



TRUE HEART

A
WAY
TO
SELFLESSNESS

A Supplemental Resource Guide
For Use by Vocation Directors
Helping Candidates
Discern A Call to the Diocesan Priesthood



TRUE HEART

HOW VOCATION & SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

CAN FOCUS TRUE HEART FOR VOCATION DISCERNMENT

The very structure of TRUE HEART is designed to help young adults (high school and beyond) make a commitment to Christ—and a consecration of their lives to Christ. We developed a balanced platform of various types of prayer experiences. All the sections have reflection questions and places for short journal entries so individuals can keep track of their spiritual experiences. Some of the spiritual exercises included in True Heart are:

- ✘ praying with scriptures,
- ✘ examination of conscience,
- ✘ confession,
- ✘ reviewing one's life history for both grace and fault lines where sin, mild or chronic, finds a home,
- ✘ Ignatian meditations at nighttime in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament,
- ✘ short focused prayers to begin and end the day,
- ✘ periods of technology-free time during the day so individuals can access their hearts,
- ✘ reflection exercises on points of spiritual discernment,
- ✘ diagnostic sections where individuals can do a holistic analysis of themselves and any discoveries they have made.

- ✕ two Ignatian exercises where individuals imaginatively contemplate the different directions their lives would take if they gave themselves over to self-centeredness or to selflessness.
- ✕ a closing eight-hour all-night vigil in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament where they consecrate their lives to Christ and the Blessed Mother.

As indicated above, the entire structure of True Heart is a perfect tool to be used by a vocation director and/or a spiritual director working with those discerning a priestly or religious vocation.

A vocation or spiritual director can have the individual potential candidate for the priesthood or religious life make the ten-week True Heart journey. The spiritual direction meetings between the candidate and his or her director can be a time for the candidate to discuss their spiritual journey with True Heart and what he or she is sensing regarding the desires surfacing that indicate a calling to the priesthood or religious life.

Since the journey also includes a life-review, with a search for areas of sinfulness and grace, the individual's history will be illuminated in helpful ways for a process of discernment, reflection, and growth.

As the ten-week period comes to an end, a director can suggest that the concluding two week's exercises on writing an autobiography of a self-less life or a self-centered life, be a point for reflection/discernment for clues as to how the Holy Spirit might be calling one to a priestly vocation or to religious life.

The concluding eight-hour all-night vigil can be used as a confirmation of a direction discerned with an individual offering his or her life to Christ. If the vocation path is still not clear, the vigil can be used as an opportunity simply to consecrate one's life to Christ—offering one's True Heart to Jesus and the Blessed Mother with open hands to follow the path once it is clear.

Suggestions: If you are meeting regularly with a vocation candidate, we recommend giving the supplemental reflection resources to them at the beginning of each new week of the ten-week program. Using Ignatius' instructions from the Spiritual Exercises, we think it best not to give them out too far in advance as the goal is to focus on the exercises at hand, and not look at (or worry about) the weeks ahead.



Ten Weeks to Christ

Ten Weeks to Christ is a dynamic diocesan-wide group option for vocation discernment using the TRUE HEART program. All pastors would be invited to identify men in their faith communities who may be discerning a diocesan vocation to priesthood. These men would then be given the option of doing the TRUE HEART program in the parish with the other men in their local *Ten Weeks to Christ* group.

Each week ends with a night vigil in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The content for these vigils is identified at the end of each of the weeks in the TRUE HEART program. All are fashioned on Ignatian-inspired contemplations on various Gospel passages. Identify a time each weekend when the men in the *Ten Weeks to Christ* group can come and do the vigil together in the quiet of the evening.

The men can be given the option of meeting weekly together to share their experiences and to build friendships with each other. This creates the time for them to discuss their thoughts and ideas about the priesthood. Such meetings can lead to many important discernment discussions amongst those discerning a vocation.

The capstone experience is an eight-hour all night vigil in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Again, each hour of the vigil is detailed in the TRUE HEART materials.

We suggest this part of the program be conducted at the cathedral church or chapel with all the men in the diocese or archdiocese who have been in the *Ten Weeks to Christ* group. Consider beginning the evening with a Mass celebrated by the bishop and the pastors who have been working with the men. Pastors can choose an hour to be present during the all-night vigil to specifically pray for the men as they spend time with Christ. A closing Mass or Benediction service could be held at the end of the vigil, with breakfast served afterwards.



