



THE NEUMANN NEWS

A SPECIAL EDITION

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Faith During the Pandemic



When I was a little boy and faced those small but scary moments in life – like rejection, defeat and loss – I always could go to Mom for comfort and strength. Mom would often say, “Where is your faith?” This is a good question for us now. I know that you are counting on me, as a minister of Jesus Christ, to help you keep the faith front and center. The cancellation of public Masses has made this task more challenging. So I ask you my mom’s question: How are you keeping the faith in this tumultuous time?

One of the ways Fr. Dennis, Patrick and I have been trying to continue the mission of the Church is by using technology. A day after our public Masses were officially canceled, we went live on Facebook to interact with you. We continued to livestream the Holy Mass on Sunday. We have been praying the Mass every day at 8:30 a.m. with you. Every time we elevate the host and lift the chalice, we remember you. We also have provided the Liturgy of the Hours, the Divine Mercy chaplet and Stations of the Cross. We use technology for each service. The feedback we have received is that you are most appreciative.

This is one way we are being Church. It is a different kind of ministry of presence. Ironically, it is a presence marked by a noticeable absence. I truly miss interacting with all of you and walking with you through the many dyings and risings of life. We are living a different kind of accompaniment.

This has been for me a deeper experience of priestly charity. We are unable to go home to see our families as so many of you are unable to see yours. At the same time, I really feel for our brother priests who live alone. For all of you who live alone. That must be a true desert experience. Another ironically desert experience is the life of all of you who are essential workers. Your frontline experience is so appreciated.

Another thing Mom would say to my younger self was, “David, count your blessings.” In times of anxiety such as these, the great antidote is gratitude. It is an opportune moment to make our prayer more centered on gratitude. Even in the midst of so much worry and fear, we have much to be grateful for. The more faith we wrap around this experience, I believe, the more we will see God’s abundant blessings. It is a dark time, but the light of Christ continues to shine. He is in the boat of the Church with us, promising to calm us all in the face of this incredible storm.

In Christ,
Fr. David Peck



PATRICK GLANVILLE

SEMINARIAN

Those of you who have joined us for our daily Facebook Live Masses during our sheltering-in-place have met Patrick Glanville, our parishioner who is studying to become a priest. What you may not know is that Patrick's dad Shawn Glanville is also undertaking a new vocation. Shawn is in the diaconate program and, when done with that formation, will serve as a deacon at St. John Neumann. We wanted you to meet the Glanville family!

When did you feel called to priesthood and how was their discernment process to say YES to the Lord and follow the call?

The first time I clearly remember feeling a call to the priesthood was at Camp Wow near the end of middle school. One of the counselors at the time, Connor Orabutt, was telling me about how the following year he would be entering seminary to study to become a priest. This was the first time I had even heard the word seminary. I never really thought about the fact that people had to study to become a priest. In my head I guess I had thought that priests were just born with a collar around their neck saying Mass. Despite my total cluelessness about the whole process the Holy Spirit moved through me at that moment, and he placed in my heart the question: Am I supposed to do that? Does God want me to be a priest? For the rest of camp that question seemed to follow me, and I started to pray with it. However, after camp I pushed that question to the side. I had always had a plan to go to college for engineering, get a good job, get married and have a bunch of kids. I loved God of course, but I had my own plan, and I didn't want to sacrifice my plan and my freedom to become a priest. However, despite my best efforts to push it to the side, that question didn't go away. It remained in the back of mind going into high school, where I went to Marmion Academy.

Having several of the monks as teachers at Marmion was an incredible blessing because I was able to really develop personal relationships with these men, and see that priests weren't these weird people who pray all the time and were completely removed from the world, rather they were totally normal people whose lives were set on fire in an extraordinary way with a joy for God. That was huge in showing me that I could be happy as a priest. It was at Marmion that I also began to go to daily Mass. Through that regular encounter with Jesus, God drew my heart to have a deep love for the Eucharist, and a desire to share that gift with others. I think it was especially through the Eucharist that God managed to shift this question of "Is God calling me to be a priest?" from something I tried to ignore to something I found myself attracted to.

