



OFFICE OF VOCATIONS

Parish Vocation Committee Guide



DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

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Section 1: Introductory Overview



Fall, 1999

Dear Friends,

The Gospel is a blessing for our lives. We are aware, too, that it is an imperative for our world. The Second Vatican Council has made it clear that the richness of God's revelation guides the life of the baptized. All are called to holiness, and all are called to carry on the great work of Jesus Christ. All are called to witness to the hope that "the family of nations made one in Christ are to become God's one holy people." Central to this is the work of the priest. We are renewing that understanding in these latter years. The call of the baptized so clearly expressed at Vatican II has, in a sense, overwhelmed our diocese. The Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Strategic Planning pointed to the development of ministries at every level, but gave little attention to the ministries of priests and deacons, of consecrated religious men and women.

Happily we have a new awareness that all of these are important ministries in the Church and are the responsibility of our local community. We are renewing our awareness as a diocese that there is a need for priestly ministry to form our communities as well as for sisters and brothers who will give themselves entirely to the service of the Church.

I would point out the atmosphere of burden and challenge that is present. No doubt, that same challenge is in the scripture in the call of Jeremiah and others. But we can look to that kind of invitation as a very special gift of Jesus to the community. His reaching out to Peter and Andrew, to Nathaniel, to Matthew was a joyful invitation. The evidence of that is clear; those men from Galilee never went back to the tax collector's table or to the fishing nets or to their fig trees. They found an overwhelming sense of meaning and purpose and ultimate satisfaction. This is what we are providing people by that invitation of the Lord. It is a blessing and an opportunity for them. Jesus did not call the rich young man to a dull, uneventful, dry and dissatisfied life, and He was disappointed that the man did not accept the richness of the opportunity.

I am grateful to Father Jerrold Kennedy, Director of our Vocations Office, as well as to his predecessors and to all who collaborated in providing this document. I commend those of you who have served on parish committees in the past, as well as our priests who have made vocations a particular responsibility, our religious men and women, our Serrans and our Theresians.

No program or promotion will be successful unless it is in the context of prayer. That prayer must be an evident and integral part of your vocation ministry in the parish. I am confident that the Master of the harvest will find your prayer pleasing and will bless you in this very important work.

Sincerely,

John S. Cummins

John S. Cummins
Bishop of Oakland



OFFICE OF VOCATIONS

Summer 1999

Dear Friends,

In our present age, the fostering of vocations to the priesthood and religious life is certainly a ministry deserving of our utmost attention and effort. To this end, we are asking for the help of dedicated and caring parishioners who are willing to organize and serve on Parish Vocation Committees in the eighty-eight parishes of the Diocese of Oakland.

We are happy to present you with this copy of our new PARISH VOCATION COMMITTEE GUIDE. Suggestions for getting started will help you begin your work. Three tasks are set before us:

1. Creating Vocation Awareness
2. Praying Earnestly for Vocations
3. Inviting Individuals to Respond

After you have had a chance to become familiar with the material in the guide, and as you begin the work of your committee, we encourage you to meet with your pastor, the staff of your parish and your Parish Council. Their collaboration and the approval of your pastor will help insure the success of your efforts.

Be assured of our prayers for the success of your committee's work. You will have the assistance of a Diocesan Resource Team as your Parish Vocation Committee undertakes the task of fostering vocations to the priesthood, the diaconate, religious life and lay ministry. May the Lord of the Harvest bless your efforts abundantly.

Sincerely,

Reverend Larry D'Anjou
Director of Vocations



EIGHT STEPS FOR STARTING A VOCATION COMMITTEE

1. **Get Organized**

Select a chairperson and decide how often you will meet. Study the charter statement in Section 2 of this guide. It is a good summary of the tasks your committee will face and what you need to do to be an effective committee. Adapt the wording to your local situation if necessary.

2. **Plan Activities**

Your committee has three basic tasks to carry out. They are:

Task # 1: Creating vocations awareness

Task # 2: Campaign of prayer

Task # 3: Inviting individuals personally

This section of the guide is important since it will introduce you to these topics.

3. **Meet With Pastor and Parish Council**

Always inform the pastor of your plans and vision. Invite his input and participation. It is also important to meet with the parish council at least once a year and inform them of your activities. Give them copies of your charter statement so they have a handy summary of your work and role.

4. **Get the Word Out**

Be sure to let the parish know you exist. Put an announcement in the parish bulletin (see sample announcement in Section 2). A member of the committee could also give a short presentation at the end of all Masses some Sunday explaining to the people what you hope to accomplish (see sample script in Section 2). Or your pastor could give that presentation. Do what fits best in your particular parish.

5. Team Up With Others

Collaborate with other programs and groups in the parish. Attend their meetings and ask for their suggestions and help. These groups include: youth ministry, young adult ministry, religious education, parish school, YLI, ministers to the sick, parish prayer groups, liturgy committee, Knights of Columbus, Serrans, parish ethnic communities, small faith communities, people who attend morning Mass, etc. And always give them something to pass on to others: the brochure "Make a Difference," for example.

6. Be Informed

Read the information in this guide. Also be familiar with the list of videos and other resources. The Diocesan Vocation Office will send regular mailings to your chairperson making new materials available to committee members.

7. Network

Stay in contact with other parish vocation committees in your deanery. They can be a source of support and new ideas. Consider organizing regular meetings at a deanery level. Staff from the Vocations Office will try to attend such meetings.

8. Find New Members

Be on the lookout for new members for your committee. Your committee can include as many as 10 members.



TASK #1

CREATING VOCATION AWARENESS

The Parish Vocation Committee has three major tasks:

- 1. Creating parish awareness of vocations.**
- 2. Launching a campaign of prayer for vocations.**
- 3. Surfacing names of potential candidates and personally inviting them to consider a church vocation.**

It goes without saying that a vocations committee should be promoting vocations! If the committee's role means anything it means using every opportunity to keep the need for vocations before the eyes of the people in the parish. And this task is made easier by the Diocesan Vocation Office which has a variety of material for the promotion of vocations at the parish level. This material includes posters, brochures and other materials that can be displayed in the vestibule of the church.

This material is already available to parishes, but it sometimes does not get used because nobody on the parish staff has the time to deal with it. That is where you come in. One of the important tasks of the Parish Vocation Committee is to assist parish staff in taking advantage of this promotional material. In reality, this may mean taking responsibility for seeing that the material gets used. Remember the average parish gets a large volume of mail each day and parish staff members do not have the time to follow up on all of it. They will be happy that you are taking this chore off their shoulders. Just keep the pastor informed about what you are doing and get his permission before you begin this new role.

Please see Section 3 for selected resources in creating vocation awareness. The Diocesan Vocation Office has posters, brochures and other promotional materials.



TASK #2

CAMPAIGN OF PRAYER

The second major task of the Parish Vocations Committee is to organize a campaign of prayer in the parish. Prayer must always be the foundation of our work to promote vocations-personal prayer and community prayer.

Ways to Pray for Vocations:

- **Personal Prayer**

If you ask others to pray for vocations, you need to begin by praying yourself. Make vocations to the priesthood and religious life part of your private prayer every day. Use the vocation prayer printed in Section 4.

- **Vocation Cross Program**

The Vocation Cross Program is highly recommended by our Diocesan Vocations Office. Each week one family hosts a vocation cross and prays for vocations every night during that week. The following week a new family hosts the cross. This program can be organized on a parish wide basis. See fuller explanation in Section 4.

- **Votive Mass and/or Services for Vocations**

A sample votive Mass for vocations is included in Section 4. It includes a sample homily and tips for preaching about vocations. Also included there is a sample "Prayer Service for Senior Citizens." Other specialized services can be written using the sheet entitled "Scripture Passages Related to God's Call."

- **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**

This is one of the best ways to pray for vocations. Some parishes do it one day a week; others do it seven days a week. Because of the organization involved signing up volunteers (somebody has to be present at all times while the Blessed Sacrament is exposed), you may want to start with a holy hour once a week or once a month. See "Holy Hour for Church Vocation" in Section 4 for more information.