PREFACE

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

For the preface of TRUE HEART, consider replacing (or supplementing) the prayer through the intercession of Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., for healing, with a specific prayer for guidance in choosing a vocation. The one below is adapted from prayer #7 from the USCCB website for the committee on clergy and consecrated life for vocations.

Make an act of faith as you begin your TRUE HEART JOURNEY. If you are capable of making this act of faith in a church in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, do it! It is a perfect way for you to begin your True Heart journey to discern your calling in life. You are making an act of faith in Jesus to confirm a True Heart and believing that with Christ, "all things are possible."

Gracious God,

You have called me to life
and gifted me in many ways.
Through Baptism and Confirmation,
You have sent me
to continue the mission of Jesus
by sharing my love with others.
Strengthen me to respond to
Your call each day.
Help me to become all You desire of me.
Inspire me to make a difference in
others' lives.
Lead me to choose the way of life

You have planned for me.
Open the hearts of all to listen
to Your call.
Fill all with Your Holy Spirit that
we may have listening hearts and
the courage to respond to You.
Enkindle in my heart
and the hearts of others the desire
to make the world a better place
by serving as you as a Priest (or religious)
if that be your Holy Will.
AMEN!



INTRODUCTION

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

The TRUE HEART disciplines have a time of prayerful recollection upon waking in the morning and before going to bed at night. For the duration of TRUE HEART, include at these times a simple prayer asking God for the grace to know and follow the vocation he is calling you to live.

No matter whether you are called to the lay or priestly state of life, you are certainly called to be a saint.

Pray with the quote from St. Ignatius that you have the grace not to resist God's plans for your life, but by God's grace, fulfill them completely so you can produce fruit that endures to eternity.

There are very few who realize what God would make of them if they abandoned themselves entirely to His hands, and let themselves be formed by His grace. A thick and shapeless tree trunk would never believe that it could become a statue, admired as a miracle of sculpture...and would never consent to submit itself to the chisel of the sculptor who, as St. Augustine says, sees by his genius what he can make of it. Many people who, we see, now scarcely live as Christians, do not understand that they could become saints, if they would let themselves be formed by the grace of God, if they did not ruin His plans by resisting the work which He wants to do.¹

St. Ignatius Loyola

¹ Paul Doncoeur, SJ, *The Heart of Ignatius*, (Baltimore: Helicon, 1959), 34.



WEEK ONE

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

The Affirmations are discernment aids. Use them as such in your ten-week journey. Listen to which ones speak to your heart, especially in the desire for following Christ in a specific vocation.

The story of St. Ignatius is a powerful example of how God can take a sinner and make him a saint. No wonder he wrote the power reflection we used in the introduction. As you listen to the story of St. Ignatius in Week One, see what inspires you and what makes you want to give yourself wholly to Christ.

Fall in Love—the sixth day concludes with a reflection on “falling in love and staying in love.” Listen to your heart and ask for the grace to “feel and know” how you want to fall in love forever. What does the vision of that love look like? An authentic vocation to the priesthood is about falling in love and staying in love. An authentic vocation to the married state is also about falling in love and staying in love. Which way of loving would make you sad if you did not choose it? Which would bring you more joy? Ask God for clarity on how you want to fall in love and stay in love—forever!

The week ends with a night vigil in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. You will be with Jesus as He prays at night. Speak to him from your heart in your prayer conversation to help you discern the deepest desire—your true heart—and to have the grace to follow that call.



WEEK TWO

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

For St. Ignatius, contemplating on the living word of God from the stories of Jesus in the Bible, is a core element of his Spiritual Exercises. This ancient tradition of the Church, called *Lectio Divina*, is something that St. Ignatius made his own.

Here is how the Catechism of the Catholic Church describes this important form of prayer:

“The reading from the Word of God at each Hour . . . and readings from the Fathers and spiritual masters at certain Hours, reveal more deeply the meaning of the mystery being celebrated, assist in understanding the psalms, and prepare for silent prayer. The *lectio divina*, where the Word of God is so read and meditated that it becomes prayer, is thus rooted in the liturgical celebration.”
“Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire.

