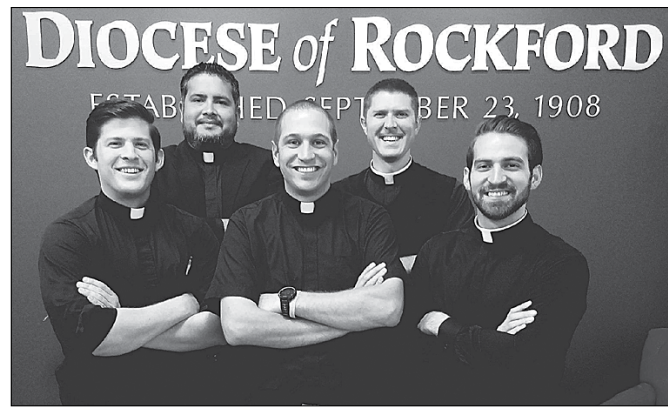


Meet the Vocations Team

Father Keith Romke (front center), director of the diocesan Vocations Office, now has a team of priests helping him. They are assistant vocations directors (clockwise from Father Romke) Fathers Robert Gonnella, Manuel Gomez, Sean Grismer and Kyle Manno. Look for more from them in future Young Observers. This month, Father Sean Grismer offers a perspective in Vocations Corner, and Father Romke answers a YO Father question.



VOCATION CORNER

Claiming our kingship



By FATHER SEAN GRISMER | Assistant Vocations Director

**J**R.R. Tolkien's book, "The Return of the King," is vastly different from the movie created by Peter Jackson in 2003.

The thing that struck me most when reading it was the character of Aragorn. The movie portrays him as this reluctant yet noble man who, after being pushed enough, takes up his rightful kingship.

Whereas in the book, he

knows deep within himself (because of his lineage) that he is called to be king. Without any hesitation or reservation, but with confidence he steps into that kingship when the time is right.

Too often we step into our vocations (big or small) like the Aragorn of the movies. We are hesitant and only make the decision after God has made it absolutely clear.

The reality is this. It may not be absolutely clear until you make your vows or promises at the altar of God (in any of the vocations).

But when you feel the draw, the pull, the invitation in one direction or the other, take that step with confidence. God will make it "clearer" for you one way or the other.

God wants us to step into our kingship and queenship

like the Aragorn of the books.

Believe that you were created with a purpose and seek it out with your whole heart and soul. He does not want you to be afraid or question its uncertainty.

Take a step and throw yourself into the God who created you and who will be there to confirm for you the call He has placed in your life.

More summer at Steubenville



(Photos provided) The youth group from St. Mary Parish in Woodstock (left) poses at a Steubenville conference this year. Traveling in four buses, the group of 156 students and 24 chaperones was the parish's largest ever. The conference has been a big influence on parish youth who feel blessed to be able to witness the Holy Spirit move through them when they attend this conference.

YO FATHER

Q Why does it sometimes seem like there is a lot of animosity between Catholics and Protestants?

**A** Great question! I think I'd like to begin answering this by using an example that pales in comparison when it comes to importance. So, let me ask a different but similar question: "Why does it seem like there is a lot of animosity between Cubs fans and Cardinals fans, or between Bears fans and Packer fans?"

I'd say the answer is because one group believes their team is the best. And on top of it, after years and years of cheering for one specific team, you fall in love with them and become emotionally attached. (This explains why I cried tears of joy uncontrollably when the Cubs won the World Series!)

Another idea as to why there would be animosity is because these groups are constantly pitted against each other in competition. Unfortunately I've seen fans of opposing teams get so worked up they physically start fighting!

I think if we take these ideas and apply them to the infinitely more important question you have asked,

we'll find our answer. Just to make sure we're on the same page I'll offer a quick history lesson.

Jesus established ONE Church, the Catholic Church.

Jesus even prayed at the Last Supper "I pray for those who will believe in me . . . that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." (John 17: 20-21)

Thus, Jesus' intention from the beginning was for there to be one Church for all time. However, we human beings sometimes get tripped up and go against God's will! In the 1500's there were some not-so-great practices within the Church, such as the selling of indulgences.

Basically, some people within the Church made some bad decisions, and things needed to get cleaned up. But the doctrine of the Church and her sacraments and teachings were all still 100 percent Divinely Inspired and protected by God.

When some people reacted against

the decisions and practices of some of the leaders of the Church, they went further and changed some of the doctrine and teachings as well.

This opened the flood gates because once one group pulled away and changed some things, then nothing stopped a different group from splintering off. If we fast-forward 500 years, there are now over 30,000 different Christian denominations.

Jesus prayed that we might be one!

So, getting back to the question as to why there can be animosity between Catholics and Protestants, I'll again go back to the answers from our sports analogy.

Both groups of Christians believe their "team" is best, and both, over time, become emotionally attached. Sometimes this intense emotion can lead us to stop thinking with our heads, which is precisely why fans of opposing teams can sometimes fight.

Christians shouldn't be doing this!

