



Seminarian Jonathan Grossi

I grew up in Lexington, Kentucky as the oldest of four in a protestant family. My family was always active in church, and I was involved with Christian youth groups throughout my adolescence including campus ministry in college. After receiving an engineering degree from the University of Kentucky, I received a nice scholarship and went to the University of Iowa for law school. My roommate in law school was from Essex, Illinois; and he was able to connect me with my employer who was a solo practitioner in Channahon. After graduating from law school and taking the bar, I moved to Essex in August 2022 to begin working as an attorney. As I began my career, I also began to search for a church home. There was no church nearby from my denomination, so I had to expand my scope. I went to a non-denominational church of a friend, thought about visiting a Lutheran church; but I also noticed a local Catholic church out of the corner of my eye.

I had very little understanding of the Catholic faith, but there were Catholic men I respected such as J.R.R. Tolkein and G.K. Chesterton, and the little I did know about the Catholic faith intrigued me. After going to Mass, I was captivated by the reverence for God, and I kept coming back. Shortly thereafter, I entered OCIA and read through the catechism within a few months. I resonated with everything I found in the catechism, and when I also started to discover with the beauty of catholic art, the stories of the saints, and the history of the church; I became convinced that the Catholic Church was truly the church that Jesus founded. I made the decision to become Catholic and received confirmation and first communion on Easter vigil 2023.

While attending Mass, approximately one year after becoming catholic, one of the prayer intentions was for vocations to the priesthood. I mouthed "Lord, hear our prayer," with everyone else, but this prayer intention began to occupy my mind. I was still a new Catholic

and did not know all the details of becoming a priest, but I did know that – at a minimum - to become a priest you had to be a Catholic male (and single). I certainly fit that description, and I decided to investigate this train of thought further with the help of my spiritual advisor and the vocations director.

At the beginning of my discernment, I was curious about becoming a priest, but I had trepidation about going to seminary for 7 years when I had already completed 7 years of undergraduate and law school studies. However, as I continued to discern and grow closer to God in prayer, my curiosity gradually transformed into intention and my trepidation became excitement. I was grateful for the work I was doing as an attorney, but I felt that I may experience greater meaning in my work if I were a priest.

I took the plunge and submitted an application to the Diocese of Joliet; and as I enter my Spiritual Year this year (2026), I am eager to see how the lord works through me as I take my first steps on this new journey.