

Come, Follow Me

God's Calling, My Response



Fr. Roger J. Landry
Catholic Information Conference
July 24-26, 2020



First Sense of a Vocation

- I had the grace to grow up in a Catholic home that loved God in practical ways. My earliest memories is of having my mother read children's Bible stories to me and praying the family Rosary each day.
- When I was four, I went to daily Mass with my mother, twin brother and young brother and sister. When Fr. Cantwell was giving Holy Communion to people, I thought he was the luckiest man in the world, capable of holding God in his hands and giving him to others. As he put the ciborium back in the tabernacle in front of me, that's when I asked Jesus to be a priest when I grew up.
- That desire never left me. I grew up close to priests and the Church, serving as an altar boy from 8-18, working in the rectory for five years.



First Sense of a Vocation

- I was drawn to many other things too: to be a professional athlete, doctor, husband and father, as well as to work in politics and elect as many pro-lifers as possible, but the desire to be a priest never left me.
- I was encouraged by many lay people and various priests, but when I mentioned it to peers, they thought I was crazy!
- When I was eventually ordained at 29, I had 25 years of looking at the world through the eyes of a priest.

Active Discernment

- In my first weeks at Harvard, I met with a priest who asked me what I was thinking of doing after I graduated. I said, “I’m thinking of becoming one of you,” and he responded with a poker face, asking me whether I thought that that was what God was asking of me. “Why wouldn’t God want me to be a priest?,” I asked, listing various reasons. But he said that God also needs good and holy lawyers, doctors, husbands, teachers and more.
- That started a two-plus year discernment as to whether God was actually calling me to be a priest.



Active Discernment

- I made various changes at the time:
 - I started to go to daily Mass
 - I started to go to Confession every week.
 - I started to live a plan of life and pray for at least an hour a day.
 - I started to receive spiritual direction and adult Catholic formation.
 - I started to spread the faith and more actively get involved in the Church's charitable works.
- At this point, I became convinced that God was calling me to be a saint no matter what my state of life and I wanted to give my life to him. He was purifying my intentions so that I would be saying "Your will, not mine, be done."



The Clarity of the Call

- I became convinced God was calling me to be a priest on April 3, 1992.
- Impatient after 30 months of prayer, needing to make post-college plans, and imitating something from the life of St. Benedict, I asked God to give me an answer on the first Friday of April, between 2-3 pm, during a Holy Hour of adoration I would be making at the chapel of the Student Center. I made a novena to Our Lady, asking her to intercede so that, no matter what God was asking of me, he would make it clear on that day and that I would say yes and be faithful.
- At 1:45 that day, my younger sister called. My twin was supposed to meet her in Harvard Square so that he could help her with her taxes, but he wasn't answering his phone and she was concerned about some threatening personalities around her. So I needed to go get her and miss the holy hour!



The Clarity of the Call

- Later that afternoon, I went to my regularly scheduled spiritual direction appointment and was talking to my director not only about the missed appointment but about various other discernment-related matters.
- He helped me to see how various other possibilities weren't plausible, although I don't think either of us were quite aware of the significance of it until I went to the chapel later.
- There, as I was complaining a little about the events of the day, God spoke to me interiorly, told me to be still and then helped to see with clarity the significance of the days events and made manifest to me that he was calling me to be a priest.





Following the Vocation: Modeling One's Life on the Cross

- When I told the Cardinal Archbishop of my home diocese that I was ready to apply to the seminary – he had been promoting my vocation since I was 14 – he was so excited he leaped and urged me to contact the vocation director.
- I did and went through what I thought was the process of applying.
- It turns out there was a problem with sexual morality at the seminary and within the Archdiocese as a whole and I was considered a threat to those who were living double-lives. I was never given an application.



Following the Vocation: Modeling One's Life on the Cross

- The Lord showed me, however, on December 20, 1992 what would happen and when it did, on February 11, 1993, I was both objectively scandalized and subjectively comforted that the Lord loved me and was with me enough to tip me off ahead of time.
- It was a good preparation for the clergy sexual scandals that would erupt a decade later. I had resolved before even entering seminary not to let corrupt priests derail a vocation but rather to try to become the type of priest God desired and his people deserved.



Following the Vocation: Modeling One's Life on the Cross

- I was happily accepted soon thereafter as a seminarian for the Diocese of Fall River, MA, by then Bishop Sean O'Malley.
- I attend Mt. St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, and St. Philip's Seminary in Toronto for philosophy, and then went to the North American College in Rome for five-plus years of theology in preparation for ordination.
- I was ordained a deacon at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican on October 8, 1998 and a priest at St. Mary's Cathedral in Fall River on June 26, 1999.

