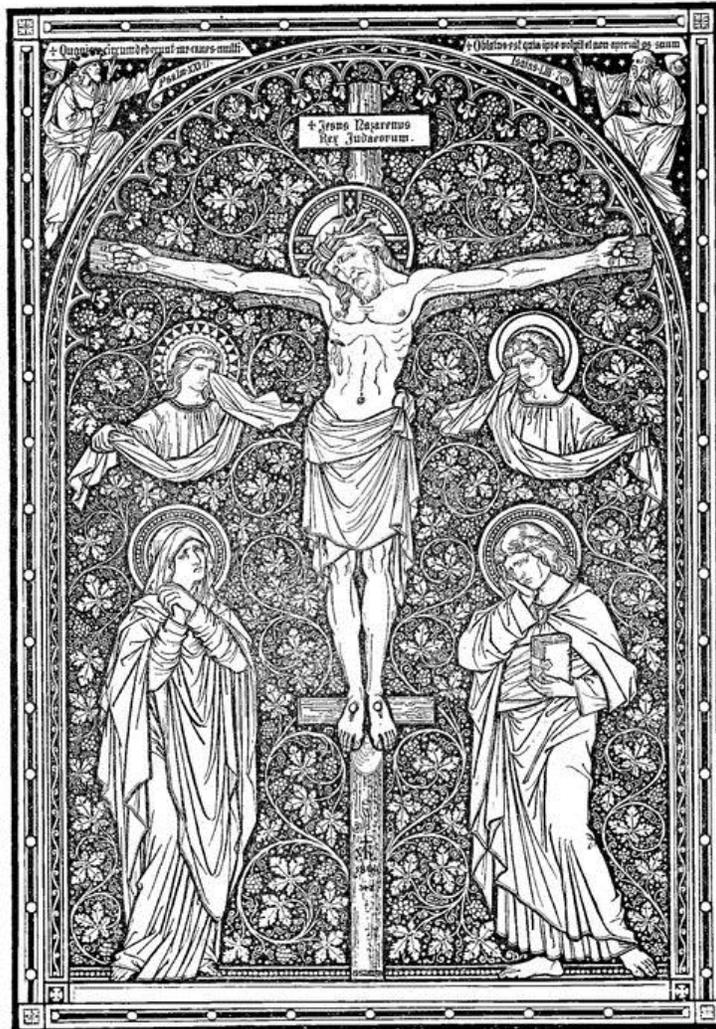


Bulletin Inserts for Vocations

Building a Culture of Vocations Every Weekend of the Year

Years A B C



ARCHDIOCESE
OF PORTLAND
IN OREGON

IN TALKING WITH YOUR CHILDREN have you neglected to raise the call to Church ministry? The process of answering God's call begins in childhood. Throughout adolescence and adulthood, the attitudes assumed in childhood begin to influence the course of one's life. A vocation or a talent will not grow to fruition unless it is nurtured in childhood and adolescence by a parent.

CHILDREN OFTEN TALK about what they want to be "when they grow up": doctors, lawyers, athletes, nurses, movie stars, teachers, carpenters. They may talk about these roles, but do they ever talk about being a priest, sister or brother? You are the hand of God — encourage your children to consider Church ministry.

WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE become priests, sisters or brothers? Are they people who don't relate well with other people? No. They are people who love others — people who find real satisfaction chatting with a 93-year-old parishioner, holding the hand of a cancer patient, listening to the troubles of a streetwise teen. They are people with the courage to touch lives, hearts and souls in a high-tech, unchurched world. Are you that kind of person?

ALL TOO OFTEN WE forget to express appreciation to those in service-oriented jobs, including priests, sisters and brothers. We forget because we think, "It's their job to help." Priests and religious aren't superhuman. They need genuine support from those they serve. Let them know how you feel.

A STUDY COMMISSIONED by the Knights of Columbus revealed that 75% of Catholic young people who had seriously considered religious life felt they were never encouraged to pursue that goal. Do you know someone who would make a good priest? Why not tell him so? Your encouragement may be all he needs.

HOLINESS is a challenge for all of us, whatever our specific vocations. We are called to be holy in all aspects of our lives. This is an ongoing process, often slowed by setbacks. When the saints were alive, they did not regard themselves as saints; rather, they knew they were sinners — and they strived to be saints. The process of becoming holy is, even for saints, filled with struggle. Know you are a sinner; strive to be a saint.

CHRIST SPOKE of the talents each one of us has, talents which must not be buried. Our calling is to take those talents, develop them fully, and then use them in establishing His kingdom on earth. Are you using your talents to fulfill your vocation to service? Take some time today to reflect on how you might use your special talents in the service of the Kingdom.

FAMILY LIFE can build values integral to a strong vocation — whether to priesthood, religious life or marriage. Teaching your children to value commitment, service and prayer will help them make strong vocation decisions as adults and live out those vocations with success and fulfillment.

