

1 life 4 Christ

Newsletter of the Serra Club of Singapore • February 2011

SERRA CLUB OF SINGAPORE



A N N I V E R S A R Y

A R I S E !

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE!

ISAIAH 60:1

Serra Club of Singapore celebrates 5th Anniversary!



Serra Club of Singapore formed on 10 February 2006 celebrates its 5th Anniversary this year. To kick-start a year of celebrations, Singapore Serrans attended a special Anniversary Mass celebrated by His Grace, Archbishop Nicholas Chia on 10 February 2011, together with the seminarians, various priests, collaborators and the Carmelite sisters who have been supportive in praying for the Serra Club of Singapore.

The theme of Serra Singapore's 5th Anniversary is "Arise! Let your light shine" Isaiah 60:1. It is a command for Serrans to stand up and do their part as members of the Body of Christ to bring the Light of Christ to all. Specifically, in our ministry of promoting priestly vocations, we are reminded that in a way, we are helping to raise shepherds and leaders for the church to minister to the people of God!

A special 5th Anniversary logo was designed for the occasion (as shown on the cover). It shows a wheat field to signify Serra Club's role in helping to pray for and support the labourers in the harvest fields. The lime green signifies spring, which is

a season of life and hope, bringing to mind that we need a constant supply of priests in order for the Church to survive and to thrive. The deep red and shining sheaf of wheat stands out from the rest signifying that Singapore Serrans are to arise, boldly stand up for Christ and be courageous witnesses and disciples of the Lord, in order to draw people to the Catholic faith.

At the Anniversary Mass, Serra Club of Singapore officially launched the book "To Save a Thousand Souls". The book, written by Fr. Brett A. Brannen (please see 'About the Author' on p. 4), is a comprehensive guide for young men discerning the diocesan vocation. Singapore Serrans -- Sean Yeo, President of Serra Club of Singapore and Lucy Chew, Vice-President, Vocations - met Fr. Brett Brannen at the 68th Serra International Convention in Alaska in September 2010 where Fr. Brett gave a very inspiring and moving talk about the priesthood and even received a standing ovation after his session. Serra Club of Singapore has obtained the sole rights to publish 1000 copies of the book for distribution in Asia.

Following the official launch, two copies of the book will be given to all Diocesan priests as part of Serra Club's gift to the Archdiocese of Singapore on the occasion of the Club's anniversary. One copy is for their retention while the other copy is for them to give to a young man who may be discerning his priestly vocation. Priests may approach Serra Club of Singapore should they require more copies. Serra Club also plans to distribute the book to seminarians, aspirants, Catholic secondary school boys, vocation promoters, etc.

In thanksgiving for the Lord's blessings over the five years, Serra Club of Singapore is planning two new programmes in 2011 in line with its mission -- to foster and promote vocations to the diocesan priesthood -- Serra Eucharistic Congress 2011 for Youths and Save a Thousand Souls 2011.

Here's a little more information on the two proposed programmes so you can keep a look out for them and to pray for the two events to be Spirit-filled experiences for the participants.

Serra Eucharistic Congress 2011 for Youths

Serra Eucharistic Congress 2011 for Youths (SEC 2011), is aimed at fostering a deeper love and appreciation of the Eucharist among Catholic Youths. The dates have not been finalised but it will be held in the second half of 2011.

The objective of this congress is to bring the hearts of young people to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist. The emphasis will be on purity and personal sanctification through the Eucharist, frequent Confession, Adoration and praying the Rosary. This is to address the perennial problem of our Catholic youths falling away from the sacraments after their confirmation.

Be EMPOWERED to be HOLY

Do not be afraid to be holy! Have the courage and humility to present yourselves to the world determined to be holy!
- Pope John Paul II

Engaging Talks, Mass,
Holy Hour, Living Rosary,
Confession, Skits

@ Church of the Holy Cross
Dates to be advised...