Living the Vocation



- Over the course of the last 21 years, I've had the joy to serve as
 - High school chaplain
 - Parochial vicar in three parishes
 - Pastor of two parishes
 - Diocesan newspaper editor
 - Attaché for the Holy See at the United Nations.

- I've celebrated 10,330 Masses, preached close to 13,000 times, heard tens of thousands of confessions, prepared thousands to meet God at the end of life, witnessed several hundred marriages, become spiritual director to many, led pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Rome and other sacred sites, preached retreats to bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians, religious, college students, lay men and women, did a lot of work of television and radio, wrote more than 1,000 articles and published a book on habits of holiness called "Plan of Life: Habits to Help You Grow Closer to God."

- I love being a priest and feel like the luckiest man in the world.



Thoughts for Those Discerning

- I would urge those trying to figure out what God is asking of them in life to do the following:
 1. Prioritize prayer, but don't focus all of your attention in prayer on discernment. Focus most of it on God. Try to make a holy hour each day, or at least a holy half-hour.
 2. Live a moral life. Say yes to God in the little and big choices of every day so that you can say yes to God in the biggest choices of all. Try to love God with "all" your mind, heart, soul and strength, find in him the pearl of great price worth selling all the rest of the pearls. Flee from selfishness through love of neighbor. Find in God your true love, wealth and freedom through chastity, poverty and obedience.
 3. Live a sacramental life, putting into practice your baptism, getting to daily Mass as often as possible, and to confession frequently.
 4. Find a spiritually nourishing and encouraging environment to support you.



Thoughts for Those Discerning

- I would urge those trying to figure out what God is asking of them in life to do the following:
 5. Entrust yourself to Our Lady through Marian consecration, the Rosary and other Marian devotions.
 6. Read various lives of the saints and begin to develop a friendship with some of them, asking their intercession.
 7. Try to learn more about the life from those living it, through vocation camps, come-and-see experiences, one-on-one conversations. Vocation directors are in general very good persons to answer questions you have, but everyone living the vocation is a deputized vocation director...
 8. Find a spiritual director with whom to talk things out. It does not have to be a priest. The person could come from a Third Order (Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, Benedictines, etc.), a personal prelature (Opus Dei), or one of the new Movements (Neocatechumenal Way, Regnum Christi, Communion and Liberation, Focolare, to name just a few.) The key is that the director has received direction for a while and be principally concerned with helping you figure out what God is asking of you, not trying to get you to follow their same individual path.

If You're Interested in More...

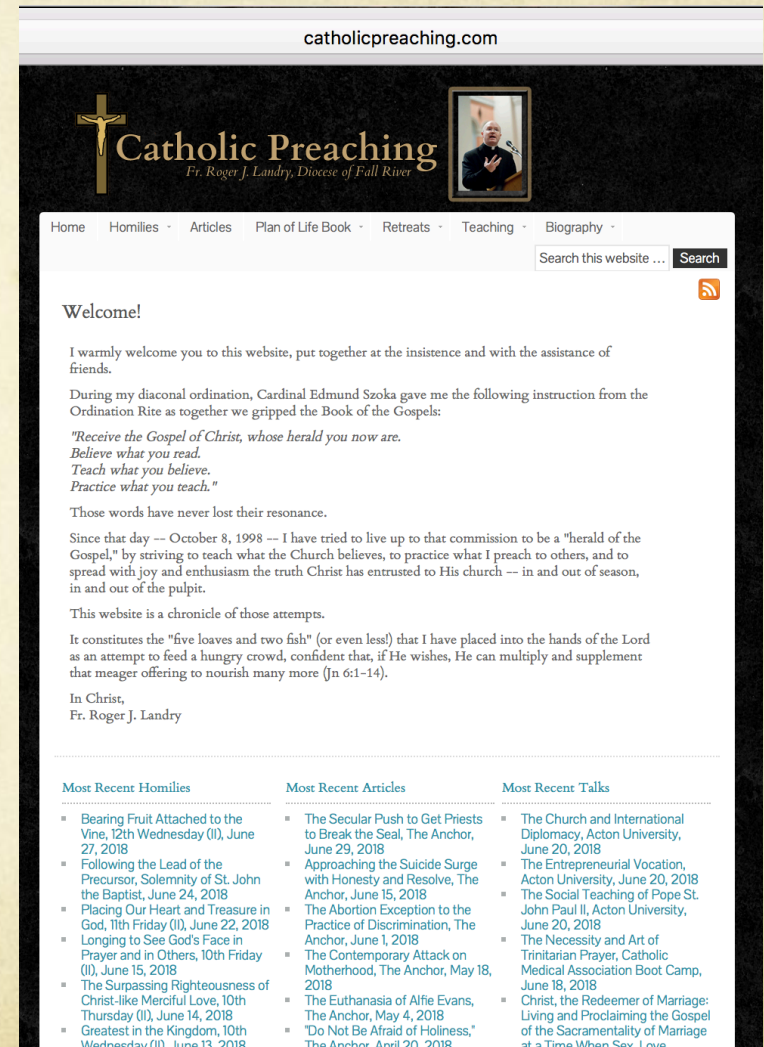
All of my daily homilies, weekly articles, retreat talks, theology of the body materials, links to my book "Plan of Life" and other materials are all accessible at:

