



Fr. Nicolas Potteau was born on June 12, 1979 and ordained a priest by Most Rev. André Vingt-trois, archbishop of Paris, on June 30, 2012 in Notre Dame Cathedral.

His voice soft and composed, Br. Nicolas Potteau answers your every question with care, without a useless word, concerned to describe as best he can what he is thinking or feeling. Having made his final vows with the Augustinians of the Assumption (Assumptionists) two years ago, he likes to speak about his call to religious life and priesthood by alluding to the famous painting of Caravaggio, "The Call of St. Matthew": "In this painting, you see Christ, accompanied by the apostle Peter; Christ is pointing to Matthew who is aglow with a halo of light. This is meant to underline that a call always includes three persons: God, the person called, and the Church. It also recalls that it is always God who takes the initiative."

Nicolas felt that he was called first to religious life. For him life in community is a real grace and a human and spiritual support day in and day out. He also shares with those of his congregation a certain vision of the world: "One must have a view of the world that is both realistic and positive, neither demonizing the world nor engaging in a kind of angelism."

This realistic view, he claims, he was able to deepen as a result of his many trips. Sent by his community during his years of formation to Lille, to Madrid, to Juvisy-sur-Orge, to Strasbourg, and finally to Paris, he has been able to discover the diversity of the faces of the Church and the realities that exist in different local churches. Actually it was his growing awareness of the need for priests that led him to request ordination.

## Ministry of the Word

Faithful to his soul as a religious, it is the ministry of the Word that affects him the most, that is to say, the spiritual opportunity to bear witness, to preach, and to accompany others on their faith journey. Nicolas is well aware of the fact that he will be sent to any number of places during his life of ministry. That is something that excites him, who shares with his community the concern to be a Christian presence in new areas of evangelization, such as youth hostels or student residences: "We can never stop looking for other ways for the Church to be present in the world, in new missionary ventures."

By Charlotte Reynaud (this article first appeared in *Paris Notre-Dame* #1435)