A MISCONCEPTION among some Catholics is that the priest has an ideal job: he works one day each week, Sunday. They forget that the other six days a week, the priest works long and hard behind the scenes: bringing communion to the sick and elderly, counseling troubled families, visiting school classes, preparing individuals for sacraments. Often the job is frustrating, exhausting and thankless, but always of vital importance. Take some time this week and express appreciation to your priests for the difficult work they do.

THE LOVING ENVIRONMENT of a family draws forth an individual's greatest talents and gifts. We've come to realize that creating an atmosphere in which children can hear the Lord's call is one of the most significant responsibilities resting on our shoulders as parents. Our own lives must reflect the presence of God, His Word, and the love He offers His people.

PARENTS, do you encourage your children to develop their talents and gifts? Do you encourage your children to think of Church ministry as a possible life choice?

PRAYER is a moving force in vocation development. Prayer is effective; prayer is powerful; prayer is essential. Few are called to priesthood or religious life, but all are called to pray for vocations. "Lord, your Church is in need. Touch the hearts of many within our parish with the desire to serve you. Call forth from this community sisters, brothers, deacons, priests and lay leaders. Help us to live lives that will nurture childhood trust into adult commitment. May this parish be a source of hope and a source of ministers for your Church, your people and your world. Amen."

JESUS COMMANDED US to pray for vocations with his words, "Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Mt. 9:38). Take on prayer for vocations as your personal effort to increase the number of priests, sisters, brothers, and lay ministers.

WHAT IS A SISTER? A Sister lives in a religious community that follows a constantly renewed tradition, patterned on the life and teaching of the founder of the community. The work she generally does will depend upon the ministries of that community as influenced by the needs of the Church and its people — for example: teaching, social work, administration, nursing, peace and justice ministry, etc. If the lifestyle of a Sister sounds attractive to you contact the diocesan vocation office for more information.

A VOCATION must be nurtured for a lifetime, not just until ordination or the taking of vows. You can help nurture the vocations of priests, sisters and brothers by praying, listening, and expressing appreciation. A life of service needs support from those served.

HOW will you work out your life response to God?

CELIBACY is a gift and a promise to love very deeply and to express that love for others without using those physical expressions proper to marriage. The lives of many men and women religious are rich and loving within the context of celibate love as are the lives of happily married couples.

IN A WORLD waging war on poverty, men and women religious choose to live as Jesus did — simply. Because they share expenses and try to keep their personal and communal needs simple, they can get along very well on very little. Everyone has a vocation; pray for yours.

A STUDY of Catholic young people in the United States and Canada showed that 75% feel they were never encouraged to pursue the religious life.

DID YOU KNOW... that just because a young man goes to the Seminary doesn't automatically mean he will become a priest. Those young men are discerning whether they are indeed called into that particular kind of service to our LORD. They would appreciate your prayers for them!

DID YOU KNOW... we all have a “vocation.” Vocations also include Marriage, Religious life and the Single life! It is how YOU are meant to live and contribute to the Body of Christ! The important thing is to pray for discernment.

DID YOU KNOW... every member of the Church needs to consciously feel responsibility for promoting vocations, especially since God’s voice may be drowned out by “other voices.”

DID YOU KNOW... “Nuns” are women religious who have professed solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and live a life of prayer and penance within cloistered communities. There is a difference between a “nun” and a “sister.”

DID YOU KNOW... “Sisters” are women religious who also have taken traditional religious vows but are engaged in active ministries among the public. They usually live in a convent.

PARENTS... don’t be afraid to encourage service in your children. Mothers are often the main influence in a man’s discernment to the priesthood.

DID YOU KNOW... “Brothers” live in Religious Communities. They take vows and promise to use their talents to serve God wherever the Community decides they are needed. Brothers are not ordained.

“WHEN PEOPLE wish to destroy religion, they begin by attacking the priest, because when there is no longer any priest there is no sacrifice, and where there is no longer any sacrifice, there is no religion.” – *St. John Vianney*

“THE FIRST WORD OF JESUS in the Gospel was ‘come’; the last word of Jesus was ‘go.’” – *Ven. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen*

HOW WOULD YOU REACT if your son said he wants to be a priest?

- a. I would ask him if he’s gone mad, and I would remind him that we must take into consideration what others might think.
- b. I would ask him to give it considerable thought and to have a university degree first.
- c. It would give me one of the greatest joys of my life, and I would support him fully.

