



NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK

NOVEMBER 1-7, 2015



✦ PRAY FOR VOCATIONS TO PRIESTHOOD AND RELIGIOUS LIFE! ✦

A Tale of Two Men & Their Vocations



Your joyful witness of marriage, priesthood, or religious life is a powerful way influence on young people discerning their vocations.

Consider two young, faithful, Catholic men who have yet to discern their vocations.

The first man is surrounded by positive examples—his mother and father live out their marriage with joy; his parish priest exudes happiness; and the nuns at his school are some of the most vibrant people he knows. Everywhere he looks, he sees people joyfully living out their vocations.

The second man is surrounded by negativity—his parents fight, his parish priest seems melancholy, and the nuns he knows seem unfriendly. Everywhere he looks, it seems like people are burdened by their vocations.

It's easy to guess how each man will approach his own vocation. The first man can see that God has a plan for everyone and it can bring great joy. The second man may be deeply discouraged, thinking that happiness in any vocation is impossible!

Obviously, both examples are extreme. The happiest lives have rough patches, and the soberest of people are capable of revealing God's love. Nonetheless, it's often said that when you sit down for a meal, "you first eat with your eyes." We judge things on how they first appear to us.

Just so, your own vocation isn't just God's Call for you. It's His gift to you, and His gift to others through you. Showing joy in your vocation is a powerful witness to young people that God has a plan, and that in His will we find happiness. As St. Julian of Norwich famously wrote, "The greatest honor we can give Almighty God is to live gladly because of the knowledge of His love."



Youth Conferences Inspire Vocations

Each summer, tens of thousands of Catholic teens attend 16 Steubenville Youth Conferences in cities around the country. This year about 4,800 boys stood up at the final Masses and publicly acknowledged that they felt God could be calling them to the priesthood. After a huge ovation from all present, every boy was handed a copy of *To Save a Thousand Souls: A Guide for Discerning a Vocation to Diocesan Priesthood*. Teens can also learn about priesthood at diocesanpriest.com.



THE VOCATION BASICS

Most people are called to marriage—to wholeheartedly love their spouses and to joyfully welcome children. The purpose of marriage is for a man and woman to help each other get to heaven, and to teach their children to do the same. Like any vocation, marriage must be discerned, not assumed.

MARRIAGE



PRIESTHOOD



Priests bring Jesus to people and people to Jesus through preaching and the sacraments. Priests are very active as they counsel people, teach classes, prepare homilies, administer parishes, and much more. Many surveys show that priests are among the happiest people in the world!

Both men and women can join religious orders such as the Franciscans, Dominicans, Benedictines, etc. The life and work of religious orders varies greatly—some are primarily devoted to prayer; others work actively in schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc. Common to all religious orders are the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.



WHAT'S YOUR CALLING?

Some people serve God as single people, without marrying or making special vows. While not a "vocation" in a strict theological sense, single people "contribute greatly to the good of the human family" (CCC 2231). "Some live their situation in the spirit of the Beatitudes, serving God and neighbor in exemplary fashion" (CCC 1658).

RELIGIOUS LIFE

SINGLE LIFE

Holiness is everyone's primary vocation. Holiness means trying to be like Jesus. After the decision to follow Christ, your vocation is the most important decision in life.



Jumping for Joy! Sisters from The Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus catch some air on a beautiful day. Based in New Ulm, Minnesota, their charism is to carry out the New Evangelization in Catholic parishes. Learn more about this inspiring religious order at handmaidsoftheheartofjesus.com.



Children dress as Joseph and Mary for All Saints Day on November 1—which this year also marks the beginning of Vocation Awareness Week. When children play "dress up" as saints, nuns, or priests, it can help them remain open to those vocations later in life.

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