- **Prayers of the Faithful**

There are sample prayers in Section 4 also. Give them to whomever writes the Prayers of the Faithful each week and encourage that person to include a petition for vocations in the Mass every Sunday.

- **Rosary Before Mass**

Ask those who recite the Rosary before daily Mass to recite the vocation prayer at the end of the Rosary each day.

- **Parish Prayer Groups**

Ask the leaders of your parish prayer groups to make vocations a special intention in their prayers and recite the vocation prayer regularly.

- **Prayers of the Sick**

Ask those who are sick to pray for vocations and offer up their sickness for this intention. By doing this the sick can become a powerhouse of prayer for vocations. A "Sick Person's Prayer for Vocations" is included in Section 4. To get this prayer out to the sick you will need to enlist the help of your ministers of the sick, assuming they are the ones visiting the sick every week. Included in this section is a sample letter your chairperson can send to ministers of the sick in the parish. Also included are sample vocation commitment cards. If visiting the sick is done by the priests, ask them to give the prayer cards to the sick and seek their commitment to pray.



TASK #3

INVITING INDIVIDUALS

For the Parish Community or Adult Groups Within the Parish

Suggested Scripture readings:

OT: Exodus 3 3: 1-6, 9-12
Response: Psalm 84:1-2, 3, 10, 11 -Refrain verse I
NT: Romans 8:28-30
Gospel: Luke 14:25-33 3 (Gospel Accl. -Mt. 4:19)

Opening Prayer:

Father, in your plan for our salvation you provide shepherds for your people. Fill your Church with the spirit of courage and love. Raise up worthy ministers for your altars and ardent but gentle servants of the gospel.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Prayer Over the Gifts:

Pray brethren...

Lord, accept our prayers and gifts. Give the Church more priests and keep them faithful in their love and service.

Grant this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

Before the Lord's Prayer:

Jesus taught his disciples to pray. In the spirit of our common calling to follow him, let us join in prayer, using the words he gave us...

Prayer After Communion:

Let us pray...

Lord, hear the prayers of those who are renewed with the bread of life at your holy table. By this sacrament of love bring to maturity the seeds you have sown in the field of your Church; may many of your people choose to serve you by devoting themselves to the service of their brothers and sisters.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

General Intercessions:

Presider: We come before our God to present these special intentions.

Response: God, increase our love.

- That we may clearly understand the challenge of the Gospel: to live out our faith by giving ourselves to it each day, we pray ...
- That we may consider a generous response to the call of Christ to labor in the vineyard of the Lord, we pray..
- That each of us may validate our baptismal commitment in love and service to all God's people, we pray...
- For an increase in vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, brotherhood, sisterhood, and lay ministries, we pray ...
- For those who have already given their lives in service and love to carry on the work of Christ, we pray..
- Let us pray for our special intentions...

Presider:

God, hear these special requests we make today. We renew our faith in your promise that whatever we ask in faith shall not go unanswered. Hear us and bless us through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing Prayer:

(from the New *Sacramentary*: Solemn Blessing in Ordinary Time III)

Dismissal:

Our celebration is ended. Let us accept the challenge of Christ to "Come and Follow."



Section 2: Resources for Organizing a Parish Vocation Committee



CHARTER STATEMENT FOR PARISH VOCATION COMMITTEE

Name

The name of this group will be the Vocation Committee of *(parish name)* Catholic Community.

Purpose

The purpose of the Vocation Committee is to inspire and assist the community of *(parish name)* in fulfilling its mission of fostering vocations, especially to ordained ministry and religious life. The committee will do this mainly in three ways:

1. Promote Parish Awareness of Vocations

Committee members will promote and advertise vocations in the parish in a variety of ways such as displaying posters and other materials in the church vestibule and having vocations mentioned regularly in the parish bulletin. They will remind liturgical planners to include vocations in the Sunday Prayers of the Faithful and encourage priests and deacons to preach on vocations on the Fourth Sunday of Easter which is Good Shepherd Sunday and the World Day of Prayer for Vocation. They will encourage parish and school committees to commemorate Vocations Awareness Week (usually the third week in January) during which they will plan to have speakers visit the classrooms of the school and religious education program to talk about vocations.

2. Campaign of Prayer

The Committee will organize ongoing prayer for vocations in the parish. This may include holy hours and perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The sick and infirm will be asked to pray for vocations. Prayer groups and morning Mass people will also be asked to make vocations a special intention. Families will be invited to pray for vocations by participating in the Vocation Cross Program. Committee members will include vocations in their own personal prayer every day.

3. Inviting Individuals to Consider a Vocation

The committee will surface the names of potential candidates for priesthood and religious life and will personally invite them to consider that vocation. Committee members will spend some time in prayer, preferably before the

Blessed Sacrament, before surfacing names. They will also consult parish staff and parish organizations for suggestions. In this search they will use the "Invitation Checklist" contained in Section 5 of this guide.

Relationship to Other Groups

The Vocation Committee is responsible to and reports regularly to the parish council. The committee will also work closely with other groups and programs in the parish: youth ministry, young adult ministry, religious education, parish school, YLI, ministers to the sick, parish prayer groups, liturgy committee, Knights of Columbus, Serrans, parish ethnic communities, small faith communities, people who attend morning Mass, etc. The committee will also try to meet regularly with other vocation committees in the deanery.

Personal Development of Members

Members of the Vocation Committee will attend the workshops offered by the Diocesan Vocation Office each year, and will strive to inform themselves about vocation trends and programs across the nation. The Diocesan Vocation Office will assist in providing educational resources.

Membership

The Vocation Committee is composed of not more than 10 members approved by the pastor of the parish. One of the priests and sisters in the parish should sit on the committee if possible. Members may serve not more than five consecutive years unless there is a good reason to do otherwise. The chairperson is selected by the members unless the pastor decides otherwise.

Annual Review

The Vocation Committee members will attend the workshops organized by the Diocesan Vocation Office. These workshops will provide committee members with an opportunity to review the programs of the previous year and plan for the upcoming year.

Approved by the Pastor and/or Parish Council

Pastor

Council President

Date



PARISH VOCATION COORDINATOR

Personal Attributes

- Has a love of and interest in church vocations.
- Is willing to devote time, talent, and energy to help other parishioners come to a better understanding about vocations within our church today.
- Will help assure that the vocation committee remains vibrant through prayer, study, and planned activities for the parish.
- Will serve as the "connecting link" with the Diocesan Vocation Office about the progress and activity of the parish vocation committee; engaging in ongoing dialogue about how the office can be of assistance in raising questions, concerns and issues for discussion.
- Has the support and approval of the pastor and pastoral staff.

Specific Duties

- Placing announcements in parish bulletins and newsletters, as well as requesting pulpit announcements regarding upcoming vocation events.
- Posting in the church vestibule, current flyers, brochures, and announcements concerning church vocations.
- Distributing appropriate flyers to young adult programs, youth programs, the parish council, school and other appropriate parish ministries.
- Being present at all parish vocation events.
- Affirming all priests, religious, deacons, parish ministers, teachers, students, scouts, altar servers, etc. in the parish community.
- Publicizing diocesan vocation events.
- Encouraging pastor and parish council to sponsor vocation events in conjunction



A SURVEY ABOUT VOCATION EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Please indicate on the scale shown the degree to which the concept discussed is presently being implemented in your parish.

Level one: Perception

Assisting people to come to a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the church, vocation, and ministry.

1. Vocations grow in a parish environment in which many people minister and are aware of themselves as ministers.

In our parish do we promote an awareness and understanding that each person is called, each has a vocation rooted in baptism?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

2. Perceiving a vocation depends partly on a person's awareness that Christ's call to service extends beyond the boundaries of family and parish.

Does our parish have ways to extend our ministry to other areas of church and society; to the poor and oppressed, near by and far away?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

3. We live in a time of tremendous challenge in our church and world, in which both face many difficulties and injustices.

