

Common Fears of Men Discerning the Priesthood

- 1. Celibacy Fear.** Always number one on the charts! “I can’t give up women. I could never be happy without sex. I fear that I will be miserable without a wife, children, and the sexual intimacy of marriage.”
- 2. Fear of loneliness.** “I fear living in a rectory all alone, without people that I love. I already feel lonely and I want that to change with my vocation. I fear that I will be lonely for the rest of my life if I become a priest.”
- 3. Family fear.** “I don’t know what my parents will say when they discover I am thinking about priesthood. My dad may get mad and forbid it. Then what will I do? My brothers will tease me. I need my family’s support. I am afraid to tell them.”
- 4. Fear of disappointing others.** “I fear that if I go to the seminary, and then decide to leave and not become a priest, I will greatly disappoint my parents or my parish priest. Even worse, what if I left the priesthood? It is better that I not go in the first place.”
- 5. Lack of faith fear.** “I don’t have enough faith to be a priest. I still question things and I struggle with doubts about God, heaven, hell—everything. A priest without faith is not a good thing.”
- 6. Overwork fear.** “I see how hard priests work and the lack of priests means that they will have to do even more. I fear that I cannot work that hard. Maybe I am too lazy. I am afraid I won’t be able to do it and be happy.”
- 7. Scandal fear.** “I fear that if I become a priest, I might do something scandalous. Maybe I will have an affair with a

woman, or some deep secret from my past will become known. I am a sinner with so many weaknesses. I love the Church. I don't want to damage her reputation by causing a scandal. It is better that I not become a priest in the first place."

8. **Poverty and obedience fear.** "I like my freedom too much. I am afraid that I will not be obedient to the bishop when he gives me an undesirable assignment. I fear living a life without all my toys. I like to buy nice things, make a lot of money, and travel. Priests have to live too simply. I am afraid that I will not be happy."
9. **Poster fear.** "I fear that when my picture goes up on the diocesan poster, people will look at me differently and expect me to act differently. I don't want anyone to know that I am thinking about the priesthood. It could damage my social life. My friends will think I am crazy. Girls won't go out with me."
10. **Vocation director fear.** "I fear that if the vocation director knows I am discerning the priesthood, he is going to harass me with phone calls, e-mails, and letters. I don't want a letter in my mailbox with the return address of the vocation office! I don't want that kind of pressure right now."
11. **Adventure-boredom fear.** "I am young and can do anything with my life that I want. I desire to travel, see the world, and have adventures. I fear that I might be called to become a priest and I will miss all of that. Diocesan priesthood does not look exciting. I don't want to be bored with my life. I want an exciting life. I fear closing off my options."
12. **Preaching fear.** "I could never stand up and preach in front of a huge crowd of people. I am not a good speaker and I