

World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2013

Professional Soccer Player Seeks new Goal

Hilgenbrinck, 26, a defender and captain of the Revolution's reserve team, retired from professional soccer, and now attends Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland since 2008

"I felt called to something greater," Hilgenbrinck told ESPN soccernet.

"At one time I thought that call might be professional soccer. In the past few years, I found my soul is hungry for something else. I fell back on what I knew, and that was the Catholic Church," he said. "I grew up as a Catholic. I was always involved in the church, went to Catholic schools. It was when I got out on my own that my faith really became mine. I really embraced it. I didn't have to go to church any more, I was free to really believe what I wanted to believe."

Because professional sports careers tend to be short, he considered putting off his move into the priesthood until his soccer career ended. "Trust me, I thought of that," he said. "I discerned, through prayer, that it was calling me to the Catholic Church. I do not want this call to pass me by," he said.

"I was putting up a bunch of barriers, saying I'm not worthy to be called to something like that. But, one by one, the barriers started to come down.

"We are all called to do something. I feel like my specific call is to the priesthood.



Hilgenbrinck with the New England Revolution



Glamour Girl kicks drug addiction and becomes a nun

Ashley Ahead, (Sister John Mary) is devoted to a never-ending ritual of worship and work at her convent with the 36 sisters who follow the Rule of St Benedict on an isolated 400-acre farm.

It's a life she was called to but it is hardly one the 44-year-old glamorous blonde seemed destined for when she worked in London at Conservative Party HQ - with her ambitious young boyfriend David Cameron. After her breakup, she moved to New York to work as a strategic planning director at Ogilvy & Mather, the advertising agency that inspired the TV drama Mad Men, she found herself part of a social whirl that included aristocratic Europeans and American trust fund heirs.

But the stresses of success and depression led her down the slippery slope of drinking and drug addiction.

Then in 2008, she unexpectedly changed her life around by joining Alcoholics Anonymous. Through the 12 Step program, she found a new life in God, and answered the call to the consecrated life.

"I did think my life would progress on the normal tracks of meeting someone, marrying, having children, but that's not the path that God has led me,"

She says: "I feel like I tried most things in life that are supposed to make you happy. That journey took me down into alcoholism and drug addiction....But I looked at this convent, and saw women who had what I want. I remember having to tell my mother, "I'm going to join the abbey," and she said, "Yes, I can see this world has no real meaning for you any more."