Does our parish believe that in the midst of real challenge there is reason for hope and a need to invite people to minister among us?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

Level Two: Education

**Increasing people's understanding of the lifestyle of priests, sisters and brothers.
Helping them understand that vocation is experienced when a person searches
for God's call in life.**

4. Parents exercise a crucial role in creating in their children a world-view in which service to God and people is a high value.

Do we educate parents about their role in vocation promotion and provide them with a positive and updated image of the lifestyle of priests and religious?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

5. People need to know how God calls a person.

Do we share our own vocation stories as a means of sensitizing others to God's call in their own lives?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

6. People who are considering a direction in life want to know that they are needed.

Do we stress the increasing need for priests, brothers, and sisters in today's church?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

7. Has our parish made use of any materials or support provided by the Diocesan Vocations Office for parish, school religious education programs, or youth ministry?

Yes

No

Level Three: Invitation

Reaching out to those who search for a direction in life with an invitation to consider a vocation to the priesthood or religious life.

8. Young people learn by doing. Do we make a special effort to invite young people to serve in ministry?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

9. For people to be able to consider a future in ministry, they need exposure to role models and information.

Do we provide opportunities for people to experience priests, sisters and brothers?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

10. When we recognize in a person in our parish the qualities necessary for the lifestyle of a sister, brother, or priest, do we invite them to consider that option for their future?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

11. Have we invited persons to attend "Come & See Weekends," information discernment programs or seminars sponsored by the vocation office, religious communities and the diocesan seminaries?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

12. Have we, as a staff, submitted to the diocese and religious communities who serve here, the names of men and women who might be suited for vowed or ordained ministry?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

Level Four: Community Involvement
Involving parish people in the work of promoting vocations and creating a healthy climate for hearing and responding to God's call.

13. Do we ask special groups in our parish to work for vocations - Serrans, Knights of Columbus, for example?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

14. Those who minister to young people have a special opportunity to promote vocation awareness.

Do we encourage or sponsor workshops and in-service training to sensitize religious education teachers and other educators to the needs of young people in the area of vocation discernment?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

15. Does our parish have a functioning vocations committee to involve people in the ministry of vocation promotion?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

Please describe below any specific needs in parish vocation ministry that you would like to see addressed by the Diocesan Vocation Office or your own parish in the future:



SAMPLE BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

Parish Vocation Committee Formed

Our parish recently organized a parish vocation committee. The task of the committee is threefold:

1. To promote awareness of vocations in our Catholic community.
2. To pray for church vocations and organize parish prayer and services for this intention.
3. To periodically surface names of potential candidates for church vocations and personally invite them to consider this special call.

The members of the committee have already attended a training workshop on vocations offered by the Diocesan Vocation Office, and the members will be installed at a special service at _____ by Bishop John Cummins on (date). Committee members will be given a special silver pin edition of the diocesan shield in recognition and appreciation of their new role in the parish community. The Committee members are: _____ (names of members) _____.



SAMPLE PRESENTATION BY COMMITTEE MEMBER

These or similar words could be used by a committee member in a presentation at the end of Sunday Masses announcing the formation of the Vocation Committee in the parish.

Good morning! My name is _____. I am a member of the newly formed Vocation Committee in our parish.

Vocation Committees are being formed in all the parishes of our diocese at the request of Bishop John Cummins. These committees are part of the strategy on vocations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. This strategy calls on all of us to make a concerted effort to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The Parish Vocations Committee, which is the heart of this strategy, will have three aims:

- 1. To create greater awareness of church vocations in the parish community.*
- 2. To pray for vocations personally and assist the parish community to pray for that cause.*
- 3. To periodically surface names of potential candidates for the priesthood and religious life and personally invite those people to consider this special calling.*

Members of the committee have already attended a training workshop offered by the Diocesan Vocations Office, and our members will be officially installed by Bishop Cummins in the fall.

I would ask you for your prayers for the success of this committee. I would also ask you to pray for vocations, that the church will have the priests and religious needed for the future.

If you have any questions about our committee, I will be available outside the church following this Mass. Thank you.



Section 3: Resources for Task #1: Creating Vocation Awareness



UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES IN VOCATION AWARENESS

with the Vocations Office of the diocese.

- Each of us is called by God. This call is rooted in Baptism, and is a way of participating in the mission of Jesus.
- There are a rich variety of calls given by God.
- Most people will choose marriage. Some people are single and may choose to serve God in that state. Others may choose to be sisters, priests, or brothers.
- All lifestyles are needed for the sake of God's people, to make the picture complete.
- Priesthood and religious life continue to evolve in ways never presented by the stereotypical images in the media.
- Sisters, priests, and brothers are ordinary people who don't claim to be perfect, but desire to be of service in how they live and work.
- To be a brother, sister, or priest can be an exciting life of service. Priesthood and religious life are for healthy, happy and energetic women and men.
- Because there are fewer priests, sisters, and brothers, ways need to be discovered in local situations for people to have first-hand experience with them.
- A celibate choice is a valid and healthy way of loving that demands an integrated sense of self and one's sexuality.
- Terms need to be defined that are related to church ministry and the lifestyles of sister, brother, and priest, (charism, vows, formation, novitiate, etc.).
- Personal invitation continues to be the main reason someone chooses to consider religious life and priesthood as possible options.



EXAMPLES OF PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

The following material is made available to parishes by the Diocesan Vocation Office. Parish Vocation Committees should offer to assist parish staff in taking advantage of this vocation material.

Vocation Posters and Brochures

Our office makes available posters, brochures and prayer cards on vocations. One important role of the Vocation Committee members is to see that posters are displayed and to contact the Diocesan Vocation Office for a new poster if needed. Members should also watch out for other materials---fliers and brochures--and encourage parish staff to display them in the vestibule of the church.

Parish Bulletin Announcements

The Diocesan Vocation Office mails a variety of bulletin announcements to the parish as a way of keeping vocations before the eyes of the people of Sundays. Committee members should develop a relationship with the parish bulletin editor and remind that person to print these announcements as often as possible.

Material for Vocation Sunday

The Diocesan Vocation Office sends out material to all pastors, deacons and administrators for Good Shepherd Sunday (the Fourth Sunday of Easter) and Vocation Awareness Week (usually the third week in January). This material includes ideas for a vocation homily as well as other suggestions for Mass on those occasions. Remind those planning Sunday liturgies to take advantage of this material and, if appropriate, offer to help.

Classroom Material

Committee members should see to it that a vocation speaker visits the classrooms of the parish school and religious education program each year. This is particularly important for students in the 4th to 8th grades. Research has shown that the seeds of most religious vocations are sown during those years, even though the person does not make the final decision until years later. And if you have trouble finding a speaker (and do not wish to speak yourself) think about using one of our seminarians. They make excellent speakers for young people since they already have made the kind of decision we want some young people to make. For help in finding a seminarian speaker call the Diocesan Vocation Office.



PRAYERS FOR VOCATIONS FOR WEEKLY USE IN PARISH BULLETINS

- **Sunday Congregation**

Single Catholics who attend Sunday Mass regularly may also be potential

candidates. You can also enlist the help of the Sunday congregation in

searching out candidates. Put an announcement in the Sunday bulletin

asking people to suggest names. You should also ask the congregation to

pray for your committee in this important search. And ask the pastor to

make an announcement about your search and to include the intention in

the Prayers of the Faithful that week. See the sample bulletin announcement

later in this section.

1. **Root Your Homily in the Scriptures for the Day**

There are plenty of Scripture texts that lend themselves well to preaching about vocations. The themes of call and response, community, discipleship, self-giving and mission are regular features in the cycle of readings for the church year. When any homily is preached, its focus should always be the Word which has been given for the day. When you make a pastoral decision to focus on an invitation to priesthood and religious life, it is appropriate to do so when the Liturgy of the Word lends itself to that focus. Two very appropriate days are the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, when the church in the United States begins its observation of **National Vocation Awareness Week**, and the Fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday, which is also observed as **World Day of Prayer for Vocations**.

