Answering God’s call

“To live means to be desired and loved by God, moment after moment.” (“Jubilee of the Consecrated Life,” Appendix IA)

Of all the ways one might define human life, that brief and startling statement says everything. I wonder what kind of definition each of us would write were we asked to define “to live.” I have a suspicion that many of us would begin, “To live means that I…” Our definitions would continue with a list of things that I would accomplish, achieve, feel, think, know, do.

But the true definition does not begin with anything that I set as a goal for myself. Instead it begins with recognizing that the only reason I am alive is that I am “desired and loved by God.” By desiring and loving me, God brought me into being and sustains me. I am neither the source nor the goal of my own life. I am one who is desired and loved by God, moment after moment, and therefore I am alive. My existence is evidence that God exists!

Taking that definition seriously means letting a revolution happen in our hearts. If the reason I am alive is that I am a desire of God, the beloved reason I am living is that I am desired and loved by God.

“What does God call me to do?” That is the proper question to ask oneself when contemplating a vocation.

Discerning a vocation means allowing myself to be defined by God’s desire and love for me.

Am I afraid of falling? God will catch me. Am I too weak? Yes, but God is strong. Will I miss my former life? Perhaps, but I will gain something more. Will I abandon what I have built up? No, I will give it to God. Will I lose my family? No, I will grow even closer to them, and God will even expand my family. Will I limit my future choices? Most definitely yes, but in giving myself to God I will gain everything.

Alive in God’s desire

Over the past six months I have had the privilege of getting to know the large number of religious women and men who serve the Archdiocese of Seattle, and I am often struck by their heroic history in the Pacific Northwest. Many of their forebears set out into the wilderness, far from home, like Abraham, because they trusted in God’s promise and believed in the mission he had given them. The results of their pioneering spirit can be seen everywhere in the archdiocese, as sisters and brothers continue to serve God faithfully.

This Saturday I will have the awesome privilege of ordaining five new priests for the archdiocese, men who have been called by God from a variety of backgrounds. Last Friday they spent the day with me, and we enjoyed our time of prayer and reflection. I was reminded joyfully that God is calling fine men to be priests, and I am deeply grateful.

Please join me in prayer for those in the archdiocese who are considering a vocation to the priesthood or religious life (and for those who are not considering a vocation but should be!). Pray that they will come alive in God’s desire and love for them, that they will give their “I” to God for his sake and ours. Pray that they will have the courage to stake their lives on what it means to “live.” Pray that they will hear his call and answer, “Yes!”

I would like to make a request of everyone who reads this column — lay, religious and clergy. Think of at least one young man or woman who you believe would be a good priest or religious. Pray for that person’s intentions, cut this column out of the newspaper and mail it to him or her with your personal words of encouragement.

Part of our vocation is to extend the call of God.

Archbishop Sartain Special Pallium Issue

On June 29, Pope Benedict XVI will confer the pallium upon Archbishop J. Peter Sartain. The Progress will have full coverage of this special event in the July 14 issue.

Don’t miss this opportunity to send Archbishop Sartain your congratulations and best wishes!

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Liturgy to be more formal, theologically deeper

While critics question long, complex sentences, new translation conveys concepts previously diluted by simplified language

By JERRY FILTEAU

When a new English translation of the Mass is introduced in the United States — at the start of Advent in late 2011 — the style of worship will be more formal. But it will also be deeper theologically and more evocative emotionally and intellectually.

The Vatican’s intention was not so much to make the liturgy more formal as to make the English version conform more closely to the original Latin, says Father Paul Turner, a Missouri priest who is former head of the North American Academy of Liturgy and frequently writes and lectures on liturgical questions.

“I think what’s intentional is getting to a closer interpretation of the Latin” from which all modern liturgy translations in the Roman Catholic Church emanate, Father Turner says.