

Hello to all St. Philip Neri parishioners and visitors!

My faith formation truly began at St. Philip Neri. My entire childhood and teen years, all my sacraments and fond memories of altar serving and activities with the youth group are from my home in Empire. It is amazing to be called as the first seminarian from St. Philip Neri in Empire, for it truly is a calling, and I give all the credit to Holy Spirit. Here is the 'short' story of my calling to attend seminary to pursue a vocation to the priesthood.

My Discernment of Faith and Journey to the Seminary

After graduating from Glen Lake Community Schools in 2007, I headed downstate to attend Hillsdale College to seek a Bachelor's Degree in Business. I always enjoyed business as a way to serve people, which began with my 5 year landscaping business throughout high school. It was more than just a business to me, it was a way to help and build relationships with my neighbors in the greater Glen Lake area. At the mature ages of 18 to 24, I *knew* that God was calling me to a life in business - I mean I was 18 and had this all figured out, right?! I soon found out that this is what I *thought* I was supposed to do and had yet to open my heart to God's will.



After graduating Hillsdale in 2011, I set off to start my business career. I accepted a job in Human Resources for a large manufacturing facility down in South Bend, IN. Over the next 18 months, I built many great relationships with coworkers, hired and trained many new employees, and integrated myself into the day to day operations of the business. However, I began to feel more and more anxiety about my current career path and knew that there was something missing, but I couldn't put my finger on what it was exactly.

I decided to take a unique opportunity to move out to Boston and pursue a career in a small, entrepreneurial career. After a few months in Boston and graduating from an entrepreneurial program, I ended up finding a sales job back near home in Traverse City, Michigan with a small Commercial Roofing company. This was a great opportunity! I would be near home, in a small company helping it to develop new products and grow the business. But the same unsettling feeling was still present. It was during this time that I began asking myself deeper and more serious questions like, "what really am I try to do in my life and where will I truly find peace? What truly satisfies my deepest desires?" These questions pointed me toward my faith, something that I haven't spent too much time addressing over the last 2 years since being out of college.

I sought out some priests that had been great examples of spiritual fathers throughout my time in South Bend, Boston and back home in the Gaylord Diocese. It immediately became clear that learning more about my relationship with God, the Catholic Faith, and the responsibilities of a Parish Priest was

important to me and brought a great deal of fulfillment. But I immediately became skeptical. "Me? A priest? I don't even know a seminarian? I am really an outsider to all of this!" But I just took it one step at a time. I scheduled a meeting with the Director of Vocations to talk about the priesthood. The conversation cleared up many of my skepticism and actually gave me a great deal of hope. Then he said something that changed my outlook on my vocation search, "The fact that you are asking me about faith, priesthood, a calling to a deeper relationship with Christ are the *fruits* of the Holy Spirit *calling you*." It was then I realized that this calling was not my own doing, but that of the Holy Spirit - my anxiety of previous jobs, curiosity about the priesthood and a new found sense of peace. This realization made me know, more than ever, the presence of God in my life. Now it was my turn to respond.

I am now returning to my 2nd year of seminary down at the **Pontifical College Josephinum** in Columbus, OH. Last year went by so fast and it has truly been one of the best years in my life. God has called many generous, pious, and simply good men to the seminary, and together to develop a deeper love for Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and a deeper knowledge of our amazing Catholic faith.



The main point I want to portray in my vocations story is that God has a loving plan for each one of us. I was completely caught up in what "Mitchel wanted to do," which only led to more and more anxiety. It wasn't until I took my hands "off the wheel" and prayerfully asked God that *His* will be done that freed me this anxiety and filled me with peace. Whether your vocation is to marriage, religious life or single life, it must be seen as a *vocation*, not just an *occupation*. God had a plan for us all, and it rarely is what we had planned! Please keep me and all of our young adults in your prayers that they may all listen to God, open their hearts to the Holy Spirits, and respond generously. God promises not to disappoint!

God Bless,

Mitch Roman

Seminarian, Diocese of Gaylord

"For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, *Abba, 'Father!'* *The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and join heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.*" – Romans 8:14-17



Below, I have attached the periodic letters I have sent back to the parish family at St. Philip Neri as a way for us to journey together through seminary. I look forward to the sharing more experiences with you.