2. **Use Contemporary Images**

When choosing images and stories for a vocation homily, ask yourself, "Will a seventeen-year-old parishioner relate to this story?" Examples like Pope John Paul II, Mother Theresa, Dorothy Day, and other heroic Christians will probably strike

chord with young people because they have most likely heard of them outside of their church experience.

3. **Focus on Vocations to Priesthood and Religious Life -- Be**

Direct

Perhaps you have noticed that often young men and women who make a choice for priesthood or religious life are already involved in some level of parish ministry, whether as paid professionals or as volunteers. When preaching on vocations to priesthood and religious life, remember that your congregation includes these young adults who are already dedicated to serving God as lectors, music ministers, and catechists. Without implying that lay ministry is a lesser form of service, be direct in your invitation to consider the lifestyle of a vowed or ordained minister.

4. **Affirm the Faith of Your Listeners**

People who worship regularly in our parish communities demonstrate that they are people of faith searching for more. The motivations that carried them to Mass are already counter cultural. Thank God for their faith ... Jesus did.

5. Tell Your Story

"Young people have immense curiosity about the lives of people who appear to have discovered sense, meaning, and a measure of fulfillment" (Michael Hunt, CSP). Share a concrete moment from your story so your listeners might make a connection with your discernment, vocation, joy, and sense of mission.

6. Give a Bold, Personal Invitation

The number one reason young people say they haven't considered vowed or ordained ministry is that no one had ever asked them. Ask your listeners directly to consider the possibility of a church vocation. Be courageous.

"Today, I'm asking, I'm asking the young people in our parish to think about what it would be like to serve the People of God as a priest, brother, or sister."

7. Ask Parents and Grandparents

Enlist the help of parents and grandparents in the vocation effort of the church. Pope John Paul II clearly points out that vocations begin at home.

"Parents and Grandparents, please talk with your children and grandchildren about the

possibility of serving in a religious vocation. We owe it to them to offer them the possibility."

8. Include Religious Life

When preaching vocations, include reflections on religious orders. Do not neglect to promote communities of religious women and men. For years, sisters and brothers have generously supported vocations in our schools. Priests should return the favor.

"Think about what it would be like to do the work of a brother, to do the things a sister does."

9. "The Church Needs You"

Let your listeners know that they are important. They could make a great contribution to the mission of Christ by serving as a priest, sister, or brother.

"The church needs You! Just one generous person can make such a difference in the mission of God by offering their lives in the service of the church."

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O God Almighty, we thank you for calling each of us into deeper life through Jesus. We thank you for the love we are called to bear

one another and for the power you give us to love with your Spirit of love. Teach us to respect the many ways your Spirit is manifested and the many gifts needed to bring Christ's life in us to its fullness. Never let us forget that the greatest among us is the one who serves with joy and humility, using your gifts for the common good. We ask this in the name of your son through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

National Coalition for Church Vocations

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

In the Spirit, we pray for vocations, remembering the words of Pope John Paul II: "A vocation is a grace and a gift of God in Jesus Christ. This awareness of the divine gift gives our vocation its deep meaning, in the perspective of our whole life." Open our life to this gift. Amen.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Dear God, you gift us with life. Through baptism you have called us to new life. May we be a sign of your love in the world. We pray that you will continue to fill women and men with an abundance of courage to follow the path you set before them today. May those who feel compelled to serve as lay ministers, brothers, sisters, deacons and priests be blessed with passion and vision to make the world a better place. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

National Coalition for Church Vocations

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Thank you, Lord, for all your great and wonderful gifts. Help us to live each day with joy and humility. Keep us totally dedicated to serving you. Teach us to recognize the many ways you make your Spirit known. Then help each of us to accept your gift, then grace to answer your call to form, strengthen and expand the Body of Christ. Amen.

Diocese of Lexington

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Creator God, you give us life and entrust us to families where we learn about your love and care. As we share our family life, help us feel your presence so that faith will make a difference in our lives and we, in turn, will make a difference in our world and in the lives of others. Amen.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Generous God, you call us by name and ask us to follow you. Help us grow in the love and service of our church. Give us the energy and spirit to shape its future. Grant us faith-filled leaders who will embrace Christ's mission of love and justice. Bless the church by raising up dedicated and generous leaders from our family and friends who will serve as sisters, priests, brothers, deacons and lay ministers. Inspire us to open our hearts and hear your call. Amen.

Diocese of Austin

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Loving God, help us follow the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary in willingly giving ourselves in service to your church. Stir up the grace of priestly and religious vocations in the hearts of many within our community and send your Spirit to guide and strengthen them in answering your call. Amen.

Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson, Chair,
Bishops' Committee on Vocations

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Loving God, you are the creator of the universe. You have gifted me with life. You call me to be a light to the world through baptism. Help me to brighten our world by

sharing my gifts in the service of others and respecting all creation. I ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

National Coalition for Church Vocations

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Loving and merciful God, you call us into being and commission us to serve your people. We pray that our lives might make a difference and that our service might give you praise. Strengthen us, we pray, to be instruments of peace and justice in our church and in our world. May the desire to ministry as priests, sisters, brothers, deacons and lay ministers. We ask this in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen.

National Coalition for Church Vocations

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the savior of the world. Please manifest in your church the Spirit whom you also abundantly bestowed on your apostles. Call very many to priesthood and religious life. May zeal for your glory and for the salvation of the world inflame those you have chosen. May they be saints in your likeness. May our Holy Spirit strengthen them. May they be priests and religious according to your own heart. Amen.

Diocese of Marquette

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord God, you so loved the world that you sent your only son, Jesus, to bring eternal life to those who believe in him. I join him in his prayer for laborers in your harvest. May your Holy Spirit inspire and strengthen generous men and women to continue his mission in the world. May this same Spirit make known to me your will in my regard. Where you lead, I will follow. Let it be done to me according to your word. I make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Diocese of St. Augustine

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Jesus, we ask you to bless our parish and all those living their commitment to you as married couples, singles, sisters, priests, deacons and brothers. We pray that our young people may know their vocation and respond with enthusiasm and generosity of spirit. Increase the faith life of our parish and strengthen our family life. Bless our parish with many vocations. Grant, Lord, that faithfully sharing your mission in this life, we may come together to share your eternal life in heaven. Amen.

Archdiocese of Hartford

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Dear God, you have created us in your own image and have given us so many gifts. We ask you to bless us all, so that we may know best how to love you and each other with those gifts. We pray especially for those young men and women who are searching for ways to serve you in love. May they be open to all that you may ask. We pray for those who study for the priesthood and religious life, that their preparations may bring to the church happy and holy priests and religious men and women. We ask this, through Christ the Good Shepherd. Amen.

Archdiocese of Detroit Vocations Office

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord God, you know me. You know when I sit and when I stand. You have me always in your heart. I thank you for this, Lord. You know the path for my life and what will make me happy. Show it to me, Lord. Bless me, guide me and be my Lord, so that whatever road I choose, I may choose it for your glory. Amen.

Archdiocese of Detroit Vocations Office

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

You gave me life in baptism, Lord. Help me

to share this joy of living with others. I want to do it now by caring and sharing like Jesus did. Show me how to do it later when I grow up. Amen.

Archdiocese of Detroit Vocations Office

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord, I am older now. Time weighs heavy on my hands. They are too weak to labor now. Let my prayers be your hands, reaching out to touch younger men and women. Lord, the harvest is ripe, the laborers few. I beg you, touch the hearts of the young. Make them want to serve as lay ministers, priests, sisters, deacons and brothers. Amen.

