

"They all ate ...and were satisfied."

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Once upon a time, an American priest was invited to take part in a youth rally in Canada. About 700 people were camping out in a large park for the weekend.

Their program included workshops on such topics as dating, sexual morality, drugs, peer pressure, and meditation. The organizers were surprised when they discovered the best-attended workshop was the one on ...meditation.

At one point in that workshop, the priest giving it sensed a profound presence of the Holy Spirit and invited the 200 participants to pray together. The response was amazing.

Afterward, the priest said: **"It was one of the most moving experiences in all my years as a priest."**

Then, alluding to the image of today's Gospel, which I/deacon just read to you from St. Luke, he said:

"There's a whole mountainside full of young people out there who want to eat, but there's no one to feed them. There's a whole mountainside full of young people out there who want to pray, but there's no one to teach them."

The priest's remark merely paraphrases what Jesus said in Matthew's Gospel:

"The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so, ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for the harvest." Mt. 9:37-38

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On this Feast of Corpus Christi, the "Body of Christ," we, the members of the Body of Christ, should seriously reflect on this vexing question:

"Why are there so few workers, today, to gather in the harvest? I mean: "Why are there so few young people, today, responding to God's call to the 'religious life?' " "Why is it that, in a day when there are more single people in the world than at any other time in history, there are, proportionately, fewer vocations than at any other time in history?" you ask.

Well, I am glad you asked that question (or two)!

---Could the reason for the vocation-shortage be that we aren't doing what Jesus told us to do, some 2,000 years ago, when he said:

"Ask the harvest master to send out laborers for his harvest."

For example, when was the last time we asked for laborers for the harvest? If it's longer than 2 days ago, it's too long. We should be praying for this daily!

---Could there be another reason for the 'shortage?' Could that reason be 'families?'

Are families, today, the kind of seedbeds for vocations they once were?

For example, when was the last time we spoke to our children or grandchildren about the priesthood, the sisterhood, or the brotherhood as a life's work? Do we fret about the shortage of vocations and, consequently, the merging or closing of parishes and not 'lift a finger' to even suggest the possibility of clerical life to **our** youngsters?

---Could there be, yet, another reason why there's a shortage of vocations today? Could the reason actually have to do with each of us, personally? Let me put it this way:

If we are a young person, have we ever considered committing ourselves to following Jesus as a 'religious?' If not, why not?

If 'not', I don't think it's because young people are so selfish and value the things of the world so much. I think they are far too generous for that.

I think the reason has to do with us adults. How many of us have ever invited a young person to consider a vocation? The fault, I believe, is ours, not theirs.

And so, on this Feast of Corpus Christi, I'd like to invite every unmarried person in this congregation to do something special during the week ahead. I'd like to invite you to add to your prayers ...a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to guide you in your choice of a life's work.

And I'd also like to invite every parent of an unmarried person to add to his or her prayers ...a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to guide their son or daughter in choosing a life's work. This is the invitation I extend to you on this special Feast of Corpus Christi.

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I now close with this story:

Once upon a time, a missionary was reporting to his superior from a foreign land, as was a requirement, not only on the progress of his work, but also on his own personal life. Here is an excerpt from just such a report submitted by St. Francis Xavier in India to his superior in Europe:

"Many Indians here fail to become Christians --simply because there is no one to teach them. I have often felt moved to go to the universities of Europe ...shouting like a madman, saying to those who have more learning than goodwill, to employ it advantageously....

If only, while they studied their humanities, they would also study the accounting they will have to make to God someday for the talent he has given them! If only they did this, many might be moved to say...

'Here I am, 'Lord.'

What would you have me to do?' "

My brothers and sisters:

**"The harvest is abundant,
but the laborers are few;**

So... ask the master of the harvest...

to send out laborers for his harvest" ... and... to give us ears to hear his call!

May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you ...the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.