www.catholicpreaching.com

Fr. Roger J. Landry

Email:

fatherlandry@catholicpreaching.com



The screenshot shows the homepage of the website catholicpreaching.com. At the top, the site name is displayed in a white bar. Below that is a dark header with a gold cross logo on the left, the text "Catholic Preaching" in a serif font, and a small portrait of Fr. Roger J. Landry on the right. A navigation menu with links for Home, Homilies, Articles, Plan of Life Book, Retreats, Teaching, and Biography is located below the header. A search bar is positioned on the right side of the navigation menu. The main content area begins with a "Welcome!" message, followed by a paragraph of text and a quote from the Ordination Rite. Below this is a section titled "Most Recent Homilies" with a list of six items, "Most Recent Articles" with a list of six items, and "Most Recent Talks" with a list of three items.

catholicpreaching.com

Catholic Preaching
Fr. Roger J. Landry, Diocese of Fall River

Home Homilies Articles Plan of Life Book Retreats Teaching Biography

Search this website ... Search

Welcome!

I warmly welcome you to this website, put together at the insistence and with the assistance of friends.

During my diaconal ordination, Cardinal Edmund Szoka gave me the following instruction from the Ordination Rite as together we gripped the Book of the Gospels:

*"Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are.
Believe what you read.
Teach what you believe.
Practice what you teach."*

Those words have never lost their resonance.

Since that day -- October 8, 1998 -- I have tried to live up to that commission to be a "herald of the Gospel," by striving to teach what the Church believes, to practice what I preach to others, and to spread with joy and enthusiasm the truth Christ has entrusted to His church -- in and out of season, in and out of the pulpit.

This website is a chronicle of those attempts.

It constitutes the "five loaves and two fish" (or even less!) that I have placed into the hands of the Lord as an attempt to feed a hungry crowd, confident that, if He wishes, He can multiply and supplement that meager offering to nourish many more (Jn 6:1-14).

In Christ,
Fr. Roger J. Landry

Most Recent Homilies

- Bearing Fruit Attached to the Vine, 12th Wednesday (II), June 27, 2018
- Following the Lead of the Precursor, Solemnity of St. John the Baptist, June 24, 2018
- Placing Our Heart and Treasure in God, 11th Friday (I), June 22, 2018
- Longing to See God's Face in Prayer and in Others, 10th Friday (I), June 15, 2018
- The Surpassing Righteousness of Christ-like Merciful Love, 10th Thursday (I), June 14, 2018
- Greatest in the Kingdom, 10th Wednesday (I), June 13, 2018

Most Recent Articles

- The Secular Push to Get Priests to Break the Seal, The Anchor, June 29, 2018
- Approaching the Suicide Surge with Honesty and Resolve, The Anchor, June 15, 2018
- The Abortion Exception to the Practice of Discrimination, The Anchor, June 1, 2018
- The Contemporary Attack on Motherhood, The Anchor, May 18, 2018
- The Euthanasia of Alfie Evans, The Anchor, May 4, 2018
- "Do Not Be Afraid of Holiness," The Anchor, April 20, 2018

Most Recent Talks

- The Church and International Diplomacy, Acton University, June 20, 2018
- The Entrepreneurial Vocation, Acton University, June 20, 2018
- The Social Teaching of Pope St. John Paul II, Acton University, June 20, 2018
- The Necessity and Art of Trinitarian Prayer, Catholic Medical Association Boot Camp, June 18, 2018
- Christ, the Redeemer of Marriage: Living and Proclaiming the Gospel of the Sacramentality of Marriage at a Time When Sex, Love,

Come, Follow Me

God's Calling, My Response



Please know of my prayers for you as you discern your vocation.
Please join me in praying for everyone to respond to the Harvest Master!