Organised by the Serra Club of Singapore (www.serrasingapore.org)



TO SAVE A THOUSAND SOULS

A Weekend Retreat for Young Single Catholic Men
Who are Serious About the Diocesan Priesthood



Conducted by:

Father Brett A. Brannen

Author of *'To Save a Thousand Souls - A Guide for Discerning a Vocation to Diocesan Priesthood'*

Father Alex Chua

Vocation Director,
Archdiocese of Singapore



SAVE THE DATE!

30 September 2011 (Friday) to 2 October 2011 (Sunday)
At the St Francis Xavier Major Seminary

For more information, please email info@serrasingapore.org
Organised by the Serra Club of Singapore (www.serrasingapore.org)
in conjunction with its 5th anniversary celebrations.

Fr. Brett A. Brannen



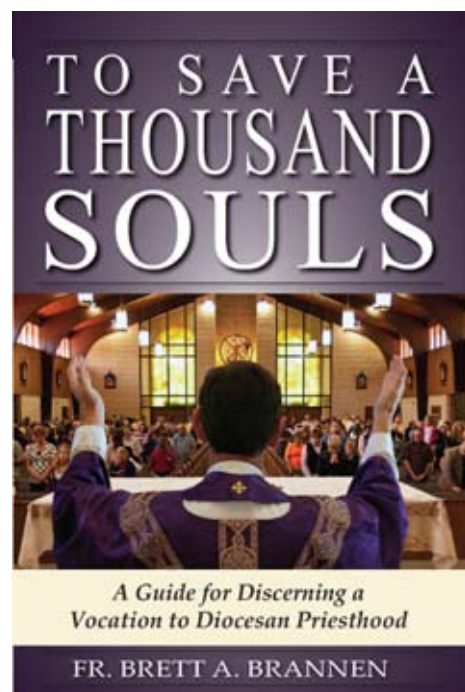
Save a Thousand Souls

Save a Thousand Souls (SATS) is an initiative where Fr. Brett A. Brannen, author of "To Save a Thousand Souls" (please see story on what the book is about from pages 5 - 7), will conduct a vocation retreat for seminarians, aspirants and young single men seriously considering the diocesan priesthood from Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei. It is scheduled to take place from 30 September to 2 October 2011 (Friday – Sunday) at the St. Francis Xavier Major Seminary. The aim of this initiative is that at the end of the retreat, participants will have the desire to "save a thousand souls".

In addition, Fr. Brett Brannen will also be conducting vocation missions to a few Catholic boys' schools, an area which Fr. Brannen has vast experience in.

To Save a Thousand Souls

A Guide for Discerning Vocation to Diocesan Priesthood



About the Author - Fr. Brett A. Brannen



Fr. Brett Brannen is one of the most successful vocation directors in the United States and now serves as the vice-rector of Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD. He is widely known as a powerful speaker and an expert in priestly formation.

Fr. Brannen was ordained in 1991 for the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia, and served as Vocation Director beginning in 1993. During his tenure, the number of seminarians dramatically expanded from five to 28 men. By 2007, Savannah caught the attention of the national press as it ordained the second-highest number of priest per capita of any diocese in the country.

Fr. Brannen has given over 30 parish missions and retreats to seminarians, priests, and religious orders. He has appeared on EWTN, published several booklets on the priesthood, and released an audio series on how to discern a diocesan vocation.

Fr. Brannen's latest book, *To Save a Thousand Souls*, combines a lifetime of spiritual insight with practical advice and riveting storytelling. It is widely hailed as the most comprehensive resource available for men discerning a vocation to the diocesan priesthood.

What the book is about

For a young man thinking about the priesthood, there are dozens of websites and pamphlets available on the subject. But until recently, there has not been a single, comprehensive guide to answer deeper questions and offer clear-cut guidance.