Archdiocese of Detroit Vocations Office

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Loving Father, you call each of us by name and ask us to follow you. Bless your church by raising up dedicated and generous leaders from our families and friends who will serve your people as priests, sisters, brothers and permanent deacons. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Serra International

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O God, who wills not the death of a sinner but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech you, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary ever virgin, Saint Joseph her spouse, Blessed Junipero Serra and all the saints, an increase of laborers for your church, fellow laborers to spend and consume themselves for souls, through the same Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns. with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Serra International

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O God, you have constituted your only begotten son supreme and eternal priest for the glory of your majesty and the salvation of mankind; grant that those he has chosen ministers and dispensers of his mysteries may be found faithful in fulfilling the ministry they have received. Amen

Serra International

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Good and gracious God, you have called us through baptism to discipleship with your son, Jesus Christ, and have sent us to bring the good news of salvation to all peoples. We pray you to grant us more priests and religious to build up your church here within our country. Inspire young men and women by the example of Blessed Junipero Serra to give themselves totally to the work of Christ and his church. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

Roger M. Mahoney,
Archbishop of Los Angeles

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord, our God, you established the church as a sign of your continuing presence in the world. We ask you to raise up the faithful ministers to your church in the priesthood and religious life, so that the message of faith, justice and love contained in the gospel may be brought into the hearts of all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

John R. Quinn, Archbishop of San Francisco

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Almighty God, your son Jesus told us to pray for vocations since the harvest is great and the laborers are few. Help all of us who center our Catholic lives in word and sacrament to be active promoters of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The ministry of identifying and nurturing vocations belongs to each member of each family in our parish families. May we all accept this mission from Jesus with the determination that comes from faith. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Elden F. Curtiss, Chair,
Bishops' Committee on Vocations

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

God of life and love, you share these gifts with me in powerful ways through my family and friends. Help me to find ways to share the gifts of your life and love in service to others as a minister of the church. Help me to discern how I can best respond to this challenge and give me courage to do your will. I ask this in union with the whole church and in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Thomas J. Murphy, Archbishop of Seattle

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O God, send your Spirit, that we may hear and recognize your voice. in the deepest part of our beings. Give us the courage and strength to respond with the gift of our whole lives in witness to the person of Jesus Christ and the good news of the gospel. Amen.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Dear Lord, ours are the only hands that can do your work. Ours are the only feet with which you can go about the world. Ours are the only eyes through which your compassion can shine upon a troubled world. You have no body on earth but ours. Set our souls on fire to fulfill your ministry on earth. Amen.

Serra Club of Reno, Nevada

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O Lord of the harvest, your word finds a home in our hearts, calls us to community and invites us to generous service to the human family. Bless with courage and spirit your priestly people, called to full participation in the one body of Christ. May many choose to respond in public service to your call offered in Jesus' name. Amen.

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin,
Archbishop of Chicago

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

God, source of creation and love, you invite each of us to serve you through the gift of our life. May your grace encourage men and women to serve the church as priests, sisters, brothers and lay ministers. Make me an instrument to encourage others to give of themselves and challenge me to do the same. Amen.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Loving God, you gift us with life. Through baptism you have called us to new life. May we be a sign of your love in the world. We pray that you will continue to fill women and men with an abundance of courage to follow the path you set before them today. May those who feel compelled to serve as lay ministers, brothers, sisters and priests be



Section 4: Resources for Task #2: Campaign of Prayer



VOCATION PRAYER

VOCATION PRAYER

Loving God,

You speak to us and nourish us through the life of this church community.

In the name of Jesus, we ask you to send your Spirit to us so that men and women among us, young and old, will respond to your call to service and leadership in the church.



We pray, especially, in our day, for those who hear your invitation to be a priest, sister or brother.

May those who are opening their hearts and minds to your call be encouraged and strengthened through our enthusiasm in your service. Amen.



VOCATION CROSS PROGRAM

Vocations don't grow on trees. They come from families. For that reason, prayer for vocations should include prayer in the family. When families pray for future priests and sisters, God listens. More than that, God may plant a vocation seed in the very family doing the praying. And one practical way to get families to pray for vocations is to start a Vocation Cross Program in the parish.

A cross is circulated throughout the parish, with each family hosting the cross for one week. During that week the family prays every day--usually before the evening meal--for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Copies of a special vocations prayer are provided by the parish for use by the family. The cross is put in some prominent place in the house so the family members are reminded of its presence throughout the week.

It is best to present the cross to the hosting family during a Sunday Mass. As well as creating a formal setting for handing over the cross, this reminds the entire congregation to pray for vocations.

To have this program run smoothly someone (or group) will need to be in charge of keeping the calendar. Sponsoring families should sign up well ahead of time and will need to know what Mass to attend to receive the cross. The celebrant should present the cross to the family using some appropriate wording such as:

"I present this cross to you and commission you to pray each day this week for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We, the community, will also join our prayers to yours that the Lord will raise up the workers he needs for the harvest."

The crosses can be provided by the parish or the Diocesan Vocation Office.



VOTIVE MASS FOR PRIESTLY VOCATIONS (with homily outline)

make the most of your talents and abilities for the sake of God's people.

Reading: Wisdom 7:7-12

Leader: It is not always easy to grow older, to change and to see people, places, and things change around us. But even in struggle and difficulty--even in pain--we are invited to share in the passion and resurrection of Jesus. Let us ask ourselves, "How can I be of service to others, not only in the joys that I experience, but also in pain and loneliness as well?"

(Pause for Reflection)

Leader: The senior members of our parish community are invited in a special way to be people of wisdom, people of faith and people of prayer. Each is invited to pray for and encourage others within the Christian community, that they might respond generously to God's will in their lives. We need generous and loving women and men to minister among us. We need people like you to pray for and encourage them.

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Leader: Let us pray for those who have ministered and do minister among us, and for women and men we know who may be in the process of deciding how they will respond to God's call.

(Spontaneous Prayers)

Leader: Let us each commit ourselves to a particular way of supporting those considering church ministry.

(Pass out commitment cards shown on following pages).

Prayer: The following prayer can be prayed by the leader or by all after commitment cards are collected.

(This prayer may be printed out and given to participants for personal use.)



SUGGESTED HOMILY OUTLINE

"May we move into the future united in hope and in a spirit of prayer, with boundless trust in the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. If each of us takes personal responsibility to encourage vocations to priesthood and religious life, then, together we will build a vocation-rich Catholic community. Pray the Lord of the harvest send laborers into the vineyard."

Most Reverence Joseph L. Imesch
Bishop of the Joliet Diocese in Illinois



9 POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN PREACHING ABOUT VOCATIONS

3. Meet

Meet as a committee to add more names to the list or refine the list you have compiled. It would be helpful to have the pastor attend this meeting since he probably knows the parishioners better than any one else.

4. Personally invite

It is now time to personally invite candidates whose names you have surfaced. Have a suitable member of your committee talk to the candidate and say something like this: "I am contacting you on behalf of our Vocation Committee. Our committee feels you would make a good priest/sister. If you would like to discern this call further I can put you in touch with our diocesan Office of Vocations."

If you feel self-conscious about doing this, remember that you are really complimenting the person. Even if the person is not interested in a church vocation, he/she will feel affirmed by your conversation. You may want to ask the pastor to do the inviting on behalf of the Vocation Committee. An invitation from the pastor can be more effective.

Who are you looking for?

There are many single Catholics around who are prayerful, generous and involved in the parish. Assuming they have normal health and average intelligence, these are the kind of people who would make good priests and religious. But they often need a personal invitation from somebody to begin seriously considering a special call from God.

Where will you find them?

You will find them on the lists of volunteers that make up the membership of your parish organizations and programs. Take a close look at the following groups in particular, making sure to include all ethnic communities in your parish:

- **Liturgical Ministers**

Look through the list of servers, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, and cantors. According to the 1993 NCEA study "Seminarists in the Nineties," 76% of seminarists who responded said they were altar servers, 82% responded that they had served regularly as lectors and Eucharistic ministers. These statistics suggest that close proximity to the Eucharist fosters in a person the desire to consider a church vocation.

- **Religious Education Teachers**

Check your catechism teachers. The NCEA study states that 59% of the seminarists who responded to the survey were regular catechists at their parishes. These are the people who have already responded to the call to spread the faith to others. Full-time ministry could be the next step.

