



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP
DIVISION OF VOCATIONS

Dear Friends in Christ,

I was ordained a transitional deacon a few months ago and I feel so much joy in my diaconal ministry and as I continue my path to the priesthood.

My journey began much like other seminarians. I attended Catholic schools growing up and was supported by loving parents who kept the Lord present in our daily lives. However, the road to get to this point has been one of constant change and perseverance.

I grew up in the Philippines and came to the United States for the first time in 2010 to attend Baltimore City Community College.

Two years later, I returned to the Philippines and entered a Religious Community, the Oblate Apostles of the Two Hearts, where I was exposed to different facets of missionary and parish life. I continued my philosophical studies at Mater Redemptoris College and then transferred to St. Peter's College Seminary. I longed to return to the U.S., but with that came hesitations and questions. I kept asking, "Where does the Lord want me to be?"

While praying one day at St. Peter's I came across Joshua 1:9, Be strong and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD, your God, is with you wherever you go. I knew at that moment it was time for me to take the next step. So, in 2020 I returned to Maryland to be a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

As I look back at my discernment process, seminarian education, and so much travel, there are no better words to describe formation other than it has been an incredible gift. It's an opportunity for a young man to radically give himself to God through prayer, study, and sacrifice in a way that shapes him for eternity. Wherever I may go I know that the Lord will be by my side.

I know now that you, too, have been by my side. Through your prayers and generosity, you have become an integral part of my journey to become a priest just as you have for the 55 seminarians in the archdiocese.

You help provide the resources we need to learn and grow in our faith with the Lord. We cannot do this without you, and I ask that you continue to accompany us on our paths of discernment with your support for Vocations, through prayer and through your sacrificial giving.

Thank you for your generosity as I continue toward the priesthood with you and the Lord by my side. It is with immense joy that I prepare to serve God, His Church, and the faithful of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

With sincerest gratitude,

Franz Belleza
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