detail of your plan. I know, Lord, that this is not simply an abstract lesson but a call to action. When have I looked after my neighbor's needs with such care and love? Am I was ready to lay down my life for my friends, for those souls you have entrusted to me personally? I have so much to learn still, Lord. Walk me through this detailed love for others so that I may learn to love through my own sacrifice following your example.

**2. He took, broke, gave.** This is the pattern of our Christian life. First, God takes us, chooses us among others, out of no merit of our own, transforming us in Baptism, setting us apart. So he does with each one of his subsequent gifts, each Sacrament and our own particular vocation. Taken. Chosen.... Then broken. Jesus

was "broken" in his Passion and death on the Cross. He died. So each one of us is called to die to himself, die to the world. "If we die with the Lord we shall live with the Lord." And Jesus gave his apostles the Bread that was himself. But he also wants to give himself to others in us and through us. As Christians we are his presence in the world, he gives himself to the world through us. And he wants us to give, spend ourselves in service to others as he did for us. He wants the world to experience God's love through our love for our neighbor.

**3. "Take!"** Once again we see Christ's amazing generosity. He is here for us. He had told his disciples that unless they ate his flesh and drank his blood they would not have life in themselves. Jesus wants us to have the fullness of life, and so he offers us his Body to take and eat, his Blood to take and drink. Do we need any greater proof of his love? And, will we be so ungrateful as to refuse his gift? Would there be any limit to the good we could do as his apostles if we only took his word and attitude as our own, if our word to him and to souls was, "Take!" To him we would say, "Take my life, all I have and possess, all my liberty, my understanding, my entire will. My life is to serve you and do your work." To souls we would say, "All the gifts I received from God are for you. Take my time, my talents, my strengths, my gifts, all that I am. I live for you." Then we would be truly Christian, which means, truly Christ-like.

**Conversation:** Lord Jesus, I want to prefer you to anything and anyone else in this world. But I need you to draw me to yourself. I need you from the cross to look at me with love and strengthen me, fill me with your love. I do not want to walk away sad, holding onto your gifts, unwilling to share them and sacrifice them if necessary. Strengthen my weak will so that I will never more prefer any darkness to your marvelous light.

#### Questionnaire:

1. How do I show Christ my appreciation for the gift of himself that he gives me in the Eucharist?
2. Just how generous am I toward Christ and toward souls, is there anything that I tend to hold back that I should really be giving?

## Spirituality

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### "Faith in God"

Faith is the victory that conquers the world. Faith tells us that God raised up Jesus to life and made him Lord of all creation. He is Lord too of our souls as part of that creation, and we must submit to his reign. When he imprints a specific direction, path or vocation on our lives, we can be sure that no power can ever tear us away from it as long as we hold fast to the faith which gives us victory. Who can separate us from Christ? *Nakedness? Hunger? Tribulation . . .* (cf. Rom. 8:35)?

If faith should seem too naïve a reason, then even healthy human calculation should incline us towards an option motivated by God, precisely the prudence that Christ himself recommended: *What will a man gain if he wins the whole world and ruins his life?* (Mt. 16:26). In every instance it will always be better to choose God over the world, even if you are being totally pragmatic. *Everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life* (Mt. 19:29).

Admittedly, there are times when the glitter of this world so dazzles us and the humdrum cycle of life so numbs us that unconsciously, not out of malice but nonetheless superficially we put ourselves first and conclude that our devotion to and constant following of Christ is abnormal. This attitude is especially common nowadays in a world so appealing to our senses, with a whole array of easy solutions and glitzy good fortune. But if we look at history, no truly great man ever thought that his faith in God was abnormal, even if he had

to lament his failings with the words of the Latin poet: I see what is best and I applaud it, but I choose what is worst. If faith seems abnormal to us today, could it not be that we are becoming less human, and in a world of semi-humans what is simply human appears abnormal?

## Special

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"The Value of Simplicity"  
*courtesy of Catholic.net*  
Rev. Mark Connolly

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Simplicity is the sign of greatness. In all the studies being made today in the line of comparative religions, one theme comes across loud and clear - that the founders of these religions were made of great simplicity. When you analyze the writings of Confucius with his marvelous insight into humanity, you find that his last will and testimony consisted of thirty seven or thirty eight words. Buddha, who reached a high degree of spirituality, left no will at all. Christ himself left only seven last words at the end of his life.

