



Seminarian Jonathan Hernandez

I am a middle child with two sisters. I was born on December 22, 1999. As I was growing up, my family was faithful in attending Mass every Sunday and my parents always made sure that we were taken care of in regards to the sacraments. Despite the gift of having such parents in an increasingly secular society, we were still lukewarm Catholics. My parents knew a respectable amount about their faith and even prayed the rosary every so often with us as a family. When I would hear them pray, I could tell their faith was genuine.

The instruction I did receive was the soil for my faith to grow. From an early age, I recall being highly curious about what was going on at Mass and was always interested in what the priest and altar servers were doing. With time, my interest in altar serving brought me to begin altar serving at my parish. Through this experience, my love of the mass and knowledge of priests began to grow. After altar serving for two years, I was at an age where I could begin attending vocation events. The very first I could attend was Jeremiah Day, I was in middle school at the time. During my Jeremiah Day experience, I learned more about the priesthood, visited a seminary, and met seminarians for the first time. At the conclusion of the day, we prayed the rosary. During which we were invited to ask the Lord what our vocation was. I reluctantly did so at the time and was surprised to find a desire for the priesthood. I was struck because I had not considered it prior to this experience.

The desire for the priesthood never went away, at times I managed to repress it but it would always come back. For a time, I went through a period where I rejected the notion that I could ever be a good priest. My trust in the lord at the time was also lacking, and I was looking towards the world to guide me. I was told I should get a high-paying job and I would be happy. That didn't satisfy me. The only thing that gave me peace was the priesthood. As such, the parochial vicar at my parish invited me to stay at a seminary for a weekend. The Lord made it clear to me that he was calling me towards the priesthood. Thus, I entered seminary after high school. That was one of the best decisions I ever made. Had I waited and tried to play it "safe" by going to college and then discerning priesthood. I would have surely been filled with regret for I knew I would be going against God's will for me.

During my time in Seminary, I have matured and grown in my relationship with the Lord. I look forward to my second year in Theology this Fall 2023 at Mundelein Seminary.