By the time sophomore year rolled around I started really trying to discern whether the priesthood was what God was calling me to. I started attending various discernment retreats and groups put on by the Diocese and Marmion. The summer going into my junior year I had a profound experience at a Steubenville conference. One thing that had been a stumbling block in my own discernment was I saw the incredible life and gift of self the priest was called to do and their deep intimacy with Jesus in the Eucharist. Looking at my own weaknesses and struggles I felt so unworthy, and I didn't believe I would ever be able to live the life a priest is called to live. During Holy Hour at Steubenville, I told God all the fears I was experiencing and focused on the monstrance being processed around. My attention went to the priest holding Jesus and I felt this draw to be in his place bringing Jesus in the Eucharist to others. There was so much joy on his face, and God began speaking to my heart saying that he is not worthy either but it's Jesus who called him just the same even in his weakness.

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In fact it was in his weakness that Jesus was able to bring so much grace. I found myself saying yes to whatever God had planned for me, and I began to feel this overwhelming joy and love. It was like nothing I've ever experienced before, but I recognized that it was just a fraction of the love and joy God wants to pour out unto us in heaven if we just follow him.

Eventually my senior year of high school rolled around. and though I truly felt at some point I would enter the seminar, I felt that God wasn't calling me at that moment. I needed to grow and mature a bit more, and continue to discern. I wound up going to Purdue University for my freshman year, studying Computer Engineering. Purdue was incredibly formative place for me. I got involved at the parish there St. Thomas Aquinas run by three incredible Dominican order priests. There I learned so much about the intellectual depths, and deep beauty of our faith, and was able to grow and prosper from the incredible community there. I felt myself wanting to give more and more of my life to the lord. I truly loved being at Purdue, but throughout that first semester I felt the question of priesthood continually pop back into my head, until I went on a retreat put on by St. Toms called Boiler Awakening. It was there that I clearly felt God saying to me, even if I am not called to be a priest, he wants me to give him this time now in seminary, and let him form me, and guide me in my vocation. I felt an incredible peace after that, and I knew that it was time for me to enter seminary. After the retreat I called the vocations director for Rockford, Fr. Manno who had walked with me through my discernment in high school, and I scheduled a meeting with him over winter break. During that meeting he gave me the application to seminary, which spent the next semester filling out and finally turned in that June. Thanks be to God the Diocese accepted my application, and this past August I began my first year at Saint John Vianney Minor Seminary in Saint Paul, MN. Over this past year in seminary, the Father has blessed me so much through the community of priests and seminarians there. I have found myself growing so much through this time, and I am so excited to see where the Lord will lead me in these coming years!

How did your family life impact your decision to explore priesthood?

I thank God so much for giving me the family I have. My family is really the place where my relationship with God began. Though we are by no means perfect, and sometimes my family and I want to tear each other's hair out, I am truly blessed to have grown up in a really loving environment. I think that is because my parents always made it a point to keep God at the center of our family. We'd pray together before meals and before bed, go to church every Sunday. As I got older my parents and I prayed the rosary together. Having that prayer built into my family really helped me to see that ultimately the love that our family had for one another stemmed from God and his love and made me want to share that love with other people. One thing that I am so thankful for is my family wanted to support me in whatever way I thought God was calling me. While my parents were very excited about the prospect of me entering the seminary, I never felt pressured by them. They were supportive of me when I decided to go to college, as well as when I told them God was calling me to enter the seminary after my freshman year. One thing I have always been grateful for has been my family's continual prayers for my openness to the "Lord's" will.

PATRICK GLANVILLE

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How did the faith community of SJN influence your decision?

St. John Neumann has been my home parish for nearly my whole life. I've been blessed to grow up in the midst of this beautiful community. I am in such a debt to this parish for all it has done for me in my own growth. There have been so many RE teachers, youth ministers, choir directors, volunteers, priests, and friends from St. John Neumann who have all taught me, supported me, and helped to plant and nurture my relationship with God. Because of the love and support St. John Neumann has given me throughout the years, I want to give my life to serve God's church and help bring people to have a deep personal relationship with God. I have also recently been touched by the incredible faith, love, and desire for the Lord that many of the parishioners here have.

