

Called by Name Homily November 17, 2013

Brothers and sisters, at a recent school event, a Sock Hop, the principal called upon me to draw four names from a large drum containing hundreds of raffle tickets. I happily complied with her request. After all, the raffle was one of the highlights of a most enjoyable evening, and generated considerable excitement among those who attended the popular event. After drawing the four raffle tickets, a member of the school staff approached me to register a complaint. Dejected, she informed me that for many years she had participated in the raffle and not once did she ever hear her name called as a winner. Not once! She considered herself a loser!

Her pointed remarks reminded me of the Words of the Good Shepherd, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the tenth chapter of John's gospel "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice".(Jn10:3,4.)

By virtue of our baptism, each one of us has been called by name. Christ has punched our ticket We are all winners. All that is necessary is for us to respond to his call and act decisively as his disciples.

Once again, the diocese of Albany has taken the initiative in promoting important ministries in the life of the Church. In view of the dwindling number of priests and religious, it is all the more imperative to encourage the members of our congregation to consider prayerfully the mystery of the Lord's call. To serve as laborers in our Lord's vineyard is an extraordinary honor.

In Called by Name II we are reminded that each one of the baptized has a vocation, and that the nature of what is expected of us is a secret between the Lord and the one called for service. The Lord whispers in our ear. He awaits a response. Additionally, we are asked to identify women and men who might exercise ministry as lay ecclesial leaders, members of religious communities, or men who might offer themselves as deacons.

With so many distractions in our daily life, it is very difficult to hear the voice of the Shepherd. Nevertheless, he is counting on us to be ready and willing to reply in the affirmative to serve Him. The vitality of the Church largely depends on each one of us. May we listen attentively to Our Shepherd's voice and respond in faith to his gracious call.

Amen.