- **Parish Organizations and Groups**

Check through membership lists in the following groups: charismatic groups, cursillo and other retreat participants, parish council and other parish committee members, hospital workers, RCIA team, scripture study faithfuls, youth ministry team, choir, social justice activists. There may be other groups in your parish not on this list.



PRAYER SERVICE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

To persons:

Gn. 12; Ex. 3; 19: 3ff; 24:16; 1 Sm. 3; 2 Sm. 7; Is. 6:13;
Jer. 1:4-12; Acts 9; Mt. 4:18-22; Lk. 5:1-26; Jn 1:35-51

Covenant Theme:

Gn. 6:17-18; 8:13-9; 15:1-21; 17:1-27; Ex. 19:3-8;
2 Sm. 7:22-29; Ps. 50(49); 78; 89; 111; Jer. 31:1-6, 31-34; Heb. 8:7-12

Mission:

Is. 41:8-16; 42:5-9; 43:8-12; Lk. 9:2; 10:1-9; 24:46-48;
Mt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; 5:20, 42; 6:6; 7:1, 52-53; 10:42; 13:2;
8:12; 4:3; 18:10; 2 Cor. 2:14-16; 1:18-19

Servant

Is. 42:1-8; 49:1-7; 50:4-10; 52:13-53:12

Wedding Theme:

Ps. 45(44); Hosea; Song of Songs; Is 62:4-5; Mt. 22:1-13; 15:1-12; Lk. 14:7-24

Priesthood:

I Pt. 2:2-10; Heb. 4:12-5:6; 10: 10-17

Seeking God:

Hos. 6:1-3; Ps. 27(26), 24:3-6; 105:1-4; 42:2-5, 12; 84:2-4; Is. 55:6-13

Poverty:

Prov. 22:1-2, 16, 22-23; Ps. 73(72); 40:5; 18; 107; 72;
Am. 2:6; 8:4-6; Is. 66:1-2; 11:1-5; 61:1-4, Mt. 5:1-12;
6:19-34; 8:10-20; 11:2-6; 19:16-22; Lk. 1:46-55; 4:18-21;
6:20-26; 12:13-21; 14:12-14; 16:1-13, 19-31; 20: 45-21:4;
Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; 2 Cor. 6:2-10;
8:1-15; Ja. 2:1-9

Chastity:

Wis. 3:16-28; 4:1-2; Mt. 19:12, 5:38; 1 Cor. 7:1, 7-8,
32-35, 36-40; 1 Thess. 4:1-7; 1 Tm. 4:10-12

Obedience:

Deut. 4:32-40; 6:4-6; 13-19; Is. 29:13-24; 53; Ps 50 (49);

Mt., 7:21-27; Jn. 6:35-40; 14:21-24; 8:38-42; Acts 4:19; 5:27-32

A Senior Citizens Prayer for Church Vocations

Loving God,

You call me to be a person of faith,
who desires to grow in wisdom as well as
age. Teach me to be open to you in
responding to your love in my life.

As I grow older, sometimes I am sick or
without energy, or feel very lonely.
Let me remember that you too know what
it is to suffer and yet have hope.

I desire to offer the difficulties of my life
for those who also struggle to be the people
you desire them to be.

I ask that you bless our church community
with generous and enthusiastic ministers
who desire to work among us, who
can bring your Good News to our world.
Amen.

Leader:



VOCATION COMMITMENT CARD FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

*God, teach me your way, how to
walk beside you faithfully. ” Ps. 86:11*

Anyone who can say with pride today that he or she is a "senior citizen" is saying other things as well. Hopefully each person is also saying, "I have learned through the experience of life. I am growing in wisdom as well as age. I want to share what I am and who I am."

Older members of our parish community are our treasures. You have indeed learned that life carries with it many joys as well as challenges. You have had and still have many opportunities to share, to give, to

***As a pledge for the intention
of Church vocations,
I will:***

1. Offer a monthly holy hour.
2. Pray the rosary at least once a week.
3. Pray daily for a young woman or man (by name) who is considering priesthood or religious life.
4. Do some act of kindness for someone else in need.
5. Accept willingly whatever daily life brings in terms of pain and loneliness.





HOLY HOUR FOR CHURCH VOCATIONS

An hour of quiet reflection to be used by a parish or by an individual for private prayer. (Scripture passages may be typed out on a sheet of paper or people may use Bibles.)

1. Select a passage — five to ten verses from the Bible (see the passages listed below).
 2. Find a place where you will be alone, not bothered, and free to move, speak, and be uninhibited in your response to God's presence.
 3. Find a comfortable posture, relaxed, and peaceful.
 4. Be aware of the presence of God. Acknowledge and respond to it.
 5. Pray the passage from scripture.
- Listen to the message God has for you.
 - Read, whisper aloud so you can hear, see, say God's word very slowly.
 - Rest on any words that call you to respond in a grateful, loving way - always in truth.
 - Read on, when nothing seems to happen.
 - When the time is up, thank God for speaking to you.

Suggested scripture passages:

Gen. 12:14; 15:6	Thess. 5:11
Deut. 29:3	Ex. 3:11-12
1 Kgs. 19:19-211	1 Sam. 3:1-10
Acts 9:1-19; 13:2.3, 16:9-10	Is. 6:1-9; 22:6-21; 26:12-19
Jer. 1:4-10; 17-19; 15:10-21	Am. 7:15
Mk. 1:16-20	Lk. 9:57-60; 5:1-11; 12:49-53
Jn. 1:35-512	2 Tim. 1:6-13

6. Closing Prayer:
Loving God, fill us with your spirit of love so that the fire Jesus came to light may blaze within us. May we become more visible signs of the reign of God.



SCRIPTURE PASSAGES RELATED TO GOD'S CALL

This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Call of God

Extended freely by God:

Jer. 1:41ff; Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 15:9-10; Gal. 1:15

Demands faith and obedience:

Gen. 12; Mt. 4:18-22; 16:24-26; 8:18-22

Engendered newness in person called:

Gen. 17:4-8; Lk. 1:13, 31-32, 59-63 Jn. 1:42

Corresponds with communication of the Spirit of God:

I Sm. 10:6; 16:13; Is. 2:2; 42:1; Jn. 15:16, 26; 20:22; 14:16; Mk. 3:13

Called to the heritage of everlasting life: Mt. 22:1-14; Phil. 3:14; 11 Thess. 2:14;

1 Tm. 6:12; Hb. 9:15; Rev. 19:9

Communal aspect:

Rm. 9:7; 1 Cor. 12:1ff; Col. 3:15; Eph. 4:1-12

Purpose of Call:

Ex. 3:14; Jg. 6:12-23; Ps. 20-38; Lk. 1:13-17; 1 Pt. 2:9

Assurance of Divine Providence:

Ex. 19:3; Jg. 6:13-14; Eze. 3:7-9; Jer. 1:7-9; Mt. 10:1-8; Mk. 3:15; Lk. 9:1-2; 1 Cor. 3:4-6; 4:7; Eph. 4:11

Results of following God's Call:

Persecution: Is 50:5-8; 53:1-12; Mt. 10:16-33; Mk. 13:11;
Lk. 21:14-15; Acts 9:15-16; 26:17-19

Rewards: Mt. 19:27-29; Jn. 15:15; II Cor. 2:15-17

Renunciation: Mt. 2:14; Mk. 10:17-22; Lk. 5:27-28; 9:57-62

Prayer for perseverance:

1 Thess. 1:11-12

Discernment:

Ps. 25(24); Rm. 8:28-30, 11:33-36; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Cor. 2:7-12; 1 Pt. 1:1-10



SAMPLE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Adding these Prayers of the Faithful regularly to your weekday and Sunday liturgies is encouraged both as a means of intercessory prayer and for promoting vocation awareness.

