



Two weeks ago, the Catholic Church in the U.S. celebrated the National Vocation Awareness Week (November 1-7). This is an annual week-long event that raises awareness and promotes vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life. Holy Mother Church knows full well that an increase in vocations is directly dependent on our prayers and good works.

As Jesus says, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore *pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest* to send out laborers into his harvest.”

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the beloved parishioners who are praying to the *Lord of the harvest*. As I return to St. Patrick Parish for the annual **Seminary Appeal**, I am ever grateful to those who are always praying for priests, deacons, religious sisters and seminarians. In turn, all of you *remain in my heart* during my communion with Jesus.

In today’s Gospel acclamation, Jesus says, “**Remain in me as I remain in you. Whoever remains in me bears much fruit.**” As a fruit of your prayers, I am mindful of staying connected to the branches that are part of the Divine Vine, our Lord Jesus Christ. As long as we are connected to the Divine Vine, He will continue to nourish us with the nutrients from the *Eucharistic Bread*, the finished product of a wheat grain. Jesus is like the grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies, fulfilling its mission and growing into the Bread of Life. Like Jesus, we must die to self daily by detaching from the earthly things of the world.

You might ask, “What would make a young man to let go of the earthly things that this world has to offer?” A **restless heart!** I would detach myself of anything so as to resolve the restlessness in my heart. By coming to St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, I gradually realize that Christianity is the religion of the heart and that my heart must first be converted. To *remain in Jesus*, we must die to self daily and become reborn in Him. Only then He can fill the emptiness of our hearts. Just for the record, we are *not* dying to being. We are *not* dying to self-existence. But rather, we are dying to sins and to selfish ambitions.

As we are reborn in Jesus, we follow His example by dying to self like the grain of wheat that falls to the ground. But before long, the *Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest* in order to gather our fruits. At St. Charles Seminary, we are trained to become the future *laborers* who will diligently work in Christ’s harvest. As for me, I hope to *remain* ever closer to Jesus in my 5-day Diaconate Canonical Retreat (Dec 16-22) in Wernersville. Finally, thank you so much for your heartfelt prayers and financial contributions. Please know that your support is allowing St. Charles Seminary to form future priests, deacons, and religious who will *bear much fruit* in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

In Christ Jesus,
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