

FROM LAB COATS TO VESTMENTS: WHEN GOD HAS OTHER PLANS

with Fr Joseph Laundry



VOCATIONS OFFICE
ARCHDIOCESE of PERTH

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INTRODUCTION

Vocations Conversations with Fr Joseph Laundy



Fr Joseph's story is about finding purpose, staying open to God's call, and discovering how faith and trust can guide us, even when life feels uncertain

As a child, Fr Joseph Laundy had dreams of being "the guy who invented cool stuff." This ambition led him to a career as a medical researcher at St John of God Hospital.

However, just as his career in medical science was about to take off, **he felt an unexpected "inkling"—a persistent thought that wouldn't go away.**

This inkling pointed him toward a path he hadn't considered: the priesthood.

Today, Fr Joseph is the Director of the Vocations Office at the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth, Vice Rector of St Charles Seminary, and Chaplain to Catholic Youth Ministry Perth.

His journey from lab coats to vestments is a testament to the power of faith, purpose, and staying open to God's call.

As you read his story and vocation journey, Fr Joseph hopes you can think about your own dreams and how you can keep your heart open to the opportunities God has for you—whether it's now or later in life.



A CHILDHOOD OF FAITH: FR JOSEPH'S JOURNEY ROOTED IN FAMILY DEVOTION

Have you ever wondered what it takes to find your purpose? For Fr Joseph, it started with his big Catholic family in Perth, where faith and family life were always connected.

Growing up as one of nine kids, life in Fr Joseph's house was busy—but faith was always a priority. Every evening after dinner, his parents would gather the family to pray the rosary on their knees in front of a little home altar with statues of Mary and Jesus.

“Sometimes, to be honest, to the chagrin of us kids. But luckily, it was carpeted, so there was a little cushion!” Fr Joseph admits. **“But it became part of our routine. And looking back, it really shaped who I am today. Those moments of prayer taught me discipline and helped me connect with God.”**

Fr Joseph's favourite childhood memory shows just how determined he was—even as a kid.

When he was only eight years old, he decided to challenge himself during Lent. **For 40 days, he got up early every morning, rode his bike 2.3 kilometers to his local church, and served at the 7 a.m. Mass.**

“It was the biggest thing I'd ever committed to,” he said. “When Easter came, I'd completed the challenge, and my parents were so proud they gave me a daily missal—a book with all the scripture readings for Mass.”

Fr Joseph says those small but important habits, like daily prayer and sticking to a goal, helped him figure out his calling to become a priest. **“When you're young, it's not always easy to see how things like this shape you. But now, I can see how those little acts of faith made me who I am today.”**



FROM YEAR 10 TO THE LAB: DISCOVERING A PASSION FOR SCIENCE

What were you like as a Year 10 student? Did you already know what you wanted to do with your life?

For Fr Joseph Laundry, Year 10 was a time of big dreams and new possibilities. “It was the year 2000, and it felt like an incredible time to be alive,” he recalls.

“The new millennium had just begun, and people were talking about the ‘Millennium Bug’ shutting down computers worldwide. There was this sense of excitement and a vision for the future.”

Back then, Fr Joseph was finishing up school and already fascinated by science. “I loved looking down microscopes and studying human biology,” he said. “I thought I’d work in a lab someday.”

But life wasn’t just about science. Fr Joseph had a surprising moment of self-discovery during his school years.

“I wasn’t great at soccer like my brothers,” he admitted. “I never thought I’d be good at sports. But one day, I turned on the TV and saw the Olympics. Watching those athletes inspired me, so I decided to try long-distance running. My first run was about a kilometre—it wasn’t easy, but it changed the way I saw myself. I realised I could enjoy and be good at sports.”

From there, he kept pushing himself. “I started doing Parkrun on Saturdays and going to the gym. I discovered I had a knack for long-distance sports, and it became something I loved.”

For Fr Joseph Laundry, Year 10 was a time of big dreams and new possibilities...



As for his love of science, Fr Joseph's curiosity was sparked by observing the world around him.

