

How do I support my seminarian ex-boyfriend?

 bulldogcatholic.org/2021/05/06/how-do-i-support-my-seminarian-ex-boyfriend

May 6, 2021



Q: I am a young woman who was dating a terrific young man. Things were going along really well for us when he broke up with me because he believed that he needed to enter seminary and discern whether or not God is calling him to be a priest. I want to support him, but I'm not sure how.

A: Thank you very much for writing and for this question. In addition, thank you so much for wanting to support your ex-boyfriend in his active discernment of the next step God might be calling him to. I can only imagine how tough this has been for you. Any breakup can be difficult, but when the other person is “pursuing their calling,” one can feel a little guilty about the sadness. I’ve spoken with folks who have been broken up with because the man was entering the seminary (or the young woman was entering the convent) who feel like they ought not to be sad or angry because the other person is trying to do God’s will. And yet, it

can still be a sad thing. You were both invested in the relationship, and I imagine that the both of you had talks about a possible future together. To have to let go of those dreams gets to be difficult. You have permission to be sad and even angry about it.

But I want to invite you to keep something in mind before all else: This is not just his story. So often, when I talk with someone in your position, altruism kicks in, and they will say things that indicate they see the breakup as only about the one who is entering the seminary or the convent. Yes, your ex-boyfriend is responding to a potential call from the Lord to be a priest. But this is a part of your story too. This relationship and this breakup and this pain that you are going through is your story. If God is calling this young man in a different direction, remember that he is also calling you in a different direction. You are not an “extra” in your ex-boyfriend’s vocation story. You have your own story, and God is actively calling you forward.

Again, do not ever forget that where you are right now is a necessary part of your story. In fact, God is doing something in your life that he could not do without it. Obviously, things could be different, but the very fact that God has allowed you to be in this situation and go through this pain indicates that he wants to do something in your heart through this. This is a part of your story, and your call in the moment is to enter into whatever God is doing in this.

You get to ask the question: How is God loving me in this moment? God never ceases to love you. He never ceases to draw you closer to his heart. How is he calling you to draw closer to him in faith? How is he calling you to trust him more radically? This is the question for all of us in any season.

There are times in our lives when the skies are blue and God is loving us in a gentle and powerful way. But there are also times in our lives when the skies are dark and the weather is stormy and the waves threaten to swamp the boat in which we are sailing. In these moments, God is still loving us. He is loving us in a mysterious and beautiful way, even if it doesn’t feel beautiful. How is God loving you now? Further, how is God calling you to enter into his love?

In order to respond with your whole heart, I invite you to pray like Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus prayed, “Father, let this chalice pass from me.” He didn’t pretend that everything was great. He was in the midst of incredible distress and trial. And his prayer echoes the pain in his heart. He let himself be honest with the Father. But then he continued, “Yet not my will but yours be done.” In the midst of his honest prayer, he also expressed his trust.

Let this be the model for your prayer: Honesty and trust.

God is doing something in your moment of loss. He is doing something that could not be accomplished without this. He is loving you. Enter into his love with honesty and trust.