The important thing to remember

is that Jesus wants us to be one. And even though we may have our differences, we aren't competing against each other. Unfortunately though, sometimes it feels that way.

We are on the same side, and I think it is important for Christians to work together to try to find unity. This search for unity is called **Ecumenism**.

What Catholics and Protestants need to do is first and foremost focus on what we have in common. We all love the Lord and desire to worship Him and serve Him. All of us are human beings who are sons and daughters of God.

This doesn't mean we throw away our differences and say they don't matter because they do. Holding firm to our beliefs while trying to understand the other is important.

Deep down I hope that Cubs fans and Cardinals fans can appreciate their joint love of baseball rather than focusing on the differences between their teams!

So what does this concretely mean?

Faith and football

Player and coach put faith first, on the field and off

**T**o men, football can mean a lot. But for these two men, faith means more.

football team as a punter, and discerning the priesthood, Grant Aasen has demonstrated a desire to succeed.

thought of being a priest as a child.

Many people said his recovery from a head injury after a hard tackle was a miracle, but it wasn't until his pastor asked a question that he pondered it as more than a "crazy outcome."

Hearing a call

In recovering from a life-threatening injury, walking on to the Georgia Tech

Aasen, who graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in industrial engineering in May, gave up his final year of football eligibility for the seminary.

He planned to enter Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans this fall to begin studying for the priesthood.

Football has been part of Aasen's life since second grade. The youngest son of Mark and Tina Aasen of Fayetteville, Ga., he grew up a parishioner of Holy Trinity Church in Peachtree City. Aasen, 22, never

"I do remember Father John Murphy, the priest at Holy Trinity," Aasen said. "He came up to me after Mass once. He said, 'How does it feel to be a miracle?'"

That's when it occurred to the young man; there was something greater at work.

It was difficult for Aasen to tell Paul Johnson, Georgia Tech's head coach, that he would be pursuing a different calling.



(CNS photo/Michael Alexander, Georgia Bulletin) Grant Aasen, who graduated from Georgia Tech in May, gave up his final year of football to begin studying for the priesthood.

The (campus) Catholic Center is where I've learned everything, for the most part, and observed ... what good Catholics, really solid, practicing Catholics look like!

— Grant Aasen, GT grad

"God let me know that it was time. And he let me know at the right time," Aasen said.

Johnson said he supported Aasen and believes his former player will be successful.

"I'm certainly not going to get into a contest with a higher being as to what your calling might be," he said.



(CNS photo/Dave Hrbacek, The Catholic Spirit) Minnesota Vikings offensive coordinator Pat Shurmur (right) talks with quarterback Sam Bradford during practice Aug. 3 at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

It's just a reminder to be a good husband, a good father and good son, good friend (and a) good teacher.

— Pat Shurmur, Minnesota Vikings offensive coordinator, about his note card

Setting priorities

Each morning, Pat Shurmur pulls out a laminated card with his priorities for the day.

"We as coaches laminate everything. You never know when you're going to get caught in the rain," said Shurmur, 52, the offensive coordinator for the Minnesota Vikings.

The card has prayers and reminders of how he wants to live out his Catholic faith. His card includes petitions for St. Patrick and St. Joseph, a coach's prayer and one

his father, Joe, used during a terminal illness. The card also lists his family members' birthdays and includes a "be list," characteristics he wants to live by.

Shurmur takes those reminders into his work with the Vikings as he begins his 16th season coaching in the NFL.

"My Catholic faith influences really every facet of my life," Shurmur said. "I've always believed it's a terrific guideline for living and certainly has carried over to coaching."

— Nichole Golden and Matthew Davis, CNS

Venturing comes to St. Gall

Not only does Elburn have a new St. Gall church and a new pastor, Father Christopher Di Tomo, they also have the new BSA Venturing Crew 413.

Only 18 months old, the crew has done some amazing things in a short time.

Not only have they been indoor sky diving, mini golfing, camping, backpacking, movie watching and skiing, but they also have logged more than 1,500 service hours for their community.

They've planted and cared for a garden to give the food to their local food pantry. They have spent many hours at St. Gall church itself and at the cemetery.

This August they had their first big high adventure, a 10-day trip to Florida. They spent time in Fort Lauderdale at the beach and in the everglades on an airboat excursion.

In the Florida Keys, they boarded a 40-foot sail boat at the Boy Scout High Adventure Sea Base. There they worked the sail, cooked the meals on board, and drove the boat while living and sleeping under the stars on deck.

They spent two days at Walt Disney World, playing in the park till midnight, and a day at the Kennedy Space Center visiting the Atlantis space shuttle, seeing the Apollo rockets and learning about the mission to Mars.

Anyone interested in seeing where Venturing

Crew 413 is going next, come to an open house at 7 p.m., Sept. 21 at St. Gall Parish, 43W885 Hughes Road in Elburn.

Venturing is open to girls and boys, 14-20. Info: Linda Potvin, 630/531-0061 or Bruce Aderman, 630/404-6113



(Photos provided)