

Vocations



Yes! My family has been a great encouragement in living out the call. What my mother shared with me when I first spoke with her about my calling, became foundational to my journey into the priesthood. She shared how when she was six months pregnant with me, she had a very beautiful and powerful experience with the Blessed Mother. My mother offered me to the Blessed Mother, and in turn, the Blessed Mother revealed to her: "What you have in your womb is a priest." My mother kept this secret in her heart for 21 years, and only shared it with me at this perfect moment when I was discerning the call.

What is your favorite part about being a priest?

My favorite part is the intimacy of spiritual direction and confession and the exhilarating experience of creatively and boldly preaching God's Word. Also, the sense of fulfillment that comes in knowing that I am doing the Father's will and making a difference in the world.

What was the conversation like with your parents when you said, "Hey, I want to become a priest?"

My father's support, encouragement and blessing couldn't have been any better. The fact that in his youth he discerned the call to priesthood, proved to be extremely beneficial to me when I was discerning. As an ordained deacon, he had the language, tools, connections, which he placed at my service in order to help me discern.

What would you say to a young man who is thinking that God might be calling him?

Do not be afraid! If God is calling you, then say "yes!" He created you. He knows what's best for you. He created you with a purpose and mission which only you can fulfill. Not to fulfill your purpose would be detrimental not just to you, but all who depend on you to fulfill the mission only you can fulfill. Do not be afraid! Take courage! The adventure of priesthood is worth your life!

Tell us one thing about you that people would be surprised to learn.

Before my conversion I was a fraternity brother of Sigma Lambda Beta. I use to teach how to dance salsa and merengue. I am an artist. I love the outdoors, love to ride my road bike. I have done half marathons and a triathlon. I love kayak fishing and enjoy taking my RV to Fort De Soto Park. I also like to workout and hang out with my new puppy Q.

You are going to be installed as the new pastor of St. Rita's, what are you looking forward to?

I look forward to settling down. In the past 16 years of priesthood, I've been assigned to nine parishes. Many of those assignments were troubled parishes that needed much loving care. I felt honored to be used by God as a church healer, but it took a toll on me. On average, I was assigned one to two years in one place and then I was reassigned to another. To be installed as pastor will give me an opportunity to settle and root myself in one community for at least six years.

Is there anything that you would like to tell your parishioners?

I'm really looking forward to BEING with you! To know that I'm staying with you for a while gives me peace and joy, knowing we will be able to build many lasting memories. I'm looking forward to serving and caring for you with the heart of Jesus and Mary.



Father Carlos Rojas photographed with his Frenchton dog Q, in front of St. Rita Catholic Church.