"*To Save A Thousand Souls*" is a recently-published 400-page book that provides the answers commonly asked by young men discerning the priesthood. This book by Fr. Brett Brannen has been called the most comprehensive guide ever written for men praying through their vocation.

"I always wanted a single resource I could hand to a

man—something that answered all his questions about priesthood—so I started writing a few chapters," said Fr. Brannen, who serves as Vice-Rector of Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland. "I love being a priest and I know that Jesus is calling a sufficient number of men to be priests in his Church. I hope this book will help these men overcome their fears and respond to God's call."

Much of the book contains stories — many from the author's personal experience — that elucidate important aspects of discerning a priestly vocation. Many reviewers have commented that it manages to convey important concepts without use of heavy theological language.

Fr. Brannen brings a unique insight into what it takes to make for a successful vocation to the priesthood, steering young men (and perhaps not so young) through the sometimes difficult and complicated maze of discernment, with clear and practical ideas.

He begins with personal anecdotes of his priesthood, starting in a very positive light that shows the impact one priest can have on a family, a village, a country and the world. Moving on, he outlines basic steps for discernment, spiritual direction, virtue, dealing with parents, celibacy and cheerfulness all the way up to daily life in a seminary of today and the new priest's ordination day. He provides clear and concise steps in discernment, such as 'God can't drive a parked car, it's time to move!' 'say three Hail Mary's every day,' 'Pray before the Blessed Sacrament,' 'write down the pros and cons of marriage and priesthood,' 'do a 'what can't I live without' exercise,' and many more.

Acknowledging that a vocation is only heard in prayer, he also provides rosary meditations for those discerning a call to the priesthood.

In the USA, over 75 bishops and Vocation Directors have ordered copies for their candidates. This book is perfect for parents, college students and priests to give to men in their parish who are discerning (or ought to be discerning) diocesan priesthood.

Excerpts from the book

Introduction

Does God want me to become a priest?
How can I be sure?
How do I know if I have the gifts and abilities to be a priest?
How do I know if I am holy enough?
How do I know that I will be happy and fulfilled?

If you are asking yourself these questions, this book was written for you.

I love being a priest. I have always loved it. I particularly enjoyed the 13 years I served as a parish priest in my home diocese of Savannah, Georgia. It is hard to imagine a better job in today's Church than being a parish priest.

But becoming a priest—and even discovering whether God wants you to pursue priesthood—can be a very difficult and uncomfortable process, even excruciating at times. As the Vice Rector of Mount St. Mary's Seminary, I have witnessed hundreds of men make great progress through years of intensive seminary training and finally be ordained priests. Before coming to work in the seminary, I was the vocation director of my diocese for 10 years, and worked closely with men of different backgrounds who were discerning priesthood. I have been privileged to guide these good men as they made the most important decisions of their lives.

Over these past 15 years, I have read many pamphlets and articles about priesthood, but I always desired a single resource I could give to a man who was discerning. I eventually saw that Jesus was calling me to write such a book. I began writing in September 2008, endeavoring to write one chapter per month, and so I was thrilled in early 2009 when Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed the Year for Priests. I saw this as a strong confirmation of God's will. The volume you are holding is my attempt to compile everything I have learned — everything I would tell a man who is considering the priesthood.

Celibacy is always a top concern for men like you. Perhaps you wonder if you're holy enough to be a priest. You may be terrified of preaching in front of a congregation. Maybe you're afraid of what your parents and friends will think about you considering priesthood. You may not know how to get to seminary, or what to expect once you get there. These concerns—and hundreds more—are covered at length in the following pages. This book is simply written and includes many true stories about men just like you.

While my primary audience is men discerning their vocations, this book may also be useful for vocation directors. Hundreds of vocation directors around the world are working extremely hard to raise up new priests for the Church, and I hope they will distribute this book to potential candidates. However, if your vocation director does in fact give you this volume, please understand that your personal relationship with him is critical; no book is a substitute for that relationship. You cannot discern diocesan priesthood without the Church.

