

From diverse starting points, eight new seminarians converge on path to priesthood

By Erik Zygmunt

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An airplane evangelizer, a young man with seemingly everything and a planning analyst for the world's most valuable company are among the past lives of the eight seminarians who have been accepted into formation by the Archdiocese of Baltimore this year.

The journeys of those three men follow, along with brief bio capsules of the other five.

✖ **Jim Bors**

Age: 54

Home parish: St. Andrew by the Bay, Annapolis

Seminary: Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg

Bors has long been active in his home parish. Founder, leader or enthusiastic member in several ministries, councils and committees, he always felt he could be most effective as a layperson.

Bors applied himself outside his parish as well. As a project manager for Rockwell Collins, a producer of aviation electronics systems, he flew to Portland, Ore., about three weeks of every month for years. Every person he sat next to on the jet was an evangelization opportunity.

"All I did was ask them questions," he explained. "Based on their answer, I asked more questions." Eventually, Bors said, God would enter the discussion "because of the way the Holy Spirit works."

He estimates that he has had about 800 such conversations, leading to about 30 conversions to Catholicism, more "almost-theres" and countless seeds planted. Nevertheless, "of course not," was his initial reply when parishioners asked, after the death of his wife, Shirley, if he had ever considered the priesthood.

However, friends of his told him about another widower with adult children who had become a priest, and that, Bors said, "caught my attention."

✖ **Scott Kady**

Age: 54

Home parish: St. Peter, Westernport

Seminary: St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore

Raised Methodist, Kady's conversion began in his late teens. He was in church with his grandmother, and as the congregation recited the Apostles' Creed, a phrase leapt out at him.

"I believe ... in the holy catholic church," Kady remembered. "I was like, 'Wait a minute.' "

A few years of "inspired research" followed. Friends at St. Peter told him about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, and he signed up for classes "with no intention of converting."

However, Kady said, "that Easter I joined the Catholic Church."

He began to feel pulled toward the priesthood soon after, "but as we know, life happens," he said.

In Kady's case, that meant working for the Saudi Arabian Oil Company, the value of which is today estimated in the trillions. Taking an entry-level position in Houston, he eventually wound up in Saudi Arabia, where he attended "underground" Mass. After taking early retirement in 2011, he joined a Benedictine community as a postulant.

"I really enjoyed it," he said, but a sudden and inexplicable "need to leave" came over him, which he eventually heeded to move in with his mother.

"Unbeknownst to us, she was sick with cancer," said Kady, who cared for her in her final months. "Looking back I can see why I was led to leave."

After his mother's death, a priest asked Kady if he had ever considered the priesthood. Assured that his age was not a deal-breaker, he pursued the idea. In July, he was accepted into formation.

Zachary Robinson

Age: 25

Home parish: Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ellicott City

Seminary: Mount St. Mary's

Robinson, who is from Mechanicsburg, Pa., said he is pursuing ordination to the priesthood "because God told me to."

As an undergrad at Penn State, he lived the "college lifestyle."

"I knew that God was important, but my actions didn't reflect it," he said.

As graduation neared, Robinson lined up a job in Maryland, but then realized he had neglected something while plotting his course.

"I had been making all these plans for what to do with my life after college, and I never once asked God what he thought of my plans," he said.

Lying face down on his bed, he surrendered himself and sought an answer.

"Go to Maryland," came the reply, which Robinson described as "not audible but so clear it might as well have been audible."

He accepted a job offer from Boeing and moved to Elkridge in June 2012. One July night, he was driving home from his new job, high on the success of his life - academic credentials, a high salary and impressive physical fitness.

He sang along to the song on the radio, "Some Nights" by Fun. He heard himself repeating the crux lyrics, "What do I stand for?"

The question supplanted his self-satisfaction.

"I realized I was singing to Jesus," Robinson said, adding that another realization soon followed: "I had to start following God wholeheartedly, and his church, or I had to give up on him completely."

The dual-major in physics and mathematics, who would go on to earn his master's in computational and applied mathematics from The Johns Hopkins University, made his decision.

"I had seen too much evidence in my life to forsake God," he said.

He immersed himself in ministries such as ChristLife Young Adults. During eucharistic adoration in January 2014, he said he heard the call: "I need you to be a priest. Your heart is big enough for my church."

Other new seminarians



Chancelor Claypool

Age: 25

Home parish: Church of the Immaculate Conception, Towson

Seminary: Mount St. Mary's



Rondall Howard

Age: 23

Home parish: Holy Trinity, Glen Burnie

Seminary: St. John Paul II Seminary, Washington



Braden Lynch

Age: 17

Home parish: Resurrection of Our Lord, Laurel

Seminary: St. John Paul II

✖ **Nicholas Mwai**

Age: 38

Birthplace: Nanyuki, Kenya

Sponsoring parish: Immaculate Heart of Mary, Baynesville

Seminary: St. Mary's

✖ **David Ray**

Age: 51

Hometown: Annandale, Va.

Sponsoring parish: St. Philip Neri, Linthicum Heights

Seminary: St. Mary's

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