

Is there a (Religious) Vocation in the House?

At some time your son may say that he wants to be a priest when he grows up. It may be a passing comment, something said to get a reaction, or God starting a conversation with your son about his future.



Your daughter may hear a call from God to enter religious life. This is not the same as holy orders, but vital to the Church's mission to bring Christ to others.



How can a parent help to prepare their child for a holy life? Here are a few suggestions:

- ***Encourage** your child to love God in everything he or she does.
- ***Help** your child develop a solid faith life by taking your child to Mass regularly.
- ***Take** them to Reconciliation on a regular basis when they are old enough.
- ***Model** service in the Church; show your support by becoming involved in your parish.
- ***Volunteer** at your parish carnival or other event where children are welcome.
- ***Invite** the priest or sister to have dinner with your family so your child can get to see that they are real people; let your child ask questions.
- ***Remind** your child to visit with *any* adult in the presence of you or other trusted adults.
- ***Pray** together!

The Working Parents Guide Sacraments on the Run



Holy Orders

Have you ever wondered what it means to be a priest, a bishop or the pope? What about a deacon? How do these levels of Holy Orders differ? How are they alike? Since ancient times the Church has provided for her people through the sacrifices and goodness of men who have entered into Holy Orders. This is not to say that sisters, nuns and lay women and men have not served the Church, but this Sacrament was meant to confer a specific kind of grace, power, and responsibility on those who have received it. They are the living symbol of the larger Church, where the sacramental symbols of God's grace and life are found. The good example of the priest helps us to know God more fully. Our family benefits when the priest or deacon models service to the Church, because it helps our family to see God's service to us. We realize through the priest or deacon the visible sign of God here and now!



Why Are Holy Orders So Important?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1536-1600) talks about this Sacrament of Vocation:

*This Sacrament gives us priests; without them we have no Holy Eucharist.

*Holy Orders is apostolic - Jesus blessed the apostles with his power and authority. They, in turn, passed it on - in an unbroken line - to the bishops today.

*In Holy Orders men are blessed with Holy Chrism which marks their soul in a special way.

*Through Holy Orders, priests become the spouse of the Church, and sacrifice for her like Jesus did.



Who's Who?

+High Priest: Jesus, the One who works through the ordained priest

+Bishops: Considered modern day apostles, bishops are men who have been called to "stand among their people as servants."

+Priests: Men who are ordained by a bishop to serve the Church in the name of the bishop

+Deacons: The name means 'to serve.' They are men who can administer the sacraments of baptism and holy matrimony as well as assisting the priest in Mass. Two types of deacons are:

1. Those on their way to becoming a priest; the diaconate is one stage of the process.
2. Those who are called to serve the church as "permanent deacons;" they may be married but may not remarry if their wife dies after ordination.

*With the exception of the married deacon, all of these men accept celibacy which is to live pure, chaste lives as single men



What Does Scripture Say ... About the Priesthood?

*Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. (Acts of the Apostles 6: 3, 6)

*He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to



him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority... (Mark 3: 13-15a)

*Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever. (Hebrews 7:3)

What Do the Bishops Say?



The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (usccb.org) suggest four ways that ordained men should fulfill their ministry:

1. Serve: to bring Christ to others primarily through the sacraments and the celibate lifestyle which indicates an undivided heart
2. Gather: to bring people to Christ by preaching the Word, the sacraments, and building community both in the Church and in society
3. Transform: to bring the community an understanding of how to serve the needy through following Catholic Social Teaching and the missionary heart
4. Send: to bring Christ to others by sharing time, treasure and talent

