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THE VINE



*Official Newsletter of St Charles' Seminary,
A Roman Catholic Seminary forming men for the Priesthood in WA*



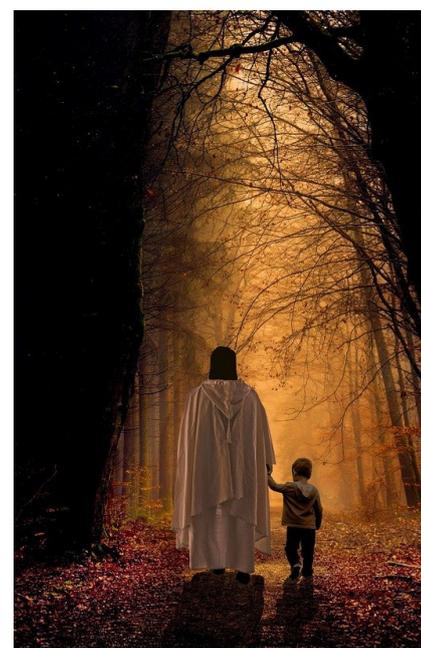
Welcome to the Family

From the Editor

In his recent address to seminarians, Pope Francis implores us to imagine the Seminary as "the family of Nazareth in which Jesus was welcomed, cared for and formed in view of the mission entrusted to him by the Father." With this in mind, the St. Charles Seminary community has welcomed four new enquirers into their home. It is our prayer that their time here will be rich in discernment of the Lord's Will for their life. In this issue of 'The Vine' the newly appointed Archdiocesan Vocations Director, Fr. Israel Quirit, shares his own discernment journey and hopes for his service in the role. The fervour of the enquirers and Fr. Israel in the sharing of their vocation stories inspires all of us to once again reflect on our own calling from the Lord. "Each one of us is called, whether to the lay life in marriage, to the priestly life, or to a life of special consecration, in order to become a witness of the Lord, here and now."

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I Will Give You Shepherds!

*An interview with new Vocations Director,
Fr. Israel Quirit*

Father Israel Quirit is the newly appointed Vocations Director of the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth. He recently joined Seminarian Nathan Barrie for an interview about his new role.

N: Let's begin with a prayer. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Heavenly Father, we ask You to enlighten our minds so that we may speak from our hearts. That what we discuss may encourage and inspire others to discern Your Will in their lives and the possibility of a vocation, especially to the priesthood. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.



N: Thank you for joining me for the interview.

Fr: No worries, thank you for having me.

N: Tell me a bit about your background?

Fr: I grew up in a family of six – Mum, Dad and then I as the youngest of four children. My inspiration in faith came from my Mum. She was very religious. I remember her being a faithful member of the Legion of Mary. I too became a Legionary. That is where I began to be nourished in the faith.

I learnt the rosary and other ways of praying. I became an altar server at the end of primary school and continued into high school. Mid high school, I stopped serving and I began to drift away from the Church. I started studying electrical engineering. In my first semester I felt a call to priesthood. It was bizarre that I felt that suddenly. It was probably the knowledge of all the ways Mum had inspired and nourished my faith. She had planted the seeds of the faith in my life.

N: What other hobbies and interests do you have?

Fr: It varies. When I was an assistant priest in Clarkson I enjoyed travelling to Fremantle during my free time. There is a particular coffee shop that played live jazz music where I would sit with a hot drink, reading a novel with the music in the background. I was later introduced to fishing. It can be quite addictive! There are so many different rods and reels to buy. Once the initial hype of the equipment wears off though, the fishing itself is great. I also like to play chess and basketball. Of course, I love to read philosophy.

N: Going back to that time in your engineering course when you started to think about priesthood –describe how you received that call?

Fr: It was an invitation. In the middle of the semester, a group of religious sisters and brothers came to our school to talk about their congregation and the possibility of becoming a 'brother' or a 'priest' in their community. At the time I did not understand the difference between a brother and a priest.

This struck my curiosity, I wanted to know more. It really started from there. I also reflected on my Mum and what she would have thought if she were still alive. I believe she would have encouraged and supported me to pursue this interest further. So, it was a mixture of realisation and invitation. If someone had not put the invitation in front of me, I may never have thought of it. Their witness started this searching.

N: *You could have had a successful career in electrical engineering, but instead chose to pursue this vocation to the priesthood. What is the difference between a career and a vocation?*

Fr: I started in seminary formation at the age of fifteen. I spent a total of ten years in formation, three in the Philippines and seven here at St. Charles Seminary. I was ordained a priest in 2015. Through this, I have come to realise that a vocation is different from a job or career. A career is what you are called to do. What you do for a living. A vocation is what you are called to be. All of us Christians have that calling from God - a vocation, from the Latin vocare "to call" - when we say this, we are talking about someone calling. That someone is God. That call is the call to holiness. Some people may be called to holiness in the path of married life. Some in the path of single life. Some in the path of religious and some in the path of priesthood. It is the call to become. To become like Christ. To become a witness of Him in the world.

N: *What would you say to someone wanting to discover their vocation?*

Fr: The thing with vocations is that they are unique. God calls each one of us in a unique way.

My calling from God is unique only to me. What to do in these circumstances is to be open. To be open to who God is calling me to be. Openness in a broad sense. Importantly our discernment will take place within our liturgical celebrations and prayer devotions such as Mass, adoration, and rosary. Our discernment should be grounded here. Our discernment must also be taken beyond these horizons. This is because God also manifests his calling in the ordinariness of our lives. Perhaps you are having a conversation with a friend, and they mention the priesthood or religious life: why is it that our conversation suddenly came to that topic? God speaks to us in unexpected ways, so we should always be listening.