Why is this quality of simplicity so important to people? The vast majority of people have worked hard for the success they now have, the material possessions that they so justly deserve. Have you paid too great a price for what you now have? Have you allowed your personalities to be twisted and misshaped to such a degree that simplicity plays very little part in your life?

Can you be a successful, integrated personality without simplicity? The answer is no. Simplicity is the origin of freedom. Simplicity is that which gives charm to a personality. Simplicity is that which makes us authentic. Simplicity is authenticity with one's self, one's God, one's neighbor.

St. Thomas, when writing about God, made the statement that "because God has such simplicity, he is that lovable." It was simplicity that endeared children as part of the following of Christ.

Simplicity is often lacking in a personality because of a desire for status and a desire for prestige.

To make sure that our desire for status is in moderation, there must be a definite degree of sincerity. Lack of sincerity is what we called infidelity to one's self. Simplicity should say to everyone with whom you work and live, "I am a fragile human being whom you have to take for better or worse." Without this personal sincerity there is no such thing as simplicity.

When you look at a child one of the most beautiful traits is the child's simplicity - the child's feeling that my mom is the greatest, that my dad is the best. In this quest for status of a man away from his family, the family suffers. I remember one time when I went to St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore, driving back from the hospital with the doctor and his eight year old child. The doctor was speeding when it was unnecessary to do so. A policeman stopped him. The doctor said it was an emergency trip to a sick person. It was then I saw this small girl shattered not only by her father's disobedience to the law, but his lying because the law had caught him. A man with simplicity is always sincere, even when it comes to admitting he made a mistake. I think this is what Christ had in mind when he said, "unless you become as little children...."

The desire for prestige is another enemy of simplicity. All of us admit that we are working for our families, working to provide the best in education for our children and our families. All of the success we have, whether it is material or educational success, should keep us unaffected and genuine in our relationship with all people, no matter how poorly educated they are or how poor they are in a material fashion. I often think that for many people to be the champions of a minority cause is done more out of prestige than true charity. The prestige involved whenever we are asked for our opinion on a complicated project, the prestige that is

there when we are asked to be part of a committee or commission, the prestige of the professional or executive titles and category - all of these thoughts are associated with the destruction of the quality of simplicity in our own personalities.

To find simplicity in a complicated world is like searching for the pearl of great price that Christ talked about in the gospel. But simplicity is achievable if we direct our minds and thoughts to the teachings of Christ. He said, by this shall all men know that you are my disciples: if you have love for one another and a new commandment I give you that you love one another as I have loved you. He gave us a beautiful blue print for simplicity. Simplicity is imitating the love of Christ. Simplicity is bringing that Christlike love to others.

## Upcoming Events & Retreats

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(( Listed here are retreats directed by the Legionaries of Christ and Regnum Christi members. For a listing of diocesan activities and other events, click here to go to the vocation.com website ))

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- Retreats for Men  
 Retreats for Women

### LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST

**Mark Your Calendars!** Test Your Call Weekends for the 2009 Calendar Year. Experience the novitiate in Cheshire, CT with retreats for young men ages 16-27 sponsored by the Legion of Christ. These weekend retreats combine time for personal reflection, preached meditations, conferences, and opportunities for confession and spiritual direction with the experience of the day to day life of the seminarians. For more information, please call Br. Francois at (800) 420-5409 or email [vocation@legionaries.org](mailto:vocation@legionaries.org). Dates in 2009: June 19-21, July 3-5, July 24-26, August 14-16, September 4-6, October 23-25, November 25-29, December 19-23, and December 26-30.

### REGNUM CHRISTI consecrated women

**Come and See Weekends.** Spend a weekend with the consecrated women of Regnum Christi, learning about their life, spirituality and mission within the Church. Activities include: Talks/conferences about the Church, Regnum Christi, the Spiritual Life, and consecrated Life in Regnum Christi; a half-day retreat; opportunities for confession and Spiritual Direction; daily Mass and time for prayer, silence and reflection; sports and meals with the consecrated women; vocational panel: Questions & Answers with consecrated women. Ages 16-30. For more information, contact Jill Swallow at [vocation@inteducators.org](mailto:vocation@inteducators.org) or 401-949-2820. 2009 date: July 10-13.

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