

What about Vocations?

The term, “*vocation*,” for most Catholics, means a call by God to the priesthood, the diaconate, or religious life. It also means a call by God to Holy Matrimony. Of these, there are two calls that are sacramental; Holy Marriage and Holy Orders. The Church, as instituted by Jesus, cannot continue to exist without families and priesthood. In this discussion we will look primarily at vocations to priesthood.

Let’s look at some possible ways we might nourish vocations to the priesthood:

1. Foster good family life. Most priests look back on their families as the seed bed of their vocations. Avoid negative gossip about priests.
2. Promote a better understanding of what priesthood is. Many Catholics do not know the mystical difference between a priest and a Protestant minister. Holy Orders creates a new kind of being that cannot be reversed. Protestant ordination simply designates a trained professional.
3. Foster devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Some of our best vocations arise from a holy love of Mother Mary.
4. Support evangelistic youth rallies. Young people need to turn to Jesus before they can hear His call. It is told that several hundred vocations can be traced to the *WORLD YOUTH CONFERENCE* that was held in Denver during the Pope’s visit several years ago.
5. Support parish youth ministry. It would be better if the roof blew off and the furnace blew up than to blow off good youth ministry. This is the age-group in which many vocations develop.
6. Teach children to love their Pastor. This objective must be close to the heart of parents, the Faith Formation Program, all parishioners and the Pastor himself.
7. Protect the great majority of good priests from the public scorn for the failures of a few imperfect priests. Pray for a deeper conversion of some other priests.
8. Support good priestly models. Very few young men would listen to their call if they did not have a holy friendship with a priest somewhere.
9. Give support to good seminaries that are faithful to Church authority and teaching. Many good young men have dropped out of seminaries that had a rebellious or unholy atmosphere. Make generous offerings to good seminaries.
10. Encourage parent support for any vocations in the family. Most would be happy with this, but some parents fearfully block God’s call, trying to redirect their children to success in worldly pursuits.
11. Pray for vocations; in private and family prayer, in public prayer and intercessions at Mass. Vocations and responses to God are a work of the Holy Spirit. Don’t give up hope. God will reward our prayerful efforts with much needed vocations to holy priesthood.