

*“You shall no longer be spoken of as Jacob, but as Israel, because you have contended with divine and human beings and have prevailed.”*

Discerning a priestly vocation is a difficult thing. Just before he entered the novitiate for the Capuchins, Saint Pio ... Padre Pio to many ... had a dream where he had to face off against an enormous warrior ... “so tall that his head seemed to touch the heavens ... his visage was dark and horrible.”

He was at first terrified, but a heavenly guide told him he must fight, and so fight he did.

Not every man who discerns a vocation to the priesthood has such a dramatic story to tell ... yet I know that many approach the idea ... and many walk away for a variety of reasons.

Jacob wrestled with an angel, and he was given a new name — Israel ... sometimes rendered as “soldier of God” because he had contended with spiritual and human powers and prevailed.

And Jacob called the place “Peniel,” which means “to face God.”

The Gospel speaks of Jesus having pity on the crowds, “because they were ... like sheep without a shepherd.”

And the words of Jesus recorded by Saint Matthew are, “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”

Let us raise our prayers today in intercession for those discerning a vocation — any vocation, whether it be married, religious, ordained, or generous single life. Let us ask for graces to know our true vocation, where God is calling each of us according to His Holy Will.

And, too, in a special way as we continue to enter into this “Year for Priests,” let us ask special graces on those who are discerning a priestly vocation — seeking the face of God ... both at the altar, and in service to the people of God.

Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina

— Pray for us.

Saint John Vianney

— Pray for us.