

Men for Others

(A) Early Formative Years

Rev. Fr. Vincent Woo came from a devout Catholic family and studied at Wah Yan College, Kowloon from 1997-2003. While at Wah Yan College, Kowloon, he was an altar server and belonged to the Sodality – basis of his priestly vocation.

(B) Jesuit Education at Wah Yan

There was much freedom with the Jesuit method of education for “the complete person”.

His talk followed the following outlines:-

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Extra-curricular activities (violin, orchestra, etc.)
- (iii) Religious activities
- (iv) Men for others
- (v) My decision to study abroad

Academic

His result at Wah Yan College was very good. He was seriously thinking of studying Medicine in Hong Kong but decided to go abroad to study before finally deciding on his life-long career. In this class at Wah Yan College, there were a musical composer, a wildlife oceanic officer with WWF, and a lawyer devoted to serving South Eastern Asians in Hong Kong.

Extra-Curricular Activities

He was an altar server and a member of the Sodality. He also played the violin in the school orchestra.

Religious Activities and Men for Others

After Form VI, he went to Los Angeles where he joined the Society of St. Vincent de Paul USA and looked after the homeless people in skid row. He joined a group of young Catholics who went to daily Mass and prayed the Rosary together. They also did the laundry for the homeless people.

With prayers, public service and companionship, the seed of a priestly vocation began to take root. He was impressed with the Franciscan way of life and got to know Father (now Bishop) Joseph Ha.

He next went to Chicago where he worked in a soup kitchen serving the poor and doing their laundry. He came into contact with many underprivileged poor and homeless. During this time, he also broke off relations with his Catholic female companion who took this philosophically – “it is better to lose to God than to another woman”.

He then applied to a university in Madison, Wisconsin to study a doctorate programme in “Psychometrics”. He chose this university because there was a chapel near the school where he could pray conveniently. At this time, the Bishop in Madison, Wisconsin started a movement for prayers for priestly vocations and in

six years, the number of seminarians there grew from 6 to 30. He was 23 years old at that time, and he first contemplated priestly vocations in October 2007. He completed the programme for his Master degree but did not complete the Doctorate programme.

Men for others

During his time in Wisconsin, he saw a parish priest come into the chapel to pray one afternoon. Up to this time, he never associated a parish priest with praying on his own. This was the first time that he realized that he was called to be diocesan parish priest – the front line people in contact with Catholic laity.

He joined the Holy Spirit Seminary from 2009-2016 during which time there was one seminarian leaving the Holy Spirit Seminary per year.

After his ordination, he has worked with the mentally-handicapped people in Hong Kong