1. That families will strive to make their homes places where children can hear God call them by name.
2. That parents may realize their responsibility to be an example of faith for their children.
3. That those who feel a call to and desire for priesthood or religious life may find the courage to say yes to what God asks of them.
4. That young men and women will listen to the Spirit in their hearts and respond to the cry from deep within.
5. That our parish communities will nurture religious vocations through their lives of prayer and service, giving witness to God's loving action in the world.
6. That we may be signs of God's presence and love in the world.
7. That our daily living may transform our suffering world into a place of love, justice and peace.
8. For those who struggle in their vowed commitment, that the mystery of God's deep love will strengthen them.
9. In thanksgiving for those priests, sisters, and brothers who inspire and strengthen us by the witness of their commitment.
10. We pray to you, our good and gracious God, that you will continue to call women and men of faith to serve as ministers in our church.
11. We pray that through the power of your Spirit you fill those you call with the courage and faith to respond to a life of service.

12. We pray, God of hope, that you will continue to call women and men to serve your church as sisters, brothers and priests.
13. We pray, God of love, that our lives may be a sign of your presence and love in the world.
14. We praise you God, for your mysterious ways among us; for your presence in the midst of human affairs and for the many ways you gift us with life.
15. For parents and teachers, that they may have the courage and faith to speak God's word in their words and actions.
16. For all women and men throughout the world: that they may find in Christ their source of contentment, peace, and security.
17. For all who seek to know the truth: that their searching may lead them to a life of generous service.
18. We pray for young people: that they may persevere in hope, trusting in God's faithfulness to them as they search for deeper meaning in life.
19. For wisdom for parents and educators, that they may know how to hand on the faith to children.
20. We pray for the whole church, especially for preachers and catechists, that the words they speak may be words of life for those who experience struggle, weariness and emptiness today.
21. For each of us, for our families and our friends, that we respond fully to the call of our baptism, and accept the grace to remain open to God's call to serve.
22. We pray for a sincerity of heart, a firmness of hope, and a purity of intention in our lives and in the life of the world.
23. We pray that young people may find a joyful faith in their families and encouragement to respond to a life of ministry and service.
24. For men and women in seminaries and religious formation programs, that they may know the support and love of our community as they grow in self-awareness and continue to discern God's call.
25. For those responsible for guiding the spiritual growth of seminarians, candidates and novices, that they will rely on the wisdom of the Spirit in their



SAMPLE LETTER TO MINISTERS OF THE SICK

Dear Minister of the Sick:

I am writing to invite your assistance in promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The sick and shut-ins of our parish can provide a tremendous resource of prayer for vocations, and I hope you can help us to ask their prayers for this important purpose.

I enclose our new prayer cards, "Prayer of the Sick for Vocations" and a "Senior Citizen's Prayer for Vocations" which have been made available to our committee by the Diocesan Vocation Office. Use of these cards by the sick of our parishes is an important part of the strategy for vocations called for by the United States Catholic Bishops. We would like to distribute these cards to the sick, shut-ins, and elderly, so that they might offer their illness or infirmities to the Lord for an increase of vocations. We call these people our **Powerhouse of Prayer for Vocations**. There are thousands of people who would probably be very happy to share in this worthy endeavor.

Membership in the **Powerhouse of Prayer for Vocations** is open to everyone who is willing to pray daily the prayer on one of the cards. There are no dues, no mailing lists, no meetings and no other obligations. The members have the spiritual benefit of knowing that their prayers and sufferings are for a good purpose, united with the prayers of many other people throughout the Oakland diocese.

Please let me know how many cards you can use. They are available without cost. Thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Note: If you decide to use a "Prayer of the Sick for Vocations" or "Vocation Commitment Card" please include the samples in your letter.



A SICK PERSON'S PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Prayer of the Sick for Vocations



Lord,

you are a good and loving Father so I have great confidence that you are listening to me. Today we need many priests and consecrated men and women to serve your church.

I offer my sufferings, my illness, the infirmities of old age, and my personal inconveniences for your greater honor and glory. Give a spirit of generosity to our youth. Give them a vision, your vision, of how they can serve their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Oh God, give me strength to pray constantly, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Office of Vocations
Diocese of Oakland
510-267-8356



Section 5: Resources for Task #3: Inviting Individuals



AN INVITATION CHECKLIST

- ◆ God challenges Moses to accept the leadership of the Israelites.
- ◆ He is reluctant, for he fears his inadequacy for the work.
- ◆ God promises to always be present to strengthen Moses in this endeavor.
- ◆ The sign of that presence will be found in worship.
- ◆ St. Paul, in his letter to the Christians at Rome, insists that God call certain people to do this work, to make God known among all people.
- ◆ The cost of being a disciple, of accepting the challenge, is great (Luke), but so, too, are the rewards great.
- ◆ For goodness to have an effect on the world, there must be those who give their lives in service completely. Moses had such a vocation; so did St. Paul -- so did Jesus.
- ◆ Accepting the challenge is not done without asking the important questions:
 1. What does the Lord want from me?
 2. What is the cost of this discipleship?
 3. What abilities do I bring to the challenge? What inabilities?
 4. Is this a mature decision on my part? Have I tested it?
 5. Am I generous enough to give the sort of response I believe God wants of me?
- ◆ Priests deacons, brothers and sisters share in something larger than themselves; something greater than nations, peoples, or ages, For they have a part in the ongoing revelation of God to the human family, the formation of the human race into the People of God, the ultimate fulfillment of our destiny.
- ◆ God places the challenge before us today; may God grant the blessing of many generous responses from among our Christian family.

People Need An Invitation

The third major task of the Parish Vocations Committee is to surface names of individuals in the parish who might make good priests or religious, and personally invite them to consider this special call. This is a crucial part of vocation work and many young people have been lost to the ministry because it was not done. It is the missing link in vocation work. A Knights of Columbus study, done among young people some years ago by Fr. Andrew Greeley, found that nine out of ten young men who expressed some interest in the priesthood had never been encouraged by anybody, and as a result did not chose a priestly vocation. Meanwhile, a survey done among the seminarians in Mundelein Seminary in Chicago found that most men who have entered seminary have done so in part because someone along the way said: "You would make a good priest."

Who should we invite?

Following are four easy steps on how to surface names of potential candidates for personal invitation.

1. Pray about it

Prayer must always be primary. Before meeting to surface names, spend some time before the Blessed Sacrament as a group and ask the Lord's help and guidance in the important mission you are about to take on.

2. Consult

Meet with the pastor and parish staff and ask them for names of people they believe would make good priests and religious. Use the "Invitation Checklist" included in Section 5 of this guide. Conduct the same discussion with all the major organizations and groups of the parish, using the checklist.



SAMPLE BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

Search for Candidates

This month the Parish Vocations Committee is conducting a search of potential candidates for the priesthood and religious life. The names surfaced will be contacted and personally invited to consider a church vocation. During this search process the committee members will consult with the organizations of the parish asking for suggestions. If you know of single Catholics whom you think would make good priests and sisters, please contact the committee chairperson with their name and phone number. And please help by including them in your prayers.

Research has shown that most people who decide to study for the priesthood and religious life do so because somebody along the way said to them: "You would make a good priest or you would make a good sister."



LIFE CHOICE OPTION CHECKSHEET

This checksheet is a helpful tool for someone who may be assessing themselves as a potential priest or religious. It can be used as a resource for discussion with these persons or may be given to them directly as an aid toward assessing their life choice options.

A. Marriage

1. If you were to marry, what for you would be the best part of being married? Why?
2. What would you find the hardest? Why?
3. What factors would you consider most important in deciding whether or not to marry and/or deciding what person to marry?
4. Do YOU want to get married? Why or why not?

B. Single Life

1. If you remain single, what would you like most about that state in life? Why?
2. What would you find hardest? Why?
3. What do you think would be important factors which would lead someone to decide upon the single life?
4. Do YOU want to remain single? Why or why not?

C. Religious Life

1. If you became a sister or brother or religious priest, what would you find best about this state in life? Why?
2. What would you find hardest? Why?
3. What do you think are the reasons men and women choose religious life today?
4. Do YOU want to become a religious sister, brother, or priest? Why or why not?



