

Seminarian Profile: Daniel Sedlacek

My name is Daniel Sedlacek, and I am a senior in college studying at St. John Vianney College Seminary at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota.

I grew up on a dairy farm outside a small town, Cornell WI, on the northern edge of the Diocese of La Crosse. I have eight siblings, five sisters and three brothers. I am the fourth oldest. I was also home schooled K-12 and so spent a lot of time at home with my family. My favorite subject in school was almost always religion, catechism, or anything regarding the Catholic Faith. Growing up I liked to serve Mass at my parish, Holy Cross in Cornell. I also like hunting, reading, taking care of the farm animals, and playing the piano.

The circumstances of my upbringing have had important effects on my discernment of the priesthood. Growing up on a farm gave me a sense of God's providential work in all of His creation and of our dependence on His grace and His will. The example of my parents' willingness to educate me and my siblings, while also running a family farm and raising nine children, taught me true love, discipline, and self-sacrifice for the sake of others and for something greater than myself.

Ever since I was quite young, I have always wanted to do something amazing or go on a great adventure. I loved reading stories such as *Treasure Island*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Sherlock Holmes*, and any story that involved danger and adventure. I wanted to be a hero and do something that really mattered with my life.

When I was about eleven, I read a book about St. Francis Xavier, and his story of being a missionary in distant lands and preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments to those who had never heard of Jesus Christ inspired in me a desire to do something similar. This was one of my earliest recollections of God calling me to the priesthood.

Although I wanted to do something great, I was not always willing to do what God wanted me to do, especially in high school. And so I started to think about what *I* wanted to do and plan *my* own life. I thought about joining the Air Force, becoming a fighter pilot, or going to college and becoming a university professor of history or philosophy, or perhaps even getting into the political arena. However, God kept calling me through many other small instances, such as retreats, Steubenville Conferences, serving at Confirmation Masses, studying my Faith, attending youth groups, going on a Threshold Retreat, and visiting a seminary. All these small moments of God's grace built up until I had to finally admit and accept that God was calling me to enter seminary. I was only able to admit that God was calling me to seriously consider the priesthood when I stopped making excuses (i.e. "I'm not good enough" or "It is too difficult"), when I was truly willing to do anything God called me to do, and when I started to pray daily. I decided in April of my senior year in high school to enter college seminary, after already planning on attending Ave Maria University.

When I was finally able to accept the fact that God was calling me to pursue this

vocation, I entered St. John Vianney College Seminary in St. Paul, MN. On move-in day, I experienced the greatest peace and joy which I have ever had, because I realized that I was finally where God wanted me to be. I slowly realized that I was indeed striving for something great. After three full years of seminary, I now know that God's plans for me were far greater and more adventurous than any of my own plans. Answering God's call has brought me on greater adventures than my own plans. I have made many good friends, learned a lot, overcame my fear of public speaking, studied for four months in Rome, and have grown in love of God and of His holy Catholic Church. I am excited for what God has in store for me in my next four years of theological study and God willing, as a priest of Jesus Christ for the Diocese of La Crosse. I do not know what great things he has in store for me, but I know that they are greater than what I could accomplish by my own will and efforts. It is only by doing His will that we will find fulfillment, peace, and happiness in life.

My journey toward priesthood on which God has sent me has been more exciting than the adventures of Frodo Baggins or Long John Silver, for its purpose is greater than finding treasure or even saving Middle Earth; its purpose is following God's will in order to attain my salvation and the salvation of those whom God has put in my life. The goal of this journey is really the only thing that ultimately matters; fulfillment and peace in this life and the hope of eternal happiness with God in the next.