An important caveat: this is a book about discerning diocesan priesthood. It is not about discerning priesthood in a religious order. Though there are many similarities between these vocations, this is a guidebook for discerning whether God wants you to become an ordinary parish priest. However, this book may be able to help you exclude diocesan priesthood, freeing you to continue your discernment with a particular religious order.

Please keep in mind that this is a handbook, which means that some topics will already be familiar to you. For instance, if you have already been accepted as a seminarian, some chapters will be in your past history. Feel free to skip to the chapters applicable to your current situation, keeping in mind that the chapters are arranged more-or-less chronologically, taking a man through the discernment process from beginning to end. You may also find useful the index of questions at the back of the book.

To Save a Thousand Souls. Why did I choose this title? Only Jesus Christ can save souls. Only God has the power to bring people to heaven. But there is an old expression in the Catholic Church: "He who saves a priest saves a thousand souls." It means that if a priest is in danger of leaving his vocation, and someone steps in to help restore his confidence in his priestly ministry, a thousand souls will be saved. Actually, it is a great understatement. The ministry of a single priest affects many thousands of people during the course of his lifetime. God uses the vocation of priesthood very powerfully to bring people to Jesus and Jesus to people.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will use this book to inspire more priestly vocations in our country and in our world. I am thrilled that it is being published in the Year for Priests, and I offer it as a gift to the Catholic Church, the Bride of Christ. I love being a priest and I love the Church! May the Lord use this gift as He wills.

As I always said to the young men arriving at my vocation retreats, "I'm glad that you're here. I'm glad that you have come. But now it's time to listen to Jesus. Please check your plans at the door... and let's begin."

Excerpt from Chapter 1 What Do Priests Do? Priests Bury the Dead

The couple spoke to me as they were leaving the Saturday Vigil Mass. They were a lovely couple and their twelve-year-old son was with them. He said excitedly, "Father, we're going to get a hamburger at my favorite place and then we're going bowling tonight!" This couple had tried to have children for many years and they spent a lot of money going to different specialists. Finally, they conceived and had a son, but the baby had some complications, including a hole in his heart at birth which took several surgeries to repair. But he was doing great. He was attending our parish school and living the life of a normal twelve-year-old boy.

At nine o'clock that night, a nurse from the hospital emergency room called me and told me to come quickly. I later learned what had happened. While at the bowling alley, the boy had stood up and walked to the

lane to bowl. After he bowled his ball down the lane, he turned around, grabbed his chest and fell. The doctors said that he was dead before he hit the ground. His heart had simply burst.

Later that night, I was kneeling in the church with a very heavy heart. I felt so badly for the family and for their suffering. I said, "Jesus, I don't think I have the strength to bury a child right now. I can't do this. Please help me. Please give me the grace to do this funeral and to minister to this family."

I had never seen the Church more packed than it was the day of the funeral. God helped me. He gave me the grace and I made it through the homily. After the consecration and Communion, I remember thinking, "Jesus, it is almost over. Thank you Lord."

The Catholic Rite of Committal at the cemetery is very brief, though it took a long time for all the people to park and make their way to the grave. Once I had blessed the grave and finished the final commendation, the mother looked at me and said, "Father, please open the casket so I can say goodbye." I thought to myself, "Oh no. Please don't do this." But what could I do? How could I deny the request of a mother burying her only child? So I nodded to the funeral director to go ahead and it was just as I suspected. The mother began to scream and cry, hugging her child in the casket. Her husband was there holding her and crying, and the family was all huddled around. It was a terrible, sad, unforgettable moment in their lives — and in mine.

Emotionally, I could not take it and tears poured down my cheeks. The funeral was officially over, so I just turned away and started walking slowly among the graves, acting as if I were looking for a certain name on a tombstone. I was really trying to compose myself. After a few minutes, I suddenly heard Jesus speak to me very clearly. The Lord has spoken to me many times in my life, but there have been only a few instances where his voice and message were so clear.

Jesus said, "Thank you."

And I understood in that instant that he was saying, "Thank you for being a priest. Thank you for burying this child for me, and thank you for ministering to his parents." I knew without any doubt that it was Jesus because his voice totally and immediately restored my emotional and spiritual strength. I went from being heavy-hearted and sad — one of the lowest moments in my life — to being emotionally strong, filled with joy and happiness. I immediately began to thank and praise God, "No Jesus, I should be thanking you. Thank you, Jesus, for being my Savior. Thank you for dying for me. Thank you..." But again the Lord communicated to me very clearly and this time he said, "Stop. Be quiet. Right now, I just want you to let me thank you."

As I walked through the cemetery my heart was full, and I prayed quietly, "You're welcome Jesus. You're welcome. I am so glad that I am a priest."

This is just what priests do.

“... Who will you bring with you into heaven?”

Excerpt from Chapter 3 What Is a Vocation in the First Place? Who Will You Bring With You Into Heaven?

I once heard a priest tell his vocation story.

I grew up in a very close, devout Catholic family with loving parents and we prayed together as a family every day. I attended a Catholic school with wonderful teaching Sisters and everything in my life revolved around the Church. I lived in a very Catholic culture. I was the number one altar server, the star student, and a leader in my class. Because of this, and the fact that I loved being around the parish, serving and helping out the priests, everyone would say the same thing, "You will be a priest when you grow up. Won't you?" I heard this constantly from the other kids in my class, from the sisters who taught me, and from the two assistant priests, who were always visiting the classes and interacting with me around the church. But I never heard it from the pastor, which I appreciated. I got tired of people urging the priesthood on me, because I did not especially want to become a priest. I always wondered why the pastor, an elderly Monsignor, never asked me about priesthood as everyone else did, though he was always very kind to the altar servers.

One day, as I was coming close to graduation from the parish school, I was assigned to serve the seven o'clock morning Mass and the elderly pastor was the celebrant. Only the two of us were in the sacristy and he vested in silence, mumbling the vesting prayers in Latin and preparing himself for Holy Mass. With just two minutes to go before the Mass began, the Monsignor suddenly turned and said, "John, what will you be doing when you grow up?" I thought to myself, "Oh boy, here it comes. Even from Monsignor." But I replied, "Monsignor, I am still not certain but I am thinking about going into medicine. I would like to become a doctor." And the pastor replied, "Good. Good. And what will you do after that?" I said, "Well, I suppose I will marry and have a family of my own." The priest said, "Good, and what after that?" Not sure exactly where he was going with this line of questioning, I replied, "I guess I will grow old, practicing medicine, and eventually retire. And then I guess I will die and go to heaven." The pastor nodded his head knowingly, thoughtfully, and he was quiet for a few seconds. Then he looked at me earnestly and said, "And who will you bring with you into heaven?" Immediately, he rang the sacristy bell and we walked out to begin the Mass. I thought to myself, "How clever you are, Monsignor. How clever you are." I thought about that comment all during the Mass and many more times during my adolescent and young adult years. "And who will you bring with you into heaven?" It was asking myself that question repeatedly that really turned the tide and convinced me eventually that I should become a priest.

Excerpt from Chapter 6 Developing a Spiritual Plan of Life A Jesus Experience

The truth of Jesus resonates in our souls. As we learn the truth, we quite naturally begin to love it and desire to live it. Often men who are called to become priests can remember a certain moment when God became very real to them. I call this a “Jesus Experience.” As I hear the vocation stories of seminarians, I am amazed at the extraordinary Jesus Experiences that they have had. Usually one of the three transcendentals touches a man’s soul: the good, the true, or the beautiful. Sometimes it is the love of Christ that he experiences, or especially if he is mired in sin, Christ’s great mercy and forgiveness.

