

Discernment Self-Test

A tool for evaluating yourself

Examining yourself using the 20 qualities or signs below is a good way to begin discernment of the priesthood. On each item, rate yourself on a scale of 0 – 5. A rating of 0 means you do not possess the sign at all. A 5 indicates that the sign is very evident in your life. The highest possible score is 100. Be completely honest with yourself and rate yourself fairly.

1. ____ I love Jesus Christ and I have a thirst to bring Jesus and his teachings to the world.
2. ____ I am endeavoring to be a believing, practicing Catholic Christian.
3. ____ I am trying to live a life of prayer and I desire a life of prayer.
4. ____ I am trying to serve others and I desire a life of service to others.
5. ____ I feel a desire to be a priest, though it is sometimes stronger than at other times.
6. ____ I have had others tell me that I should be a priest or that I would make a good priest.
7. ____ Prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture leads me to believe I might be called to be a priest.
8. ____ I am endeavoring to live virtuously.
9. ____ I like to be around people and I have sufficient social skills to engage others.
10. ____ I have enough intelligence to complete graduate-level coursework and function as a priest
11. ____ I think that I have the physical, emotional and psychological stability to become a priest
12. ____ I am joyful and I have a good sense of humor
13. ____ I think that I have a “priest’s heart,” as described in this chapter
14. ____ I believe that I have the self-mastery to be a good priest
15. ____ Generally speaking, I have demonstrated stability in life style.
16. ____ People who know me would say I am a Christian gentleman.
17. ____ I have had events happen in my life that seem to be signs pointing towards priesthood
18. ____ I am usually able to accept both success and failure without losing my peace
19. ____ I believe that I have a healthy psycho-sexual development and orientation
20. ____ I am trying to be truly open to the will of God for my life.
- ____ Total

Tally your score and e-mail it to the vocation director to ask for his feedback. In the meantime, try to develop the qualities that need strengthening. This will make you a much better Catholic man, even if you are not called to become a priest.

Signs of a Priestly Vocation

How do I know God is calling me?

If you have ever thought about being a priest, these qualities may be clues to a future priestly vocation:

1. God has placed in your heart a desire to be a priest.

Surveys of recently ordained priests have found an interesting trend: most priests say they first started thinking about the priesthood at eleven years old or in eleventh grade. It has become known as the 11-11 rule. If Jesus has placed a desire in your heart for priesthood, *no matter what your age*, don't ignore it. Talk to a priest you admire about how you feel.

2. You have a deep love for Christ and His Church.

A priest functions *in persona Christi capitis*—in the person of Christ, head of the Church. Thus a man who wants to be a priest must love Jesus Christ above all else. And like Jesus, he should have a deep love for the Church, the Bride of Christ. In general, a man who wants to be a priest will find himself drawn to Church teachings and “all things Catholic.”

3. Other people have mentioned that you would be a good priest.

Often other people will notice a “priest's heart” in a young man and say to him, “Have you ever thought about being a priest? I think you'd make a good one.” In fact, many men report that they grew tired of people making such comments—but that the encouragement eventually led them to seminary!

4. You desire to live a life of virtue and prayer.

Pope Benedict recently spoke about what people expect of their priests. To paraphrase, he said that people do not expect priests to be experts in anything but the spiritual life. Thus, a good candidate for priesthood attends Mass, prays frequently, receives the sacrament of Confession, serves others, and strives to grow spiritually.

5. You want to help others grow closer to Christ.

A priest brings Jesus to people and people to Jesus. For this reason, a man who wants to be a priest must have a deep concern for the people of God. He wants to help them grow in holiness; he wants to teach them the truths of the faith; he wants to minister to them during the trials of life. The vocation of priesthood is about leading others to heaven.

If you've thought about the possibility of priesthood, but don't yet have all these signs and qualities, don't despair! All people must strive for holiness. And future priests go through a long and intensive formation period, precisely to help them grow in virtue and be effective in their ministry.

If you're interested in priesthood, talk to the Vocation Director about the signs above. He can help you further discern your vocation. And remember—true happiness and peace depend on following God's perfect will for your life. If God wants you to be a priest, trust in his grace to lead you.

Citing Sources: [www.BridgeportVocations.org/your-vocation/discerning-the-priesthood/discernment-self-test/]: [Aug. 24, 2016]