



A priest is a man who:

- is called by God to be an ordained minister of the Church, who offers his life in service to all;
- nourishes and fosters his relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer and service;
- joyfully proclaims and preaches the good news of Jesus Christ, and the faith of the Catholic Church;
- leads the Catholic community in worship and celebrates with them the sacraments of the Church;
- works to build up parish and other church communities in union with the bishop, priests and the people of his diocese;
- may serve as a chaplain to universities, hospitals, prisons, schools and the armed forces; and
- promises to live a life of celibacy.



**For More Information
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PRIESTHOOD

IT'S YOUR CALL!



“WE NEED MEN
WHO HAVE THE **COURAGE**
TO ACCEPT THE **CHALLENGE**
TO BE **LEADERS** THROUGH
TIMES OF GREAT **CHANGE**
IN OUR **CHURCH.**”

BISHOP BRIAN HEENAN

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON

I have been ordained as a priest for a little over two years, and am currently the Assistant Priest in the Mackay South Cluster of Parishes. It's been quite an amazing journey that has brought me to this point in my life: from my earliest experiences of God and Church, thanks to my parents and my Catholic schooling, through the more personal searching that often comes in adolescence, to eventually making the decision to respond to that mysterious and irresistible call to "put out into the deep" with Christ.

Even though I had always been fairly involved in church life growing up, and always believed in Christ, the call to priesthood was a gradual one, and one that I resisted at first. I think the idea of priesthood first appealed to me because of the example of the priests I knew growing up. I was drawn by their confidence, their passion for sharing the faith, their apparent understanding of religious mysteries and the fact that they seemed to have a really privileged role in helping other people deepen their faith. That kind of life excited me somehow. As I grew older, I began to ponder my faith more deeply, and along with that came a more explicit thought: 'I wonder if God wants me to be a priest?'

That thought remained throughout my final years of secondary school and my time at university studying Science. But mostly during this time it remained a fairly vague idea about something that may happen 'sometime in the future.' Following university I signed up for a year with the National Evangelization Team (NET). This was an experience that brought the idea of priesthood much more into focus for me. During that time I shared with other young people on my team about my faith and the thought that I might be called to priesthood. And it was their support and affirmation that really spurred me to start listening to God's call more intently.

I finally made the decision to enter the seminary two years later, largely because I decided I couldn't ignore the call any longer and that if I wanted to know for sure, I just had to give it a try.

Having been ordained now for a bit over two years, I can say that it has certainly been the right decision for me. My earliest attractions to the vocation of the priest have evolved and matured, but they have basically remained the same; the deepest call of this life for me is still a passion for drawing others to a deeper faith in Christ and standing in a privileged role as Christ's representative in the sacraments. The range of work I do as a priest in the parish is broad: celebrating the Eucharist, hearing people's confessions, working with other parishioners on pastoral councils and other groups, visiting the sick, burying the dead, baptising new members of the church, and visiting schools are just some of the many ways in which I live out the call to act **in persona Christi** - in the person of Christ.

I deeply hope that many more young men in our diocese will see the blessedness of this life and respond courageously to this call. It's sometimes a hard call to hear in the 'noisiness' of our secular world, but I have no doubt God is continuing to give it to people. For me personally, I am simply grateful that I have heard it, thanks to the blessings I've received from so many people and experiences in my life.

Fr Andrew Chase



with me, off and on, years of secondary school time it remained a fairly something that may happen future.' Following university I the National Evangelization experience that brought the into focus for me. During that time

I was ordained a Priest on the 24 May, 1982. What an incredible journey it has been.

When I left Christian Brothers' College in 1968 (now The Cathedral College), the thought of being a priest was somewhere there in the back of my mind. I thought I had "other things" to do. It was not until 1979 that I eventually went to St Paul's National Seminary in Sydney. In the meantime, I had worked as a Valuer and in Property Management. At one stage I was engaged to be married. However, nothing seemed permanent, there was always a feeling that there was something else to do.

That something else was Priesthood. I was ordained Bernard Wallace.

As a Church, I find that we are blessed with an Gospel message. I always have experienced a especially Eucharist where we join in an intimate and life-giving and we are alive to ourselves.

To everyone who has been and continues to be part of Priests, Religious and my wonderful family and friends

To those who may have thoughts of Priesthood, that there and share in the life of the Church as a Priest. It is a wonderful, our lives meaning and purpose.



at St Joseph's Cathedral on 24 May, 1982 by Bishop

incredible gift of witness to our faith and to God's great joy in celebrating the Church's Sacraments, sacred bond – here, the real Presence of Christ is so

my Priestly Ministry, especially Bishop Brian, brother and parishioners, I wish to say a special "thank you".

is something else to do, I urge you to come, to pray, to listen fulfilling and enriching vocation. Now thanks to God who give

Fr John Hogan

Priesthood was always an unanswered question. Being born in Melbourne I saw priesthood with young eyes as being beyond me. Something for the intellectuals of the world. Someone with celebrity status. That was not me.

Besides I found life and the sporting fields far more interesting and entertaining. Coming from a large catholic family of eleven children we learnt family values and the importance of our faith. Education was a priority. So as a youngster I settled for the enforced schooling between the far more important playing fields each weekend.

The cricket and then the umpiring of the VFL saw me enjoying the people and playing fields throughout the cities and towns of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and eventually Western Australia. During this time I studied Industrial Engineering and then Primary Teaching.

But something was still nagging. I loved teaching with all the dynamics of young people, creative teachers and parents wanting the best for their children. So I gave in. I told the Good Lord I will go where you want me. It is now I realise the Good Lord has an extraordinary sense of humour! The next thing I know I am in Western Queensland looking after St Patrick's School Winton. One moment training for another season on the playing fields in Perth. The next in the extremes of the West. The experience was transformative. A real education at last. The people were most

welcoming and I learnt that life was far larger, more challenging and more exciting than my little perspective.

Education took me to St Anne's, Sarina where leadership and responsibility skills for school and town were refined. Again I saw the incredible work of the people ensuring the best for their children and town.

The priesthood nagging continued. So after a short stay in Biloela I asked for just a six month look at the seminary in Brisbane.

I have now been a priest of the Rockhampton Diocese for five years. Five challenging but most fulfilling years. The change from education to priesthood for me was not a great leap across some chasm but a gentle growth and deepening of faith. The transition was made easily because of the people I lived with and met on the journey.

It is an extraordinarily privileged vocation with ever deepening spiritual experiences as I walk with others on the Christ journey. I would love to have a yarn with anyone interested in having a look. Even if they just want a six month look. But warning: God has a surprising sense of humour!

Peter Tonti-Filippini