My first memorable Jesus Experience happened in eighth grade. Our pastor took five altar boys to spend the weekend at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit, a Trappist Monastery in Conyers, Georgia. I did not really want to go. I would have preferred to stay home and play with my friends. But my mother informed my brother and me that we were going! It was the first time I had ever witnessed monastic life and I was very impressed. I will always remember being in the church in the early morning singing the Psalms with the monks. I was struck by their impressive looking habits, their bald heads and long beards, and their kindness. On Saturday night, after supper, I went back into the church to spend a few minutes in prayer. It was empty. The monks had gone to bed since they would be up again for 4:00 a.m. matins. I wanted to pretend to be a monk, to try it on for size, and I went up into the choir stalls to sit where they sit. I can remember feeling a sense of deep peace and, though fully awake, I simply sat in the presence of Jesus without saying a word. Very solemnly, I felt that God loved me greatly and that he had made me to do a special work for his Kingdom. I could feel Jesus, the truth, filling my whole being. Time passed without my realizing it, and when I looked at my watch, two hours had gone by! I had never prayed for two hours straight in my life. That night I realized that not only did God love me deeply, but also that I loved him deeply.

He had given me a tiny glimpse of his goodness and I was captivated. I did not yet know my vocation but I did say to the Lord before I left the church, “Okay, Jesus. Whatever it is that you want, I’m in.”

Whether you have a dramatic “Jesus Experience” like this or just gradually come to know him and his love for you, it is essential to develop a personal, loving relationship with Christ, as you progress in discerning your vocation. The purpose of a priest is to bring people to Jesus and Jesus to people. As we often say in the seminary, “Nemo dat quod non habet” (One cannot give what one does not have). A priest cannot bring Jesus to others if he does not know him.

I have seen young people go on a retreat and come back totally transformed. They tell me with great excitement how God made himself real to them and they experienced his love and goodness. I can remember some of our high school students spending a summer serving in the Bronx with the Missionaries of Charity. They would spend their summer helping the sisters run

a day camp for inner-city children. There was no air conditioning and it was a rough part of town. The youth would always come back from that experience and say, “That was the hardest thing that I have ever done—and the greatest experience of my life. I met Jesus!”

It seems to me that these Jesus Experiences most often happen when a person has given up a weekend or a significant amount of time specifically to try to grow closer to Jesus. It most often happens on a retreat, pilgrimage, or mission trip. God is never outdone in generosity, but he won’t force his way into your life. He must be invited. I am not suggesting that everyone must have an emotional, cathartic spiritual experience in order to have a personal relationship with Jesus, even though quite a few do begin this way. Many men simply develop this relationship over time and gradually come to have a deeper love and commitment to the Lord.

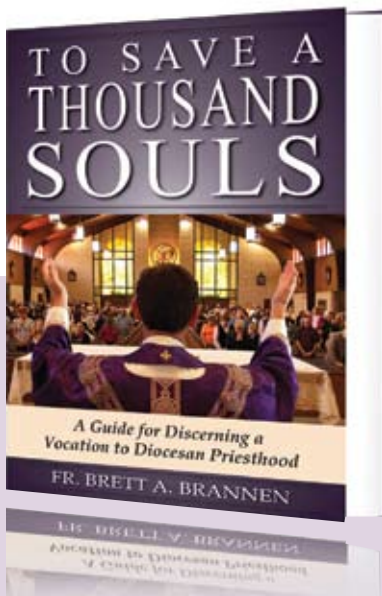
Excerpt from Chapter 12 How Do I Tell My Parents I want to be a Priest? Parental Advice

“Father, wouldn’t it be wiser for my son to get a couple of years of college under his belt first, to date a few girls, and have some normal college life experiences? Then if he still wants to go to seminary, I will support him.”

While this may seem like good advice in most cases, sometimes the suggestion to live a “normal college life” is really an invitation to live a life of grave sin. This will not help anyone discover the call of God. I am not saying that the parents desire that for their son, but that is the reality on many campuses today.