“A career is what you are called to do...a vocation is what you are called to be.”

N: A question that often gets asked is if as a priest do you ever get lonely? Do you wish you could be married and have children?

Fr: A good priest is someone who has thought about getting married. In order to be a good father and pastor to people, you have to have the inclination and desire to look after a family. It is the sign of a healthy calling when a man has thought about marriage and family. The priest has chosen a path to look after not one small family, but a large family. It encompasses the giving of oneself. It is not limited to one small family, but the whole Church.

When the priest stops giving of himself for others, that is when he will find himself lonely. He also needs friends like anybody else, people who understand his way of life, and he understands theirs.

N: *What does the Vocations Office offer for people?*

Fr: We are currently writing a strategic plan. At the heart of the Vocations Office though is to accompany people who are searching. To present the various pathways in front of them. Not necessarily for the priesthood, but also married life, religious life, and single life. To emphasise that call to holiness. This results in a holy vocation. We should first encourage people to find that call to holiness. Then they will find the path to where that holiness will be put into action. The first question is then where can I become holy?

N: *What does a typical look like in your role as Vocations Director?*

Fr: I am normally in the Vocations Office, shared with the Communications Office, opposite the Cathedral three times weekly. There I meet with those discerning their vocation and work on the strategic plan. There is a Vocations Committee that is assisting me in developing the strategic plan, offering their expertise, advice, and prayer. This committee is comprised of both priests and professional lay people, men, and women. We are in the infancy stages of planning the direction of the Vocations Office and progressing well.

N: *Is it important to have lay people involved in vocations committees?*

Fr: Of course. Vocations are not limited to priesthood. We are trying to emphasise all areas of vocation including the permanent diaconate, religious brothers, and sisters, married life and single life. We are also hoping to be present in schools. Our committee is a representative of priests, married people, schoolteachers, and young people.

N: *What is one thing you dream of doing one day?*

Fr: I am currently completing a Masters in Philosophy. Wherever God is leading me, I am open to. If I could, I would love to put into practice what I have studied, hopefully helping seminarians and lay people in their search for wisdom at the academic and pastoral level.

N: *What is your final word on someone interested in discerning a vocation?*

Fr: A vocation is like an itch in your back. You try to scratch it, but it is still there. You ignore it, and it never goes away. Sometimes we try to ignore or postpone our vocations. Five years, ten years, or more from now, it is still there. My advice is, if you have a strong desire in what ever path God is calling you, give it a go. Unless you try, that nagging reminder will always be there. Even if at the end of your search you find that the path was not for you, you will have the satisfaction and peace that you have given it an honest go.



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The Discerner

*A column for those discerning a vocation
to the Catholic Priesthood*

An Extract from:

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS TO THE COMMUNITY OF THE PONTIFICAL REGIONAL SEMINARY "PIUS XI" IN ANCONA, ITALY.

I like to imagine the Seminary as the family of Nazareth, in which Jesus was welcomed, cared for and formed in view of the mission entrusted to him by the Father. The Son of God accepted to let himself be loved and guided by human parents, Mary and Joseph, teaching each of us that without docility no one can grow and mature. I would like to emphasize this, because there is not much talk of docility. Being docile is a gift we must ask for; docility is a virtue not only to be acquired, but to be received. It is important that each of you always ask yourself: "Am I docile? Am I rebellious, or I don't care, do I do what I care?" No: docile is a constructive attitude of one's vocation and also of one's personality. Without docility, no one can grow and mature. In fact, the Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis affirms that the priest is a disciple continually walking in the footsteps of the Master and, therefore, his formation is an evolving process, started in the family, continued in the parish, consolidated in the seminary and which lasts for a lifetime. The figure of Saint Joseph is the most beautiful model by which your formators are called to be inspired in guarding and caring for your vocation.



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And now, dear seminarians, I wish to turn to you, to whom the Church asks to follow the example of Jesus who allows himself to be docilely educated by Joseph. Since he was a boy, he had to experience the fatigue that every path of growth entails, asking himself the big questions of life, starting to take on his responsibilities and make his own decisions. But He was God, He didn't need, no: He learned, but he really learned, he didn't pretend to learn: no, he learned. He was God, yes, but he was real man: he went through all the stages of a man's growth. Perhaps we have not reflected enough on the young Jesus, committed to discerning his own vocation, to listen and confide in Mary and Joseph, to dialogue with the Father in order to understand his mission. For you too, the Seminary may be like the house in Nazareth, in which the Son of God learned humanity and closeness from his parents. Don't be satisfied with being skilled in the use of social media and mediato communicate. Only transformed by the Word of God will you be able to communicate words of life. The world is thirsty for priests who are able to communicate the goodness of the Lord to those who have experienced sin and failure, for priests who are experts in humanity, for pastors willing to share the joys and labors of their brothers, for men who allow themselves to be marked by cry of those who suffer. Draw the humanity of Jesus from the Gospel and the Tabernacle, search for it in the lives of the saints and so many heroes of charity, think of the genuine example of those who passed on the faith to you, to your grandparents, to your parents.

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The seminary, therefore, must not distance you from reality, from dangers and much less from others but, on the contrary, make you become closer to God and to your brothers. Within the walls of the Seminary dilate the boundaries of the heart - the dilated heart -, extend them to the whole world, be passionate about what "approaches", be passionate about what approaches, which "opens", which "brings together".