

*Then I heard
the voice of the
Lord saying,
“Whom shall I
send? Who will
go for us?” “Here
I am,” I said,
“send me!”*

Isaiah 7:8

These activities and many others offer a single person the opportunity to serve God and others as a part of their vocation.

In recent years, many new groups and movements have sprung up to help **lay people**, both married and single, to live their discipleship more intensely through prayer, service, and spiritual growth. There are also various volunteer organizations that offer exciting opportunities for people to give one or two years in full-time service to the Church. Many young people choose to volunteer after graduating from high school or college.

Some religious communities (also called congregations) have branches specifically for lay people who wish to live like members of the community. For example, secular Franciscans follow the example of St. Francis in his detachment from material things. Third Order Carmelites seek to live their vocation by praying and listening to the word of God. There are many other religious communities that have ways for lay people to be involved and grow within their vocation to marriage or the single life.

A single person has many opportunities to live the call to serve others; the only thing they need is a generous heart and openness to the Lord's call. God gives each person the opportunity to live this unique vocation in a holy way.

*A lay person is
someone who
is not a deacon,
priest, or bishop.*

THE VIRTUE OF CHASTITY

Chastity is a very important part of every vocation because it prepares a person for whatever God might be calling them to in the future. Chastity also helps single people to live their single vocation to the fullest extent. Chastity is the virtue that guides the way we express love with our bodies. Our bodies are a gift from God, so we must learn to use them appropriately and not to disrespect our own bodies or other people's.

Chastity is the
virtue which controls
our sexual desires,
according to one's
particular vocation.

An important part of chastity is that all sexual relations are meant to be between a man and a woman who are married. Our faith teaches us that sexual acts outside of marriage are immoral and sinful. In the Bible, St. Paul says, “Shun immorality...Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?” (1 Cor 6:18-19).

Chastity frees one's heart in a special way, increasing our love for God and for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Everyone is called to live the virtue of chastity, even married people by their faithfulness to their spouse. “People should cultivate chastity in the way

that is suited to their state in life – which enables them to give themselves to God alone with an undivided heart in a remarkable manner.”⁶

Chastity also requires us to live the virtue of **modesty**. Modesty means respecting your own body by not exposing it inappropriately and not using it to cause others to fall into temptation. It also means respecting others by avoiding the temptation to look at or desire their bodies disrespectfully. The Church teaches us that “modesty is decency. It inspires one's choice of clothing.”⁷ Modesty also helps us avoid unhealthy curiosity.

Modesty protects
our most intimate
selves. This means
being decent and
appropriate in dress,
words, and behavior.

Why should we practice modesty? We should do so because “modesty protects the intimate center of a person.”⁸ Your “intimate center” is your whole self, what you think and feel; it is your personhood, and what makes you who you are. When you expose your body by dressing or acting inappropriately, it causes people to disrespect who you really are. People

no longer look at you as a person; they look at you as an object, a thing. This can affect the way people treat you, and the respect they have for you. By dressing and acting modestly, you express that you are a unique, intelligent person who is beautiful on the inside, as well as on the outside, and that you must be respected for who you are.



JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE

Jesus is the prime example of a single person living in the world. Jesus combined an active ministry with private prayer showing us that we too can do our jobs, go to school, have friends and yet still lead a holy life if we turn to God regularly for our guidance and direction. He showed us that this is the best way to find fulfillment on earth and in Heaven.

Long live Christ the King!

SAINTS WHO WERE SINGLE



St. Maria Gorretti (b.1890) was born in Italy and was murdered by a young man in 1902 when she bravely resisted his forced sexual advances. On her deathbed, she forgave him. Her murderer experienced a conversion because of her example, and when he was released from prison, he testified on her behalf at her beatification. Maria was declared a saint in 1950, and is the Patron Saint of Teenagers.



St. Kateri Tekawitha (b. 1656) was born to a Christian mother in the Mohawk tribe. Kateri was orphaned at age four and raised by her uncle who did not like Christianity. Her family tried to force her to marry but she felt called to remain single in service to God. At age nineteen, she asked a priest to baptize her and escaped to Canada where she dedicated the rest of her life to God.



José Luis Sanchez del Rio (b. 1915) lived in Mexico at a time when the government was persecuting Catholics. He joined the Cristeros, a group of Mexican Catholics who fought against the religious persecution. At the age of 14, he was captured by the federal army and put in prison. The soldiers told José Luis that if he did not give up his faith in Christ they would execute him, but he was not afraid and he kept his faith in Jesus Christ. The soldiers cut the skin from his feet and forced him to walk through the town. They would stop along the way and tell him that if he would cry out “Death to Christ the King” they would spare his life. Every time he answered, “Long live Christ the King!” Finally, they arrived at the cemetery and they asked him one last time to deny his faith. He refused and cried out “Long live Christ the King!” He was then shot and killed for bearing witness to his faith in Jesus Christ. José Luis has been declared a martyr and was beatified in November 2005 on the feast of Christ the King.

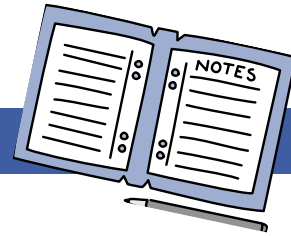
LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

1. What are some ways that you, as a single person, can avoid selfishness? Based on your talents and the needs of your community, how could you be the most helpful? What are the benefits of being unselfish?
2. What are some ways that single people live the virtue of chastity? How can you be modest in the way you dress and act?
3. It is natural to be attracted to other people. What is the respectful way to think about and treat someone who we are attracted to? How does the way that we look at other people affect our ability to live modestly?

