

From the *FLORIDA CATHOLIC* newspaper:

Meet the Seminarian

Seminarian flying high for his vocation

Joseph Plesko has dreams of becoming a ‘flying priest.’

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Home parish: Nativity Parish, Brandon

Seminary: St. John Vianney College Seminary

Schools attended before seminary: Tampa Jesuit High School and one year at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Mo.

Hobbies: Mechanics, cars, airplanes, model rockets, pingpong, golf, ultimate Frisbee, running, weight lifting, coin collecting, listening to music, driving and bowling

FC: When was the first time you thought of the priesthood?

JOSEPH PLESKO: I was in second grade when I first thought, “When I grow up, I want to be a flying priest.” This means having a pilot’s license and being a priest. This is because there are many airplane pilots in my family.

FC: Who influenced you to want to become a priest, and how did that person influence you?

JOSEPH PLESKO: I will continue to say this all my life because it is so true: Even though there are many priests that I know and close family members who have had more of an influence on me than others, every person I have ever come in contact with has brought me to the point where I am now in life.

FC: What is your favorite Scripture passage and why?

JOSEPH PLESKO: John 15:5. “I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.”

This passage makes clear that God is in all of us or is a part of every single one of us, and we must trust in him and keep his faith in order for us to help each other and live our true life.

FC: What are some of the most important parts of the discernment process?

JOSEPH PLESKO: The most important part of the discernment process is being at a college seminary that is teaching us to be a real, true father.

FC: What advice would you give to someone considering a vocation to the priesthood or religious life?

JOSEPH PLESKO: Take a leap of faith and enter the seminary or the religious life, because then that question can truly be discerned and answered. Otherwise, get a spiritual director.

FC: Who is your favorite saint and why is he/she your favorite?

JOSEPH PLESKO: Well, there are many awesome saints that I think I like. One that comes to mind is my confirmation name: St. Peter. Peter and Jesus were best friends and Peter still denied knowing Jesus three times. Yet Jesus forgave him and chose him to be the first bishop and the foundation of our church.

FC: What is the biggest lesson you've learned, spiritually, so far, while at the seminary?

JOSEPH PLESKO: I find that when I spend time with (God) in the chapel or church and write out my reflections and meditations, I am able to get more out of the experience. This then allows me to share information with my spiritual director, who can then help me.

FC: What do you look forward to most when you become a priest?

JOSEPH PLESKO: I look forward to helping people and being there for them at their most important points in life.

In cooperation with the diocesan Vocations Department, The Florida Catholic is periodically publishing a series of brief profiles of the men preparing for the priesthood in the diocese. For more information, visit the Vocations Department's Web site at www.spvocation.org. E-mail the vocations director, Father Len Plazewski, at spvocation@aol.com. He also can be reached at 727-345-3452.