

Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders

Shawn Chessell and Patrick Le

Westminster Abbey

29 October 2018

Dear Father Abbot and monks here at the Abbey, brother priests, seminarians, and friends in Christ:

Introduction

Before celebrating the Rite of Admission to Candidacy of Shawn Chessell and Patrick Le, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all the formators and families who have prepared our seminarians so that they can freely and conscientiously be admitted as candidates for Holy Orders in the Archdiocese of Vancouver. They are taking further step on their journey to Ordination and the Rite that follows public acknowledgment that it is right for them to do so.

Reflection on the Gospel

In today's Gospel Jesus issues a command to all of us, through Peter as our representative.

Duc in altum

When Jesus had finished teaching from his makeshift *cathedra* in Simon's boat, he said to the Apostle: "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch" (Lk 5:4). And the exhausted Simon obeyed the Master, trusting this compelling Teacher who spoke with such

astounding authority.¹

Peter's Fear: "Go away from me"

What happens after Simon replied with such enthusiasm is curious. The number of fish caught was enormous, far beyond his expectations. He was amazed – as we would be – but he was also fearful before the wonder. Aware of his own unworthiness at being chosen to haul in such a great catch, he exclaimed: “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man” (Lk 5:8).

We, too, can be tempted to cry out the same words, because at times we find it hard to believe that Christ is calling us personally to abide with him in love and to carry on his work as servants in the world. “Could he not have chosen someone else, more capable, more holy?” we might ask. However true that might be, the point is that Jesus has made the choice, and so we should have confidence in him, not ourselves.²

There is no need for us to feel ashamed as Peter did. On the contrary, it is spiritually necessary that we recognize our inadequacy, our sinfulness and our smallness before the greatness of the living God. Christ calls us to a life mission far beyond the expectations we might

¹ Cf. Benedict XVI, General Audience (17 May 2006).

² Cf. Benedict XVI, Address to the Clergy, Warsaw (25 May 2006).

have based on our abilities.

Jesus' Reply: "Do not be afraid"

Jesus' reply to Peter's drawing back in fear was not one of reproach or scolding him for his lack of faith. Rather, he invited him to trust and to be open to a new adventure with him – and for you, dear brothers who are soon to be candidates for Holy Orders – that adventure rightly surpasses all your expectations: "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people" (Lk 5:10).

Conclusion

Now we proceed to the Rite of Admission to Candidacy. It begins with this admonition on the meaning of what it means for Shawn and Patrick to be candidates for Holy Orders.

_ J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver