



OUT, INTO THE DEEP

The Story of Nick Ali

Vocations Project Part II

Sequel to "The Story of Matt McCarthy"



My name is Nicholas Ali, and I am a seminarian from Serra House; I am also a Knight of Columbus and I am currently in my last year of studying philosophy and theology at St. Philip's Seminary, with plans to attend St. Augustine's Seminary next year, God willing. I have been discerning the vocation to the priesthood for about six or seven years now, since I was in grade 10. At the time I was very involved in my parish – I was an altar server, a lector, I helped lead the youth group, I worked in the parish office, and much more. Prior to grade ten, I had never dared to think that I might be called to the priesthood. It was the encouragement and suggestions of my family, friends and fellow parishioners from St. Anne's that first got me to think about this vocation. In cooperating with God's grace, they prepared my heart and mind to be open to God's will for me in my life.

With the grace and gentle (and sometimes not so gentle) nudging of our Lord, I finally decided to "Put out into the deep" (Luke 5:4) and join Serra House, which is a house for men who are discerning the vocation to the priesthood. Currently, I am just about to complete my last year of residence at Serra House and my studies at St. Philip's. I have truly enjoyed, and loved studying at St. Philip's and living here at Serra House. My rector, Fr. Liborio, is the Vocations Director for the Archdiocese of Toronto, and he, along with the rest of the staff and our new incoming rector, Fr. Hansoo Park, have made my stay at the house a truly enjoyable one. The other men who live with me at the house provide me with support in my own vocation, and also give great advice regarding my spiritual journey and are truly genuine friends. We pray together at least two or three times a day and we study together. Every day at Serra House begins with prayer (usually Holy Mass), and proceeds from there in a balance of academic, spiritual and personal formation... not to mention the important recreational activities like foosball and eating (the food is awesome!).

That is not to say that there haven't been difficulties along the way; I have had to make many sacrifices in order to start out and continue on this path. I left my engineering studies only three quarters complete, and have to maintain celibacy and obedience. I can honestly tell you that every sacrifice that is made for the sake of Christ is completely worth it; making a sacrifice involves giving something up, but always for something greater. The most difficult thing for me is to know my own sinfulness while still hearing the call of Christ to serve at His Altar. In remembering that He called people like Peter and Paul who denied and persecuted Him, I find great peace and a sense of wonder and awe at how merciful and loving the Lord truly is. In my eyes, this is evidence that when you find something that you are passionate about, and that God is [possibly] calling you to do, you will truly be satisfied. In saying this, I encourage all of you, my brothers, to also put out into the deep and listen to the gentle whispers of the Lord, so that you too may discover His plan for you.