What is it like to be studying in the seminary as your father is studying for the Diaconate?

It has been a really cool experience to both be going through this discernment process at the same time. Formation is a large part of seminary and diaconate training, as you are learning and preparing to really give your life to whatever vocation you're discerning. In seminary we have four different pillars of formation that are trying to encapsulate our whole person: Human, Intellectual, Spiritual, and Pastoral. A lot of the times it requires reorienting parts of our life towards the proper place, and ultimately towards God, which is not always the easiest thing to do. It's difficult or even impossible sometimes for friends and family to understand the path that seminary and formation are taking me. It's a big blessing my dad is going through formation for the diaconate, because he and I are going through a very similar experience right now, and so we can relate to each other in a way that most people cannot. It has allowed for some really beautiful discussions both about things we've been learning, but also the way that the Father has been working in our lives through this formation. For me it has really been a joy to see the way that my dad has been growing in his own relationship to God, and all the things he has been learning from his classes. It's been a great opportunity for him and I to have some great conversations about faith, philosophy, family, discernment... Star Wars, really, we'll talk about anything! It has been a privilege to see the Father working throughout my dad's life!

What brings you joy?

I think there are two things that bring me so much joy. One is spending time with people. I'm a huge extrovert and I love being with people, getting to know them, playing board games, or just goofing around. I especially love being with my friends and family. The other thing that brings me joy is spending time in nature. There is something just so amazing about being in the midst of God's creation, breathing in the fresh air, going on hikes, and just seeing the beauty that's in nature. It is such a great escape for me from all the noise and distraction I can easily fill my life with and allows me to re-center myself on the beauty of life and on God.

PATRICK GLANVILLE

SEMINARIAN

How do your sibs support you?

I think one of the great things about my siblings is they keep me rooted. My siblings know me better than most people. I know I can always turn to them when I'm stressed or struggling with something. Whether I need to talk or just hang out with someone, my siblings are always there for me, and I am so grateful for them!

A Note from Patrick's Parents

As a wife and mother what is it like to have your husband and son making such a commitment to their faith? How is your faith impacted? What role do you and have you played in their faith journey?

To be honest, I sometimes find it very exciting and a true blessing and other times somewhat scary. I question if I am as deeply invested in my faith as they are. However, I do know we are each on a journey and that journey has its share of peaks and valleys. We approach those peaks and valleys in different ways and at different times. As Patrick and Shawn make this commitment and grow in their faith lives, I cannot help but be brought in and pulled along with them, joyfully!! Absolutely, their growth has impacted my own faith. Shawn and I over the years have often prayed together, but we each have found our own place where we feel closest to God in prayer. I began attending daily Mass regularly about six years ago as my father was dying of cancer. Shawn would attend with me every so often, but his job often kept him from making it a regular occurrence. Once he began the diaconate program, he made a commitment to pray morning prayer daily, which I've been recently trying to include into my life (quarantine has allowed us to join our prayer routines together!). Then Patrick entered the seminary where he attends morning Mass, prays morning and evening prayer (and more) as well as making a holy hour daily. Patrick's prayer life has shown me how much more I could allow God into my day! As to my role in their faith journeys, my initial response is I played no role, but I know this not to be true. Patrick still remembers the Lent in fourth grade where he and I prayed the rosary together each morning prior to him getting on the bus for school. Faith is like that though. As we allow God into our hearts and into our lives, we share him with others perhaps without any kind of plan. If we love God, we can't help but share that love with those we love.

-Julie Glanville

What is it like to have your son studying for the priesthood while you are studying for the Diaconate?

It's such a blessing to even be in a position to discern God's will for me to serve him beyond my first and primary vocation as husband and father. It's a double blessing to see Patrick respond to his own calling to the priesthood. There is much we are and will be able to share in what we both learn in our studies and discernment of parallel but ultimately very different paths. I dream of being able to serve at one of his Masses.

-Shawn Glanville