

Hearing God's call: Glyndon parish hosting major vocation night for youth

For Father Matthew T. Buening, the call to the priesthood wasn't natural. He went to college to play sports like football and basketball.

"I was so into sports and the worldly kind of things," Father Buening said. "It was only when I got out of those things that I realized I wanted more."

Father Buening said he became introspective and prayerful as he discerned his future.

"When you invited God to be part of it, it's more exciting and more adventurous to be sure," he said.

Father Buening will have the chance to share some of his message April 25 at Sacred Heart in Glyndon, which will host a program called "Called to Follow Christ." Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien will provide a taped message for attendees, who will interact with several speakers in various workshops.

The night will begin with a 5 p.m. Mass, followed by a pizza dinner and the workshops. Although more than 100 Sacred Heart youths will be part of the crowd, organizers say it is open to any young people.

The idea for the event came about through discussions at Sacred Heart, which has a vocations committee. The group is consistently looking for ways to build awareness amongst young people, so youth minister Mae Richardson was approached about doing a "mini conference" that would give different faces to vocational life.

"So often, when we talk about vocations it comes across almost as a job choice, a situation in which a young person either has to choose the church or a secular job," Richardson said. "But our church has always understood that vocational callings, whether they be to the priesthood and religious life or to married life or single life

are ultimately about serving the Church and serving humanity with the gifts God has given us.”

Richardson said Christianity’s history “is filled with people, from Mary and Jesus to Mother Theresa who were called to follow Christ, and who said yes.”

That meant sometimes going against the grain.

Richardson said she wants young people to, like Father Buening, ask God what he wants them to do.

After the Archbishop’s message to the young people, the youths will attend two “mini-rounds,” where guest speakers will talk about their response to God’s call. Groups will have about 20 people in each session. Richardson said young people will be able to ask questions that pique their curiosity.

“Our hope is to let young people have a chance to see people who are joy-filled priests, happy religious and excited married couples,” Richardson said. “Each vocation has its challenges, and each person or couple who was asked to share is more than willing to share both the good and the bad about their life’s vocations. Ultimately though, these are people who all have a sense of deep contentment, peace and joy at the life that God has called them to.”

Those interested in attending are asked to pre-register. Email Mae Richardson at Mae@shgparish.org with the participant name and his or her grade.