



## Homily for Invitation to Vocation Discernment

**By: Fr. Bill Peckman, Diocese of Jefferson City**

If I talk to you or your son about discernment towards seminary, consider it a compliment.

It means I see something good.

It means I see a young man who owns his faith. I see a young man unconcerned with how others, particularly his peers, see that. This tells me he is a young man, if called, who will speak the truth.

It means I see a masculine young man. I see a warrior. I see a young man who will take his place in that breach between those in his care and those would prey on them. I see a young man who will be a fierce shepherd who will tie his strength to Christ and be the shepherd He is.

It means I see a young man who would be a great dad and husband. This is so important. I see a young man who will use his skills to build his family, who would be faithful to His bride, the Church, and who would be the kind of dad in a parish who people would see as a spiritual father.

It means I see a man who will selflessly give and endure sacrifice and suffering for his beloved. I see a young man with a work ethic.

That doesn't mean I see a perfect man without flaws. But I see a man who doesn't want to be a slave to sin.

Notice I said discern seminary first and not priesthood. I don't want a man who has already ordained himself in his head and sees seminary as an obstacle course to navigate. Such a boy will resist spiritual and personal growth and become a tyrant or neglectful. We have suffered enough at the hands of such boys. I am looking for young men who see that need for ongoing conversion...who possess the humility necessary to serve Christ and His Church.

Going to the seminary isn't a guarantee of ordination but a discernment process seeking God's will. If that discernment ends in understanding that God's will is elsewhere, so be it. Everything I have described is also necessary to being a great dad, husband, and lay leader.

So if I have talked to you about it...pray and leave your heart open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. If I have talked to your son about it, pray for him and recognize he is God's child placed in your care...lead him where God would have him.

I invite because I love Christ and His Church. I try to be the kind of man I recruit. I love every parish I ever served and want them to have shepherds after the heart of Christ. My time as a pastor is limited. I want those I have served to have men holier, more courageous, and more fatherly than I am. Those are the men who will serve well and inspire coming generations to serve God and His people as faithful priests.