

LIST FOR PRIESTS: VOCATION IDEAS

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Know that we are the best promoters of the priesthood. We must never underestimate the impact that we can have on future vocations. God can use us to plant the seeds of future vocations in what we say and do, especially when rooted in prayer and sacrifice.

I remember in fifth grade when my pastor, Monsignor James Walsh asked me as I was preparing to serve Mass if I would like to be a priest. I told him "No," at the time, but a year later I began to be drawn to priesthood. We must not fear those who will say "No," to a vocation, and can never take it personally. Only God knows their hearts and what he has planned for them. We propose, and leave the rest to God's grace and their free response.

These are some concrete things priests can offer and do to help promote priestly vocations and all vocations in their parishes and schools:

- **Our fidelity to prayer** – Mass, the Sacrament of Confession, the Liturgy of the Hours, spiritual reading
- **Our sacrifices** – our fidelity to celibacy and obedience to the Bishop, our listening ear to the people of God in our care
- **Our commitment to consecrated study** – our homily preparation and mentioning topics that relate to vocations in homilies
- **Our presence in our assignments** – to be a witness of the priesthood in every facet of daily life
- **Our personal invitation** to those young men and women we might think would make good priests and religious
- **Put a link to NYPRIEST.COM** on all of your parish websites.
- Invite **First Communicants** to consider being future priests and religious.
- Ask all of the **confirmandi** when meeting with them to consider a calling from God.
- Tell our **vocation stories** to the youth group, in a homily, to the religious education classes and at the parish school each year.
- Show the *Fishers of Men* DVD to the parish, school, and religious education classes, teen group, and everyone else! This is available through the Office of Vocations.
- Lead a weekly Holy Hour for Vocations in the parish where Confessions are offered.
- Offer spiritual direction to young people in the parish who are interested in the faith and who might make good future priests and religious.
- Run the weekly Vocation Blurb in the parish bulletin.
- Pray for vocations in the intercessions at Sunday Masses, and even daily.
- Have all the parish children in school and in religious education praying for vocations and to be open to a vocation.
- Offer Mass as often as you can for an increase in priests and religious (especially if there are few announced intentions in your parish).
- Build up fellow priests through friendship and prayer.
- Do something concrete for vocations each week.
- Help the Office of Vocations get out the word about upcoming discernment retreats and monthly Cathedral Prep weekends; send someone from the parish who would be open to priesthood on a weekend.
- Include vocation literature in the bulletin (e.g. faith basics inserts from www.cuf.org).
- Have vocational literature available in the Church vestibule.

- Encourage families to pray for vocations by sending a traveling statue of the Good Shepherd, Sacred Heart, Crucifix, Blessed Mother, St. John Vianney, St. Therese the Little Flower, or perhaps a Chalice home with a care package that might have the following:
 - o A Catholic Bible
 - o A Children's Bible
 - o Several (up to 10) Rosary Beads
 - o Scriptural Recitation of the Rosary
 - o Prayers for an increase in vocations
 - o Interactive media, purchased from Institute of Religious Life
 - o Books:
 - Completely Christ's — The Radical Call of the Consecrated Life
 - Come & See — Theological Reflections on the Promotion of Vocations - by Rev. John A. Hardon, S.J.
 - On the Consecrated Life – A Simplified Version of John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation Vita Consecrata
 - o *Fishers of Men* – DVD
 - o Prayer Cards
 - o Candle
 - o Holy Water
 - o Journal
- Include Vocation Awareness components at each grade level of religious education. Each grade can do a special project.
- Promote the lives of the saints in various ways. E.g. in the bulletin, on the bulletin board, on posters, in a bibliography, have a sale-table for holy cards with depictions and prayers to the saints.
- Organize a group trip to the seminary or a motherhouse and pray for vocations on the way.
- Organize a Project Andrew Dinner.
- Bring young men to attend the ordination of a priests at the cathedral. Attend a profession ceremony.
- Don't forget to promote vocations to young people in homeschooling situations. Provide materials they can use and involve them in the parish or school projects.
- Ask 31 parishioners to volunteer to pray the Rosary, or attend Mass, etc. on one of the 31 days of the month for vocations, on behalf of your parish and committee. This has been adapted by one parish where parishioners promise to say one decade of the Rosary each morning, so that 45 15-decade-rosaries are continually being said throughout the parish for vocations.
- Encourage parishioners to promise their own daily prayer for an increase of vocations to our archdiocese. Prayers, works, sufferings and joys also can be offered to God for vocations.
- Celebrate the anniversaries of the Pope, the Bishop, the Pastor, the Priests and Religious in the parish, to create a teachable moment for promoting vocation awareness.
- Celebrate All Saints Day with a focus on the saints of our time, the founderesses and founders of religious orders, and all people who give witness to their faith in daily life. Ask them all in prayer to beg the Lord of the Harvest to send laborers to continue their good work on earth.
- On All Souls Day, focus attention on prayer for deceased priests and religious, especially those who have served the people of God in our diocese. Publicize the month-by-month necrology for deceased priests (and possibly also religious) for specific prayer intentions. Ask these priests/religious to continue their work on earth.
- Pray, especially in the **Fall, for new recruits** and in the **Spring for candidates** and **applicants** who are being processed for entrance to seminary for the next year.
- Publish a listing of all the **seminarians, with names and seminary addresses**. Encourage parishioners, parochial school and religious education classes to send them cards and letters showing support and prayer – without expecting a response from the seminarians, which keeps this activity supportive but not intrusive to their study time.
- **Advent** and **Lent** are excellent times for vocational activities of prayer and fasting.
- Talk to families who have good candidates, encourage and suggest it, preach about it.

“This fruitfulness is shown through fostering and forming those who have vocations to the priesthood or the religious life. Today, if such a vocation is to be sustained faithfully over a lifetime, there is a need for a formation capable of integrating faith and reason, heart and mind, life and thought. A life devoted to following Christ calls for an integration of one’s entire personality. Neglect of the intellectual dimension can give rise all too easily to a kind of superficial piety nourished mostly by emotions and sentiments, which cannot be sustained over a lifetime. Neglect of the spiritual dimension, in turn, can create a rarified rationalism which, in its coldness and detachment, can never bring about an enthusiastic self-surrender to God. A life devoted to following Christ cannot be built on such one-sided foundations; half-measures leave a person unhappy and, consequently, also spiritually barren. Each vocation to the religious life or to the priesthood is a treasure so precious that those responsible for it should do everything possible to ensure a formation which promotes both fides et ratio - faith and reason, heart and mind.”

Address of the Holy Father Benedict XVI
Visit to Heiligenkreuz Abbey
Sunday, 9 September 2007