I am convinced that God calls some men to go to seminary earlier than others. One high school senior asked me point blank if he should disobey his parents, sign up for the diocese, and go to the seminary. I told him, “No, obey your parents for now. They love you very much and they are giving you prudent advice. The seminary will still be there after you finish two or four years of college. But find a way to grow in faith while you are there.”

While I would almost never recommend to an eighteen-year old senior in high school that he disobey his parents and go to the seminary, I have at times had to recommend to a 23 year- old senior in college that he obey God’s call, despite his parent’s wishes — and then trust God to help his parents understand in time. In my experience, given enough time, parents usually do become more comfortable with their son’s decision to become a priest. My father is a Baptist and he was definitely not excited when I told him that I was going to seminary. However, now that I have been a priest for many years, and he sees that I am happy, fulfilled, and doing good work for the Kingdom of God, he is proud of me and very supportive. Parents can see when their son is happy and fulfilled doing the work of a priest. In my experience, these parents become very proud of their sons, even if they still have some lack of understanding and discomfort with the whole idea.



The book for future priests.

PRIESTHOOD like you've never read it before.

Riveting stories. Powerful insights.

The most comprehensive book ever written about discerning the Catholic priesthood

Accolades for “To Save A Thousand Souls”

“I can assure you this is an excellent book for discerning your vocation. It is concise yet comprehensive, practical yet edifying.”
- Fr. William Goh, Rector, St. Francis Xavier Major Seminary, Singapore

“Fr. Brannen’s book is tremendous—inspirational, imminently practical, and amazingly comprehensive. It is a clearly written “how to” manual filled with solid advice for men discerning the priesthood. A marvelous work of immense value.”
- Fr. Len Plazewski, Diocese of St Petersburg, Vocation Director

This book can be considered a special gift to the Church celebrating the “Year for Priests.” It is a treasure chest—for bishops, vocation directors and those discerning a vocation to diocesan priesthood.
- Most Rev. J. Kevin Boland, Bishop of Savannah, Georgia

“This is the best book-length treatment of discerning a priestly vocation I’ve seen. In particular, Fr. Brannen’s treatment of celibacy is balanced and comprehensive. The book portrays the priesthood honestly and attractively, clearly expressing that faithfully living an authentic priestly vocation is an exhilarating, fulfilling, and joyful life.”
- Most Rev. William E. Lori, Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut

“I compliment Fr. Brannen for this breakthrough work. I enjoyed the book’s conversational style and anecdotal stories, and I am especially impressed by the chapter on celibacy and chastity, which achieves remarkable clarity on difficult issues of discernment. It is a clear, helpful, and down-to-earth book which will prove exceptionally useful for men looking for answers about the priesthood, as well as those assisting them in discernment.”
- Most Rev. John J. Myers, Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey

“This book is a real Godsend. There is simply nothing else like it in print. It will certainly be one of the most useful tools at a Vocation Director’s disposal when encouraging young men to consider the priesthood. It is clear, convincing, and candid. The many stories throughout the book are inspiring and very much to the point. Not only do I wish that I had this available when I was a Vocation Director, I wish that it had been available to me as a young man considering a vocation to the priesthood. It would have answered so many of my questions. All those involved in priestly vocation work owe Fr. Brannen a debt of gratitude.”
- Msgr. Steven P. Rohlf, Rector, Mount St. Mary’s Seminary, Emmitsburg, Maryland

“This book is anointed. It’s both inspiring and informative, and will be a tremendous help for men who are hesitant about priesthood and need practical advice. I know I will order copies for every man in my diocese who is discerning.”
- Fr. Tim McKeown, Vocation Director for the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia

“An unparalleled resource that covers everything men need to know when praying about their vocation. It will be required reading for my men.”
- Msgr. Rob Panke, Director of Priest Vocations and Formation, Archdiocese of Washington D.C.