This mobilization of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ. Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in *lectio divina* or the rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him.”²

For Week Two and Week Three, you will have the opportunity to reflect on the life of Jesus in stories from the Gospel of St. Mark. Each of these reflections can come alive for you as you reflect on the life of Jesus in light of your own life. Keep your vocational desires in mind as you open your heart to Jesus in the living word of the Gospels.

The week ends with a night vigil where you can accompany Jesus as He ends His time of forty-days in the desert. He is on the verge of His public ministry. Keep your life in mind as you accompany Jesus. What desires surface in you as you contemplate the beginning of your own “public” witness of Jesus with your life.

² —Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed., nos. 1177, 2708 (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana—United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000)



WEEK THREE

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

For Week Two and Week Three, you will have the opportunity to reflect on the life of Jesus in stories from the Gospel of St. Mark. Each of these reflections can come alive for you as you reflect on the life of Jesus in light of your own life. Keep your vocational desires in mind as you open your heart to Jesus in the living word of the Gospels.

Week Three ends with a night vigil where you can be with Jesus as He is accused of great evil. You have a desire to give witness to Jesus in our own day and age. You understand how living your faith and being public about it, can create situations where you, yourself, are disliked or even attacked. Allow yourself to feel what desires you have regarding a vocation in life for living out that public witness. How are you being called?



WEEK FOUR

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

Week Four begins a wonderful series of weeks for you to examine your life history. You can think of these as “spiritual diagnostic” tools. A big part of understanding how you are being called to live your Christian vocation happens when you examine your life with these kinds of reflection exercises.

One of the most important things you can discover is the name for God that unlocks your heart to feel and be open to Him in prayer. You will have the great grace of finding that Name for God. Doing so can help you understand your vocation.

Your vocational desires are also linked to many of your closest relationships. Examine those persons who have impacted you both positively and negatively. You will learn much and understand better what has shaped your heart and desires.

Jesus manifested Himself to St. Peter by the miracle of the great draft of fish. Peter recognized his weakness and said to Jesus: “Leave me Lord, I am a sinful man.” Understanding your weaknesses and sins through a reflection on the Decalogue can reveal your heart where it needs Jesus’ healing. You may also say: “Leave me Lord, I am sinful.” But notice how He responds. “I have come to call sinners, not the righteous.”

The shortest sentence in the Bible is John 11: 35. “Jesus wept.” There are experiences, stories, music and movies that can move you to tears, as well. Understanding what touches your heart so deeply, can give you a window on your own vocation.

The week ends with a night vigil of Jesus manifesting His power to the disciples in a time of great crisis. You can reflect on the great crises of your own life. How has Jesus manifested Himself to you at these times? What does Jesus response call forth from you? Can you discern your True Heart—your vocation—from reflecting on these events?



WEEK FIVE

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

Fr. Louis Gonçaves da Camera, S.J., was the scribe to whom St. Ignatius dictated his autobiography. In his preface, he says this of the experience:

Jesus, Mary. In the year 1553, one Friday morning, August 4, the eve of the feast of Our Lady of the Snows, while St. Ignatius was in the garden, I began to give him an account of my soul, and, among other things, I spoke to him of how I was tempted by vain glory. The spiritual advice he gave me was this: "Refer everything that you do to God; strive to offer Him all the good you find in yourself, acknowledging that this comes from God, and thank Him for it." The advice given to me on this occasion was so consoling to me that I could not refrain from tears. St. Ignatius then related to me that for two years he had struggled against vain glory; so much so, indeed, that when he was about to embark for Jerusalem at Barcelona, he did not dare to tell anyone where he was going. He told me, moreover, that since that time his soul had experienced great peace in regard to this matter.

For Week Five, you will be reflecting on the vices and addictions you experience in your life. St. Ignatius did the same when he was recuperating from his battle wounds and continued the examination of his inclinations to sin and his habits for the remainder of his life.

You also have the remarkable opportunity to see the links between your attraction to vices and the addictions you experience in your life. This is a great search for spiritual gold. It should be considered as such and you should actively invite God to grant you profound insights into your own life.

Your week ends with an opportunity to be with Christ in the Blessed Sacrament as you ponder the story of a young man whose riches made it difficult for him to follow Jesus.