"I was always fascinated by bugs, microscopes, and how things work," he shared.

"I wanted to understand the human body and how everything fits together.

Growing up in Australia gave me so many opportunities to explore my interests. Whether you want to study plants, become a mechanic, or work in a lab, the options are endless."

Looking back, Fr Joseph sees Year 10 as a time when he started shaping his future.

"You might not know exactly what you want to do yet, and that's okay.

But if you follow what excites you, whether it's science, sports, or something else, you'll discover who you're meant to be."

SWITCHING THE LAB COAT FOR VESTMENTS

Imagine being deep into a career in medical research, with a clear path ahead of you, only to realise that you're being called to something completely different.

That's exactly what happened to Fr Joseph Laundy, who swapped the lab coat for priestly vestments when he answered God's call to become a priest.

It was in his mid-20s when Fr Joseph first started seriously considering a vocation to the priesthood. "I was working, and I could see that my life was on a particular trajectory," he recalls.

"But there was always something in the back of my mind, this idea of being a priest. It wouldn't go away. And when something sticks in your mind for a while, you've got to pay attention to it."

Seeking clarity, Fr Joseph turned to a retired priest for guidance. "This priest became a mentor for me. He had a calm, wise presence and would help me see what God might be asking of me," Fr Joseph says.

"I remember one day, he told me, 'God knocks at our heart, and we shouldn't keep Him waiting—we don't want to give Him sore knuckles!'"

"That moment was a turning point for me. It gave me the courage to take a leap of faith and apply to the seminary."

Leaving behind a career in science wasn't an easy decision, and the road to becoming a priest was long and challenging.

"It takes six years of study, prayer, and formation," Fr Joseph explains.

"There's so much to learn—not just theology, but also counseling, public speaking, and even administrative skills. You also need to prepare spiritually for celebrating Mass and leading others in their faith."

Fr Joseph's scientific background brought a unique perspective to his journey. "My scientific brain kept saying, 'I need proof and evidence,' but faith doesn't work that way. Faith is about trust. That was a huge adjustment for me," he admits.





LIFE AS A PRIEST: DAYS ARE FULL AND VARIED

Throughout his seminary years, Fr Joseph leaned on his mentor for support.

“There were times when the workload was overwhelming, or I questioned if I was on the right path. My mentor helped me refocus and see challenges as opportunities to grow,” he says.

Now as a priest, Fr Joseph finds inspiration in many aspects of his work.

“One of the most inspiring things is working with couples preparing for marriage,” he says.

“Seeing their courage, love, and hope for the future is amazing.”

“I also love preaching at Mass—exploring the scriptures and finding new ways to connect God’s word to our lives.

“And seeing other men in the seminary commit their lives to God is incredibly moving.”

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF FR JOSEPH

Fr Joseph’s days are full and varied. “Every day starts with at least 30 minutes of cardio or swimming. It’s non-negotiable—it keeps me focused and energised,” he says.

“Then, I spend time in prayer, meditating on the Gospel and asking God for strength. My work varies a lot. Some days, I’m teaching seminarians or helping couples prepare for marriage. Other days, I’m traveling across the Archdiocese of Perth to promote vocations or celebrating Mass. No two days are the same!”

Looking back, Fr Joseph is grateful for the path that brought him to where he is today.

“Answering God’s call isn’t always easy, but it’s worth it,” he says. “When something keeps tugging at your heart, don’t ignore it. It might just be the start of an incredible journey.”



LIFE LESSONS FROM FR JOSEPH LAUNDY: ADVICE FOR YEAR 10 STUDENTS EXPLORING THEIR CALLING

For Year 10 students navigating the complexities of teenage life—balancing school, friendships, hobbies, and faith—the question of what lies ahead can feel overwhelming.

Fr Joseph once faced similar questions as a young man, shares some life lessons and practical advice, that he himself would like to know when he was a year 10 student.

ANCHORS IN THE STORM

Life is often compared to a boat on the ocean, says Fr Joseph. “When it’s calm and peaceful, the boat floats gently on top of the water. But the real challenge comes when storms arise.

