

Zachary Brown

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What are your hobbies? I guess one of my hobbies would be making cord knotted rosaries. I enjoy being outside. Mowing the lawn and working on the landscape around the house. I enjoy trap shooting. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends.

What are the popular spiritual writings that you would recommend to other men and women discerning their life vocation? "Discerning the Will of God," "Spiritual Consolation," "The Examen Prayer," and "The Discernment of Spirits" all by Timothy Gallagher; "Priests for the Third Millennium" by Cardinal Timothy Dolan; "To Save a Thousand Souls" by Brett Brannen; "The Joy of the Priesthood" by Stephen Rossetti.

Who are your favorite saints? Why are they your favorite saints? St. Isidore: I took him as my Confirmation saint because he is the patron of farmers and before seminary I thought I was going to have an agricultural career. St. John Paul II: Over my years of seminary I have found his writings to be very good, easy to read and understand but all the same very powerful works of writings.

Who are the people (priests, religious and laity) that have influenced your vocational discernment to this point in your journey? The more years I am in seminary the larger this list grows. I would say that the priest that had the initial influence on me was my pastor as I was growing up, Reverend Joseph Szybka. I saw how he lived the priesthood and how much joy he had in his life, it was something desirable. My grandparents on my mom's side also played a role now that I look back on the years. I know that they prayed for me daily and they were always willing to tell me that they thought that I would become a priest. It took some time but I acknowledged their promptings and entered the seminary. There are many other priests, religious and laity who have helped me along during my years of seminary thus far and I am very grateful for their help and advice.

What are your hopes for the future of the Catholic Church? My hopes for the Catholic Church is that she continues to grow and that people rise up and defend her against the evil that is trying to destroy the Church and those who belong to it. My hope also is that the youth remain an active role in the Church and continue to grow and develop their faith that will help them through the rest of their lives.

What advice would you offer young people about discerning a vocation to the priesthood and religious life? If you feel called even just a little bit talk to your pastor about it, he can be of great assistance to your discernment. If you are unsure of entering the seminary I would recommend that if you feel that you are being called, even just a little bit, then give it a try. There is nothing bad that can come from entering the seminary, either you find that it is not what you are being called to or you find that it is and you stay in the seminary and prepare to become a priest. Either way you will grow to be a better Catholic man by the formation and spiritual direction that you receive in that year or years that you are in the seminary.