

St. Vincent de Paul

Completing 25 years the Southeast Kansas City Serra Club can justly celebrate the promotion of religious vocations in our diocese. Ever since my years in the seminary Serrans throughout the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph have taken an interest in me, offering me their support, their friendship, and especially their prayer. Serrans show how people who share common values naturally form communities and derive strength from the support of other members. The existence of the Southeast Kansas City Serra Club shows the strong interest in religious vocations in our diocese: One club was not enough to satisfy the desire of the faithful to promote religious vocations as a common effort.

At times you may wonder if you have the gifts that the organization needs, but you probably do, as Saint Paul suggests in today's first reading. Addressing the early Christian community at Corinth, Paul rejoices in how ordinary the first Christians were: "Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth." Paul says that God choose the foolish, the weak and the lowly, "those who count for nothing... so that no human being might boast before God." If you ever feel inadequate in your life as a Christian or as a Serran, you're probably off to a good start.

The same is true not just of you Serrans but of us priests. As happy as we all are to receive new priests for the diocese on ordination day, not too many years later reality hits when people in parishes have to put up with the priest that the bishop sends. The same description from St. Paul applies to us too: Not many are wise, not many powerful, not many are noble. God chose the foolish, the weak, the lowly, and those who count for nothing, as any Catholic can testify once they get to know us.

It is a special grace that the Catholic Church's patron saint of religious vocations, Vincent de Paul, is also the patron saint of the poor. Vincent started seminaries, but he also devoted his life to the needy. You don't have to be wise, powerful and noble to be a priest. You may be poor in many ways, and God can find a way to work with you.

In our culture we sideline people with limitations, and we rebuke the powerful when we uncover their hypocrisy. We have no need for those who have less, and we strive to topple those who have more. Saint Paul saw the Christian life in a different light. For him, the achievements of the lowly reveal the workings of God.

No matter where you experience limitations - in wisdom, power, nobility, health, age or faith - Christ is already at work because of you.

Wednesday, September 27, 2017