Your ability to be a good spiritual guide as a priest or religious will be in how much you allow God to heal you of your own sinful inclinations and in the gentle undoing of harmful addictive habits by His inspirations. It is the best way to open **up** to God and find your TRUE HEART. Be Not Afraid!



WEEK SIX

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

First and foremost: please find a time to make your whole-life confession this week. It will propel you on your search for your True Heart—and your vocation.

Finding your vocation is finding the greatest desire of your heart. The fact that you are making the journey means that the Lord will be faithful to your search.

What does it mean to have a vocation? It means, in part, following a dream that you cannot fulfill on your own. It is a desire of the heart, placed there by God, that only His power can bring about. It is a surrender of the control of your life to follow the “love of your life.” For many people, that love is exclusively Jesus Christ. It is to lay your life down for Him who created you and loved you into existence and loves you now as you read these words.

Your efforts in Week Six are carried out under the loving eyes of Jesus Christ. With Him by your side, you are allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to reveal in you by virtue of your baptism and confirmation, an understanding of your own True Heart. You are allowing God to open you to the mystery of your heart by connecting all the links in your life that He desires, with His life, passion, death, and resurrection, **in order** to transform, heal and make new.

Your efforts with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will allow you to spend the balance of the week to write a personal letter to Jesus. It is your confession of why you need Him as the Savior of your life and the GuideStar of your heart. Clearing away the distractions caused by the burdens of sin, will more readily allow you access to the deepest desires of your True Heart.

Described below is how St. Ignatius recounts his “awakening” as he was getting in touch with his need for Jesus as Savior of his life.

While perusing the life of Our Lord and the saints, he began to reflect, saying to himself: “What if I should do what St. Francis did?” “What if I should act like St. Dominic?” He pondered over these things in his mind, and kept continually proposing to himself serious and difficult things. He seemed to feel a certain readiness for doing them, with no other reason except this thought: “St. Dominic did this; I, too, will do it.” “St. Francis did this; therefore, I will do it.” These heroic resolutions remained for a time, and then other vain

and worldly thoughts followed. This succession of thoughts occupied him for a long while, those about God alternating with those about the world. But in these thoughts, there was a difference. When he thought of worldly things it gave him great pleasure, but afterward he found himself dry and sad. But when he thought of journeying to Jerusalem, and of living only on herbs, and practicing austerities, he found pleasure not only while thinking of them, but also when he had ceased.

You end this week with time in the very presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, reflecting on the incomparable love of the Father of Jesus. He awaits us, no matter how far we have strayed, with a love that knows no bounds. Be amazed as you pray with this story and hear it with a new heart and a new mind.



WEEK SEVEN

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

Curtis Martin, co-founder of FOCUS (Fellowship of University Students) gave a presentation on the FOCUS organization to Seattle-area priests. In the Q&A session, I asked what issue presented the greatest obstacle to the work of FOCUS missionaries on college campuses. Curtis responded, “Father Watson, fifteen years ago it would have been abortion and contraception. Today it is gender ideology.”

How true he is! Since he was Cardinal Primate of Argentina, Jorge Maria Bergoglio, Pope Francis, has strongly denounced the political and cultural trend to force gender ideology on society. While cardinal in Buenos Aires in the year 2010, he stated as reported in the July 9th issue of *L’Osservatore Romano*:

In the coming weeks, the Argentine people will face a situation whose outcome can seriously harm the family...At stake is the identity and survival of the family: father, mother and children. At stake are the lives of many children who will be discriminated against in advance, and deprived of their human development given by a father and a mother and willed by God. At stake is the total rejection of God’s law engraved in our hearts. Let us not be naive: this is not simply a political struggle, but it is an attempt to destroy God’s plan. It is not just a bill (a mere instrument) but a ‘move’ of the father of lies who seeks to confuse and deceive the children of God.

Pope Francis, since his election, has not let up on his condemnation of gender theory (ideology), as a movement that is diabolical in origin with the purpose to “destroy God’s plan.” I mention this because Week Seven, begins two weeks of reflections and exercises on spiritual discernment.

