



What is Pastoral Week?

Pastoral Week is a time for the seminarians studying theology to learn more about the Archdiocese and its ministries. In addition to growing in their care for the people of God, it is a time of fraternity with their future brother priests.

“I particularly appreciated learning about the practical methods used for evangelizing in the Archdiocese, especially the emphasis on communicating Jesus Christ through simple attitudes and everyday behaviors rather than relying only on preaching or long sermons. This approach highlighted how the Gospel can be announced in ordinary encounters and personal witness.”

PEDRO REYES DE SENA

“I appreciated the interactions that we had with many of the faithful of the Archdiocese during pastoral week. Whether it was Vocations Committee members, pastors, the Sisters, or families during our evenings together, or staff members from many of the offices at the Pastoral Centre, these interactions were encouraging and joyful.”

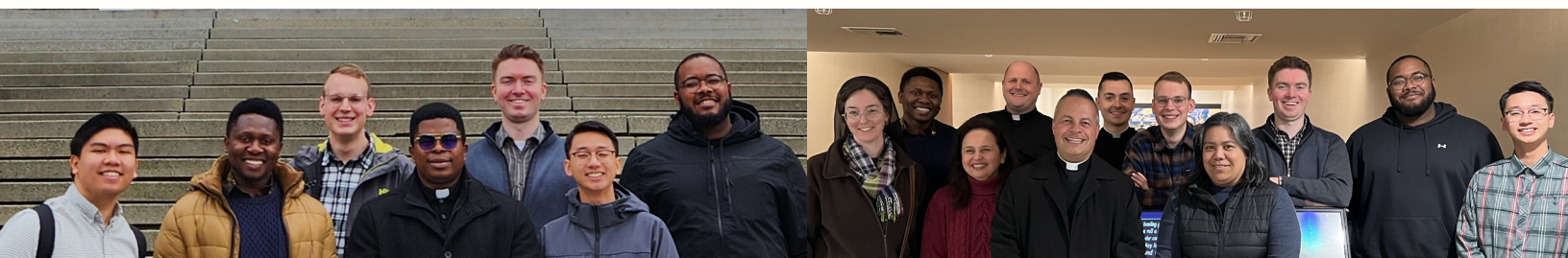
PETER VAN LEEUWEN

“It was very fun and turned out to be a memorable day in my discernment journey.”

PETER OKAFOR

“My first pastoral week experience left me feeling reignited in my vocational journey. Between the pastorally-focused workshops and visits with parishioners and priests, I was constantly reminded of what attracted me to priesthood in the first place, and given strength to continue pursuing it.”

MICHAEL ROY





By Sr. Jeanne D'Arc Paquette

With the Winter Olympics behind us and the FIFA World Cup ahead, it is prime time to take a look at the role of sports in the spiritual life. The two have a lot in common, with St. Paul drawing comparisons to a life of holiness with footraces and boxing matches. But how does the world of athletics inform our understanding of the Christian life?

Athletics are a physical expression of discipline, hard work, and personal excellence. The minutes of intense activity on a field or track reflect years of dedication. For the athlete, it means shifting priorities so that this 'game' becomes a 'lifestyle'. Daily habits and diet, and even social routines, become part of athlete's dedication to his sport. "Every athlete exercises discipline in every way." (1 Cor 9:25) Self-mastery is an important skill, and the athlete is a symbol of willing sacrifice for the glory in this world.

St. Paul continues by pointing out that worldly glory is not enough, "They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one." (1 Cor 9:25) The glory of this world 'withers and fades' with the crown of leaves won by the original Greek Olympians of ancient times. And, yes, the victories of this world are short-lived. Every year an old record is broken, a new bar is set. What remains, however, is the pursuit of perfection that is not of this world.

The nobility of athletic excellence, by its limitations, draws us into what is truly excellent. As St. Irenaeus says, "[God] kept calling them to what was primary by means of what was secondary... through things of the flesh to the things of the spirit, through earthly things to heavenly things." By considering the self-mastery of the body that so many athletes willingly undergo, we better understand the self-mastery of the mind and the spirit to which all Christians are called.



“Our race for the imperishable crown would also be incomplete without a sense of community.”

An athlete who understands his sacrifice does not ‘grumble’ his way to the gym. He goes with purpose and confidence. Even more so the Christian does not ‘grumble’ his way through hardship, sacrifice, and discipline. No, he lives his calling with purpose and confidence in God. St. Paul urges us to reach even beyond that, saying “Now I rejoice in my sufferings....” (Col. 1:24) Our Christian discipline would be incomplete without joy.

As we continue to accompany young men in their discernment and formation towards the ministerial priesthood, let us join them ‘in the race’. Their discipline of study, work, and prayer is evident every day. In addition, they are developing their talents and hobbies, rounding out their skills and unique gifts as athletes must do. Their formators can attest that the seminarians live out this mission with Christian joy and sense of community.

May we, too, in running beside them, give ourselves to the daily work of self-discipline and prayer. Then when we reach the end of our finish line on earth, we can say with St. Paul, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith”. (2 Tim 4:7) . ✠



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Through your generous donations to the Work of Vocations, you continue to fund the formation and education of seminarians in training for the priesthood, provide accompaniment to those discerning the priesthood and the consecrated life, and promote a culture of vocations in the Archdiocese of Vancouver. We encourage you to share this newsletter with others who might also consider contributing to the St. John Vianney Fund.

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