Without an anchor, the boat is tossed around and may even sink.” For young people, those anchors can take many forms.

“Friendships are a great anchor,” he explains. “Friends who accept you for who you are, who can laugh with you, cry with you, and share a hobby together—these relationships are invaluable. But good friendships take effort and intentionality. They’re worth the work.”

Faith, too, can serve as an anchor. “Faith in Jesus is really a friendship,” Fr Joseph says. “Practicing my faith is how I nurture that friendship. Like any relationship, it has its ups and downs, but it’s worth it.”

LISTENING TO GOD’S CALL

Does God’s call change over time?

Fr Joseph believes it does. “Discernment is like a river,” he says. “A river cuts into the earth, adapting its course based on the landscape it encounters. Similarly, God’s call evolves as we grow and face new circumstances.

The key is staying open to His guidance.” Staying connected to God’s plan requires effort and humility. “We need assistance to channel our thoughts and figure out what’s best for us. That’s where prayer and seeking God’s help come in. Even when we don’t have a plan, God does.”

ADVICE TO THE TEN YEAR OLD FR JOSEPH

ANSWERING GOD'S CALL IN EVERYDAY LIFE

For Fr Joseph, answering God's call is a lot like training in sports.

“When I’m swimming, my coach might tell me to do 200 meters of freestyle or practice breaststroke. I could ignore the coach and do my own thing, but that wouldn’t help me improve. Similarly, following God’s call means hearing, listening, and responding—even when we don’t fully understand the purpose.”

God speaks to us in many ways, Fr Joseph explains.

“Through our emotions, our friends, our parents, and even within ourselves. Each of us has a built-in spiritual intelligence to help us discern what we’re good at and what we’re called to do. Staying in touch with that spiritual intelligence is key, especially when making big decisions.”

THOUGHTS FOR THE VOCATION JOURNEY AHEAD

When asked what advice he would give his 15-year-old self, Fr Joseph says:

“Those insecurities you’re feeling right now—about work, friends, or life—they’re going to be okay. You’ll grow and learn through them and become better than you ever imagined. But you have to work at it. Remember, God never leaves us alone. His guidance and the Church are always there to show us the way, the truth, and the life.”

Fr Joseph’s final message to Year 10 students is simple but powerful: **“Take life one step at a time. Trust in God’s plan for you, and don’t be afraid to ask for help. You’re not alone in this journey.”**





NOTES PAGE

My notes...

ABOUT THE PERTH VOCATIONS OFFICE

The Perth Vocations Office is responsible for the promotion and support of vocations to the ordained ministry and religious life, and to guide and assist each person to act on their calling from God to love, care and serve others in their own way.

We do this by nurturing, growing and supporting God's call to love and care for each other within the Archdiocese of Perth and the wider WA community.

Our Mission

Our mission is to nurture a culture of vocation within families and communities in the Archdiocese of Perth.

In the next five years we aim to build an awareness of vocation as a call to holiness from God.

In particular we aim to encourage people to explore God's unique call to them in the ordained ministry, religious life, single life, married life or in any other life endeavour.

Our Work

01.

To promote vocations within the Archdiocese of Perth in collaboration with Parishes, Catholic Schools, Universities, Catholic agencies, and various multicultural communities.

02.

To support and sustain those discerning vocations, especially for the ordained ministry journey.

03.

To manage the administration, process, assessment, interview and recommendation for those wishing to journey into ordained ministry.




VOCATIONS CONVERSATIONS

with Fr Joseph Laundry

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For students seeking to
discover and follow God's
plan, Fr Joseph offers three
practical tips:

 **Find a mentor.** "Someone you trust, who can speak into your life and offer guidance. Meet them for coffee and have real conversations about life."

 **Commit to daily prayer.** "God hears you and responds. Make prayer a habit—it's how you stay connected to Him."

 **Cultivate good friendships.** "Friendships shape who you are in ways you can't always see. Surround yourself with people who inspire and support you."



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