Section 6: Vocation Resources on Video and Vocations Publications



VIDEO & PUBLICATIONS ON VOCATIONS

VIDEOS: Intermediate through Adults

St. Francis -Troubadour of God's Peace

(60 min-) One-man drama by Leonardo Defilippis. St. Luke Productions. USCC. \$29.95.

Sr. Thea: Her Own Story

(50 min.) Made at St. Thea's home just before she died, tells the story of this African American woman of faith. USCC \$29.95.

VIDEOS: Junior High through Adults

A Different Path

(60 min.) An up-close look at the lives of two communities of religious women, the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Clyde, Missouri, and the Sisters of St. Joseph, Brooklyn. NCCV. \$29.95.

My Soul Proclaims: Voices of Catholic Women

(60 min.) The historical and contemporary contributions of Catholic women. Discussion guide -USCC. \$29.95.

Walk with the People

(28 min.) The presentation focuses on why people become missionaries. Interviews with Maryknoll lay minister, priest, sister, and brother reveals some of the motivations, joys, and disappointments of missionary service. The presentation also develops a better understanding of Third World people. Maryknoll World Productions. \$17.95.

Work of Love

(28 min.) A documentary on the life and work of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Discussion guide. Ave Maria Press. \$39.95.

VIDEOS: High School & Adults

A Nine-to-Five Job It's Not

(15 min.) A video presentation exploring priesthood and religious life in today's church. In an upbeat and inviting style, explores the life-style options of priesthood and religious life. Study guide, leader's guide. High school through adult. Archdiocese of St. Paul -Minneapolis, Media Center. \$29.95 + postage & handling.

The Jesuits

An explanation of the stages of formation in the Society of Jesus. Available on loan from Jesuit vocation offices.

Brother is a Verb!

(28 min.) Designed to assist groups in understanding the life and ministry of religious brothers. Study guide includes project idea, glossary and discussion questions (camera-ready for duplication). Conference of Major Superiors of Men.

Merton -A Film Biography

(57 min.) An intimate look at the life of the Trappist monk. Discussion guide. Ave Maria Press. \$29.95.

A Question of Conscience

(47 min.) On November 16, 1989, uniformed soldiers entered the Jesuit residence at El Salvador's Central American University and murdered six priests, their cook and her daughter. This video tells the story behind this massacre - but it also speaks of committed priests, whose words and lives led to their deaths because they spoke out for the sake of the poor and the cause of justice. They stand as reminders that the Gospel message is costly - but we need people who are willing to pay the price. First Run Features.

Roses in December

(56 min.) Documentary about the ministry of lay missionary Jean Donovan and the three American sisters who were murdered in El Salvador. Ave Maria Press \$29.95.

Vocación: Priesthood

(10 min.) Produced by the Archdiocese of San Antonio to help surface some of the issues Mexican Americans face when they contemplate priesthood. For use with students, parents and parish groups. English & Spanish with English subtitles. NCCV. \$24.95.

Videos: Adults

God's call: A Family Affair

(27 min.) A revealing program about several young men and women who have realized quite clearly that for all the hopes and dreams they may have had for their own lives, for all the hopes and dreams their parents may have had for them, there was a better plan... God's plan! Serra International. \$12.50.

Called by God - What is a Vocation?

(20 min.) Explores the concept of baptismal call as vocation. There are interviews with a broad spectrum of people who understand their vocation in various ways: a Spanish-speaking priest, a committed Catholic couple, an African American permanent deacon, and a Vietnamese woman religious. Study guide. Sheed & Ward. \$29.95.

Charged with the Grandeur of God

(18 min.). An inspiring look at the sources of spiritual nourishment in the life of a priest. Discussion guide. USCC. \$24.95.

Come, Follow Me!

(28 min.) Looks closely at religious life and priesthood. It includes interviews with religious women and men and a brief explanation of discernment. Study guide. Sheed & Ward. \$39.95.

Conversations-. Young Catholics and the Church

(15 min.) A collage of interviews with young people who respond to questions about spirituality, mission, church and attitudes toward priesthood and religious life. Study guide. Developed for the Hilton Media Education Institute for Vocation Ministers. NCCV. \$24.95.

This Extraordinary Life

(23 min.) Suppose that your vision was the Christian vision of a new world, a world of faith, a world of justice. How would you rebuild the world according to such a vision? Where would you gain the power to change things? Whom would you choose as your companions? Available on loan from Jesuit vocation offices.

Priesthood

(30 min.) Meet three priests of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis who reflect on their vocational choice and share the joys and challenges of their lives. Communication Office, Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis. \$14.95.

Print Publications/Periodicals:

Vision, Onward and Your Choice

Publications from Berry Publishing Services. *Vision* and *Your Choice* are annuals. *Onward* is published biennially. Available free. See *Vocation Resource Catalogue* page 7.

Vocations and Prayer Magazine

A quarterly published by the Rogationist Fathers. Contains ideas for vocation ministry, informative articles about priesthood and religious life. See *Vocation Resource Catalogue* page 8.

Catholic Updates, Youth Updates

From St. Anthony Messenger Press: "Are you called to be a lay minister?" Carol Luebering and Robert E. Schmitz; "Lay ministry not just for a few," Thomas Richstatter OFM; "Sacrament of Marriage: Sign of Faithful Love," Thomas Richstatter, OFM; "Ten Things to Discuss Before Marriage"; "Why Become a Priest, Sister or Brother Today?" Catherine Bertrand, SSND.

Where to Find it:

These are the addresses of the organizations from which you may purchase the materials listed in this resource bibliography. In most cases, the publishers have catalogues that include other materials that might aid your vocation efforts.

Archdiocese of SL Paul-Minneapolis, Media Center, 328 West Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55102.

Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis, Communication Office, 226 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55102. Phone: 612.291.4411.

Ave Maria Press. Notre Dame, IN 46556. Phone: 800.282.1865.

Conference of Major Superiors of Men, 8808 Cameron Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Credence Cassettes, 115 E. Armour Blvd., PO Box 419491, Kansas City; MO 64141-6491. 1.800.333.7373.

First Run Features. 1.800.229.8575.

Jesuit Vocation Offices. To locate office newest you go to the Internet: [http:// maple.lemoyne.edu/~bucko/vocation.html](http://maple.lemoyne.edu/~bucko/vocation.html).

Ligouri/Triumph, One Ligouri Road, Ligouri, MO 63057. Phone: 314.464.2500.

Maryknoll World Productions, PO Box 308, Maryknoll, NY 10545. 800.227.8523.

Sacred Heart Kids Club, 869 S. Rimpau Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90005.

St. Anthony Messenger Press 1615 Republic Street Cincinnati, OH 45210. 800.488.0488 or on the Internet: <http://www.americancatholic.org>.

Serra International, 65 E. Wacker Place, Suite 1210, Chicago IL 60601. Fax: 800.377.7877.

Sheed & Ward, PO Box 419492, Kansas City, MO 6414 1. Phone: 800.333.73 73

Publishing Services, USCC, 3211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC. 20017.
800.235.8722

Other Sources:

Bishops' Committees on Vocations and Priestly Formation, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 3211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017, Phone:
202.541.3033.

Catholic Campus Ministry Association (CCMA), 300 College Park Avenue, Dayton, OH 45469. Phone: 513.229.4648.

Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), 8808 Cameron Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Phone:
301.588.4955.

National Association of Diaconate Directors, 1337 W. Ohio Street, Chicago, IL 60622. Phone 312.226.4033.

National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors, PO Box 1570, Little River, SC 29566. Phone: 803.280.7191. E-mail: NCVOC DIR@aol.com.

National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM), 3700-A Oakview Terrace, Washington, DC 20017-2591. Phone: 202.636.3825.

National Religious Vocation Conference, 1603. S. Michigan Ave, #400, Chicago, IL 60616-1228. Phone: 312.663.5454. E-mail: NRVC@aol.com.