“IF PRAYING ALIENATED YOU, took you away from your real life, beware: it would not be true prayer... On the contrary, dialogue with God is the guarantee of truth, of truthfulness with oneself and with others and, therefore, of liberty” – *Pope Benedict XVI*

“FAITH AND PRAYER do not resolve problems, but enable one to address them with a new light and strength, in a way fitting to man, and also more serenely and effectively.” – *Pope Benedict XVI*

“IN A WORLD where human frailty is acutely felt, they [religious men and women] remind us of God and bring Christ’s redemptive love to all they meet.” – *Archbishop Robert J. Carlson of St. Louis*

THE SECRET OF A VOCATION, Pope Benedict XVI told youth, “lies in the capacity and in the joy of distinguishing [God’s] voice, of listening to and following His voice. But to do this, it is necessary to accustom our heart to recognize the Lord, to hear Him like a person who is near me and who loves me.” Moments of “interior silence in the day-to-day routine” are essential, he said. “But once one has learned to hear this voice and to generously follow it, one fears nothing, he or she knows and feels that God is with him or her, and that He is a Friend, Father, and Brother.”

“DEAR YOUNG PEOPLE, Do not be afraid of Christ. He takes nothing away, and He gives you everything. When we give ourselves to Him, we receive a hundredfold in return.” **-Pope Benedict XVI**

HAVE YOU HEARD of Serra Clubs? That is Serra Clubs, not Sierra Clubs! The mission of Serra is to pray for, foster and affirm vocations. It seeks to help the faithful understand that each person has a vocation and especially to help vocations to priesthood and religious life. Serra is named after Blessed Junipero Serra, who started a series of missions in California to bring Catholicism to the West Coast.

PRAYER FOR MY VOCATION! Heavenly Father, You have a great and loving plan for our world and for me. I want to do my part in your plan. Help me to see the signs that You give me. Open my heart to respond to You. Grant me the courage to follow your call. Give me the strength to serve You and your people with generosity and love. Amen.

WE EACH HAVE A VOCATION –“The thing to do is answer the call. We each have something to give.” - **Dorothy Day**

ST. THOMAS MERTON prayed: “My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going, I do not see the road ahead of me. . . . But I believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.”

IF YOU ARE MARRIED or soon to be married, you need to realize that your marriage is your vocation! Your marriage must come before all things except God!

WHAT IS A DEACON? A permanent deacon is a man ordained—like bishop or priest—to serve as Christ Jesus who “came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). The word deacon comes from the Greek word for service: *Diakonia*.

WHAT QUALIFIES a man to be a Deacon? Prayer. Humility. Service. Grace. Suffering. Love. A willingness to be changed and to offer his life in unpaid sacrificial service to God, to the Church, to any and all in need of God’s mercy.

HOW DOES a man become a Deacon? Through a process of discernment and formation that takes about four or five years. If a man is married, his wife and family must also come to embrace the joys and demands of having a husband and father who is a deacon.

LIFE is not merely summarized by “what are you willing to die for,” ask yourself “what am I willing to LIVE for?”

IT IS REALLY GOD HIMSELF, the “LORD of the harvest”, who chooses his laborers. His call is always undeserved and unexpected. We are called to cooperate with his providence, and to use the powerful tool which he has placed in our hands: prayer. Jesus said “Pray the LORD of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest!”

ALL THE MEMBERS of the church are responsible for looking after priestly vocations. “The duty of fostering vocations falls on the whole Christian community, and they should discharge it principally by living full Christian lives.” (*Vat II*)

TO HAVE A FULL CHRISTIAN LIFE listen to the Word of God, participate in the Eucharist, exercise charity and pray!

WHATEVER STATE OF LIFE God calls us to, we bring with us an assortment of experiences, interests and gifts – however small they seem to us. We are called to put our lives at the service of the LORD and our neighbor, wherever we find ourselves. Where and how is God calling you to spread His Good News – His Love?

MISSIONS – You can learn more about the Pontifical Mission Societies, including the Society for the Propagation for the Faith, at www.onefamilyinmission.org.

VOCATION DIRECTORS, whether of a diocese or religious order, are the interface between the congregations and the world. They also need your prayers and perhaps your help. Feel free to suggest a name to your pastor of someone you believe may be interested in pursuing a religious vocation.

THE CHURCH INVITES all of us to make a generous gift of our life through married life, intentional single life, priesthood or religious life. In what state can we flourish?

THE VOCATION OF MARRIAGE – When the Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a Christian vocation it is saying that the couple’s relationship is more than simply their choice to enter a union which is a social and legal institution. A great internet resource is www.foryourmarriage.org – an initiative of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops.

WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD? The answer is the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist! Through it the priest offers the most sublime of sacrifices, that of God the Son to God the Father, applying the merits of Calvary to our lives today.

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE MELCHIZEDEK PROJECT? In it, Catholic men meet to pray about their lives, listen for God’s voice, and get serious about answering His call. The Project’s handbook, “*To Save a Thousand Souls*” by Father Brett Brannen, is the ultimate guidebook for discerning a vocation to the Catholic priesthood.