This week we take up the fact that human nature [body & soul – male & female] is “created by God” and destined for immortality. Believing and affirming that you are body and soul, male or female, is a foundational step in being able to apply principles of spiritual discernment in your life. Your belief—your affirmation—means that you don’t create your own reality but accept your God-given nature and its “freedom” to be open to God or to reject God. For the ultimate purpose of discernment is to help you find the way back to your authentic nature that was surrendered by choice in the Original Sin when our ancestral parents displaced the true God in favor of their

own deification. Gender ideology is the latest and most blatant expression of the Original Sin where humans, not God, define what is and is not right and true. It is important to always remember that St. Ignatius' title for Satan is "the enemy of human nature."

Spiritual discernment is focusing your "spiritual radar" to discern different "spirits" that seek to influence your thoughts, words, and deeds towards or away from your most authentic self—your True Heart. For the ultimate purpose of discernment is to help you find the way back to your authentic nature that was freely surrendered from complete and intimate union with God at the time of the Original Sin.

Laying a sound foundation to discover your true identity—your true nature—your True Heart, will be a giant step in helping you discern your vocation. The exercises for this week are focused on listening to the difference between self-centeredness and selflessness as a means. Your authentic vocation will always be one of selflessness—but it can be hard to choose this most joyful expression of our True Hearts.

The week ends with another wonderful contemplation in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Jesus manifests the true power of His nature as God and man, and frightens the disciples. Jesus approaching us can sometimes frighten us if we feel that what He asks us to accept will bring us dread, fear, and/or panic. Although the power of God in our lives can be most disconcerting at times (especially as we discern a vocation), fear, dread and panic are not the signatures of the Holy Spirit, but of the enemy of our human nature.



WEEK EIGHT

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

A great friend of mine is a remarkable scientific thinker and a great entrepreneur. Jim was part of a team that help build the original software that Microsoft used. As a vice president for Amazon, he created software for third-party sellers. He now works in the field of medical software. He is a staunch Christian and has a great singing voice to boot.

When we meet, we often discuss how our primordial parents could have been deceived to choose against God and for self. How could we have surrendered complete bliss and intimacy with the God of all creation? What fraud could have been so clever, devious, and persistent to move us from so much joy, peace, love, and security to a life of dread, disease, and death? There is a reason, I suppose, that we call sin the “mystery of iniquity.” It is a mystery of the greatest order.

Another friend of mine spoke about a time as a first-year college student when he was “living the life.” What he meant by that of course, was that he was in no way living according to his Christian faith. He describes a spiritual revolution that took place the summer between first and second year of college. When he came back, he spoke to his roommate and let him know that he might want to find another person to share the room because he would not be living the life he did his first year in school.

This young man both discovered his sinfulness and he sought repentance. He also realized that he needed to change his “lifestyle.” Sin, in our lives, oftentimes manifests in lifestyles. In order to change, we feel inspired to make changes to our lifestyle to help us to avoid the “near occasion of sin.” This change can make us fearful. In this case, the young man feared losing his good friend. This story had a happy ending because the friend also had a conversion of sorts and said he was happy to have a roommate that would help support him in his faith.

When you pray with Week Eight, reflect on sin and any lifestyle changes you made. Also, reflect on the “tricks” of the enemy to use fear or enticements to get you to stay in a lifestyle that is unhealthy for your life of faith.

As you pray with various exercises of this week, allow yourself to be consciously aware of how changes in your own lifestyle might have happened in your discovering the inklings of wanting to

live a life of greater integrity—one that might lead you to a commitment to priesthood or religious life. What “sins” have you sought to move beyond and what have been the challenges in doing that? Have you discerned, like St. Ignatius, that one lifestyle, although entertaining and “fun” did not leave you peaceful but dry and dissatisfied? Is the new lifestyle you desire moving you toward a vocation? Ask for clarity. Expect God to respond. Be thankful in advance for what you discover about your own True Heart.



WEEK NINE

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

One of St. Ignatius' discernment methods, to make a choice between two different options, was to place himself on his deathbed. The exercise might sound a bit macabre, but it makes eminent sense. Freed from the worry about what is in the future, you will have a greater capacity to see which choice, in hindsight, you "wished" you would have made. So, it is an exercise method that gives you greater "interior freedom."

The exercise for Week Nine, employs the same discernment method. It asks you to imagine your life is over or nearly over, and to look back to write the narrative of a life lived in self-centeredness. It might be a very helpful exercise for you to imagine who you might become if you give yourself over to selfish desires. It might also clarify better, which path in life you truly desire.

