

Creating a Culture of Vocations “Bulletin Inserts”

Creating a culture of vocation...

IN TALKING WITH YOUR CHILDREN, remember to talk about 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.

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CHILDREN OFTEN TALK about what they want to be “when they grow up”: doctors, lawyers, athletes, nurses, movie stars, teachers, and carpenters. Change the words to “What is God calling you to be?”

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WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE become priests, deacons or religious? What kind of people enter into sacramental marriage? They are people who love others. They are people with the courage to touch lives, hearts and souls in a high-tech, unchurched world. Are you that kind of person?

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ALL TOO OFTEN WE forget to express appreciation to those in service-oriented jobs, including priests, religious and deacons. 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.

Creating a culture of vocation...

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.

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HOLINESS is a challenge for all of us, whatever our vocation. We are called to be holy in all aspects of our lives. This is an ongoing process, often slowed by setbacks. The process of becoming holy is, even for saints, filled with struggle. Know you are a sinner; strive to be a saint.

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CHRIST SPOKE of the talents each one of us has, talents that 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.

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DO YOU BELIEVE you are called to holiness? By Baptism, we are children of God! We are called to holiness. We are called to be saints! All of us, not just priests, sisters and brothers. Pray to be the saint God is calling you to be!

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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.

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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?

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PRAYER is a moving force in vocation development. Prayer is effective; prayer is powerful; prayer is essential. Not all are called to priesthood or religious life, but all are called to pray for vocations. “Lord, your Church is in need. Call forth from this community sisters, brothers, deacons, priests and lay leaders. May this parish be a source of hope and a source of ministers for your Church, your people and your world. Amen.”

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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.

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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.

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A VOCATION must be nurtured for a lifetime through prayer and developing a relationship with the Lord. You can help nurture the vocations of priests, sisters and brothers and married couples by praying, listening, and expressing appreciation. **HOW** will you work out your life response to God?

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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 and generous single people are rich and loving within the context of celibate love.

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IN A WORLD waging war on poverty, choose to live as Jesus did — simply. As part of our call to be holy, we are called to be good stewards of the gifts God has given us. How do you use your gifts?

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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. Pray for more vocations.

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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!

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DID YOU KNOW... we all have a “vocation”? The way we live our life is our vocation - Marriage, Priesthood, Religious life or the Single life! It is how YOU are meant to live and contribute to the Body of Christ! Pray for discernment of your call.

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DID YOU KNOW... every member of the Church needs to consciously feel responsibility for promoting vocations, all kinds of vocations? Priesthood, diaconate and religious life but also to sacramental married life.

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DID YOU KNOW... there has been a decrease in sacramental marriages? Why is that? God is still calling couples to a married life that expresses Christ's love for the Church, sacrificial and selfless. Pray for married couples!

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MOTHERS... don't be afraid to encourage service in your children. Mothers are often the main influence in a man's discernment to the priesthood and mothers influence the attitudes of their children toward marriage.

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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.

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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)

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THE FIRST WORD OF JESUS in the Gospel was "come"; the last word of Jesus was "go." (Ven. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen) Where is God calling you to "come" and "go?"

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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.

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

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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) Pray to hear God's call.

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IN A WORLD where human frailty is acutely felt, faithful Christians remind us of God and bring Christ's redemptive love to all they meet.

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"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."

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DID YOU KNOW that "Do not be afraid" appears 365 times in the scriptures? One for each day of the year (St. John Paul II) So do not be afraid of God's call!

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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."

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WE EACH HAVE A VOCATION – the thing to do is to answer the call. "We each have something to give." (Dorothy Day)

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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."

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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!

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WHAT IS A DEACON? A permanent deacon is a man ordained—like a 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.

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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.

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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.

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

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“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 that he has placed in our hands: prayer. Jesus said, “Pray the LORD of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest!”

Creating a culture of vocation...

ALL THE MEMBERS of the church are responsible for looking after vocations. “The duty of fostering vocations falls on the whole Christian community, and they should discharge it principally by living full Christian lives.” (Vatican II) To have a full Christian life, listen to the Word of God, participate in the Eucharist, exercise charity and pray!

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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?

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

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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.

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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 you flourish? Pray!

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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 (USCCB)

Creating a culture of vocation...

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.