Pray for that clarity as you ponder a life given over to self-centeredness. Be precise and detailed in what that life would be like as you write the narrative this week. Notice, all week long, how you "feel interiorly" as you write your story of your false heart. Be Not Afraid!



WEEK TEN

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

You can use the same discernment method for this week as you did for the previous one, but here is another discernment method that grows out of St. Ignatius' spirituality. It is yet another way to gain interior freedom and insight in order to make a choice between two options. Imagine you are a different person—a second self—but someone who knows your first self well. You have shared your discernment journey and your vocational desires for priesthood or religious life with this second self. What advice does this second self, give to you, your first self? Pay attention this week to both these methods of gaining interior freedom and offer your writing exercise to Christ for His light, joy, hope and peace.

Week Ten is a companion exercise to Week Nine, but this time you are writing the narrative of your life of self-lessness. It should be a great discernment exercise, especially if you employ the two techniques I have laid out for you. Let this prayer version of St. Ignatius' First Principle and Foundation be something that helps you for this exercise, and also for your exercise that ends the True Heart journey next week.

FOUNDATIONS PRAYER

A paraphrase by William Watson, S.J.

*For and through whom everything was made,
Is Christ Jesus. I live because He loves me.
To praise and serve Him alone with all my mind, heart,
And strength is my freedom--my only freedom.
I shall not prejudice any path in following Him:
For I can praise Him Equally in my health and sickness.*

*I can distinguish myself in service to His Kingdom with
Great wealth, modest means, or having
Nothing at all to call my own.
He is the anchor of my joy and peace
Whether I am disgraced or lauded.
In His all-embracing love I taste eternity,
Whether my days are numbered great or small.
Christ Jesus alone is the treasure of my heart.
I shall ever listen for His call, and follow unreservedly.
For in everything I can love and praise Him,
And find my eternal joy. Amen.*



EIGHT-HOUR ALL NIGHT VIGIL

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

As a young Jesuit, I worked for three years at one of our high schools. I was both director of campus ministry and a theology instructor. One of the students I knew well as both a teacher and campus minister, was very well liked by his friends, a great athlete and a very bright student. He eventually graduated and went to college on the East Coast. I also ended my time at the high school and went to the East Coast for my theology training. My school was one hour from his, and he would occasionally want to visit me for spiritual direction.

At that point in his life, he was trying to discern between being a priest or getting married. He said he was having a very hard time because both vocations were so attractive to him and the idea of both of them as a life choice, created consolation in him. He told me his friends thought he was crazy in not being able to see the difference between marriage and priesthood. Obviously, they were focused exclusively on sex and celibacy, and found giving up the first for the second as totally idiotic. “Why are you having a hard time making this choice???”

Well, as a matter of fact, any idealistic person whose faith is alive and for whom Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith are both central dimensions of one’s life, ought to find both vocations attractive. It is only those whose faith is cool or non-existent who can’t see the beauty in both vocations.

I offered a spiritual exercise to this young man. I had him imagine living both vocations, since he was attracted to both, and listening to his experience in how each made him feel. Did both enliven his faith, hope, and love to the same degree? I then asked him to imagine living without one or the other vocation—leaving it behind for good. Which “left behind vocation,” when he searched his heart, created more sadness and loss at not being his choice?

Sometimes when we find two attractive choices in life, especially between a religious calling to the priesthood or a religious calling to marriage (yes, sacramental marriage is a religious vocation), we can get an inkling as to which we desire more intently when we feel which creates the greater sadness at leaving it behind. The story of the rich young man in Luke’s Gospel (18: 18-23) was someone who desired intently to follow Christ and was given the choice, but left “sad”

for “he was very rich.” He did not choose what he wanted. Instead, he kept his former lifestyle of wealth, even in the face of the sadness he felt in not following his True Heart.

Let this special eight-hour vigil with Christ Jesus be your singular time of consecration to be one of His disciples. If you know the direction your vocation calling will take you, let this be a time of consolation and confirmation. If you are still not sure, let this be a time when you commit your life whole-heartedly to Christ as a sign that you are ready to have Him reveal the path that will create in you the most joy and peace—the most faith, hope, and love. Be not afraid!