VOCABULARY

Single life
Lay people
Chastity
Modesty

Write about it!



Journal options:

- Chastity is a great Christian teaching that the world does not always understand. Do you ever see movies, television shows, or magazines that show lifestyles that are not chaste or modest? How does this affect the way people look at and think about other people? What would the world be like if nobody respected each other or if everyone treated each other as objects instead of human persons?
- Many young single people volunteer for a year in various church-related organizations around the world. Would you ever consider spending a year or two doing volunteer service? Describe what type of service you would be interested in doing.



Becoming a Good Spouse

If you plan on being married in the future, what qualities would you look for in a husband or wife? Honesty? Kindness? Trustworthiness? If you want these things in a spouse then they will probably want them from you. So if you plan on being married in the future, start becoming a good spouse now.

The Vocation of Marriage



GOD HAS A PLAN FOR MARRIED PEOPLE

Louis Martin and Zelie Guerin were both good Catholics. They loved God so much that they wanted to dedicate their whole lives to serving God. Louis wanted to be a monk, and Zelie wanted to be a nun. However, both discovered that God had different plans for them. God was calling them to the vocation of **marriage**. They eventually met each other, fell in love, married, and raised five children.

All five daughters became nuns, the most famous being St. Therese of the Child Jesus, who is called the Little Flower. The reason we have this famous saint today is because her parents realized that the most important thing in life was to follow their vocation to marriage.

Married people are called by God to: become saints, help their spouses to become holy, teach their children to love God, and be witnesses of their Christian faith in the world.

WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE?

The vocation of marriage is a special gift that God chooses to give many people. In marriage, a man and a woman promise before God to love and honor each other for the rest of their lives.

In the Gospel, Jesus compares His love for the Church to the love of a groom for His bride. This is why a good Christian marriage reminds us of the true love that Christ has for the Church and helps us to understand it better. Christ gave up everything, leaving his home and his mother and eventually giving up his whole life for us, the Church. In the same way, the Bible tells us that “a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). This holds true for both husbands and wives. Just as Christ gave himself completely for his Church, a man and a woman give themselves to each other. This gift of self is pure, sincere, beautiful, and complete for as long as they live.

Marriage is more than just a promise of love. In the Catholic Church, marriage is a sacrament. It is a **sacred bond** of love and responsibility between a man, a woman, and God. In the sacrament of matrimony, the man and woman make special promises to God called **vows** to live faithfully as husband and wife for the rest of their lives. God unites them in a sacred bond and fills their souls with the graces they need to love each other and form a family. When a man and a woman are married in the sacrament of matrimony, they invite God to be the center of their family and they offer their love for each other as a gift to Him.





THE SPECIAL MISSION

Married people are called to help each other to get to Heaven. God created Eve as a “helper” for Adam because He knew that two people who were united in love could help each other to get to Heaven (Gen 2:18-25). A husband and wife are also called to teach others to love God, especially their children and the people around them. A married couple is like a team that together bears witness to God’s love in the world by the way they live out their faith at home, at work, and in the Church. Like single people, married couples can also serve God in church-related careers or as volunteer workers.

The vocation to marriage also includes the children that may be raised by a married couple.

One of the greatest miracles is the ability to bring children into the world and to cooperate with God in forming them as Christian disciples. If the man and woman truly love each other, their love will extend to any children that God sends them, and their hearts will be open to the gift of every new life. Louis and Zelig Martin did not know that their youngest child would be a great saint. They simply welcomed the new baby that God gave them and taught her to love God.

Parents are, by word and example, the first ones to teach their children about God. The Church teaches that the family is like a small household church, which is called the “**domestic church**.” Each family is a domestic church where its members learn how to be good Christians: to love, to forgive, and to help others. God entrusts little children to married couples so that they will love them and teach them the Christian Faith. Parents provide for the material and emotional needs of each child. Most importantly they should care for the eternal life of each soul by helping them fulfill the vocation that they are called to, especially nourishing any religious vocations their children might have.

It is the task of each family to form Christian disciples and it is the task of every Christian disciple to build a better world. Therefore, if every Christian family lived as God intended, the world would be a much better place.

*The Lord
God said:
“It is not
good for the
man to be
alone.”*

Genesis 2:18



HOW DO I KNOW WHOM TO MARRY?



Marriage is not only a matter of marrying someone who is attractive and fun, but finding someone who will truly help you to love God. If a couple agrees to be disciples of Jesus Christ, it will help them to stay together for the rest of their lives. So it is very important to find the right person to marry, who shares the same Christian faith that you do.

Those who know that they are called to marriage may ask themselves, “How do I know who is the right spouse for me?” If marriage is a God-given vocation, God will be the guide to help us

fulfill it. You must ask Him for help in choosing a spouse. Christ tells us, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7). Jesus assures us that if we trust in Him, He will help guide us in finding a good person to marry.

Vow:
a special
promise made
to God

WHAT IS A DEACON?

Being a **deacon** is a special vocation that is open to both married and single men. Deacons serve the church by assisting the bishop and priests. Deacons may read the Gospel and preach during the Mass. They may also perform baptisms, witness marriages and lead wake and funeral services. They cannot celebrate the Mass, hear confessions, or anoint the sick.

Like any vocation, a man must determine whether God is calling him to be a deacon. Before a man can become a deacon there is a preparation period in which they learn about the faith and about service in the Church. A man is ordained a deacon through the sacrament of **Holy Orders**. This is the same sacrament that priests and bishops receive but in a different degree. A deacon is ordained for life, but only to the ministry of the diaconate, which is different from the priesthood.



EXAMPLES OF MARRIED SAINTS



Venerable Pierre Toussaint (d.1853) was a black slave who moved to New York with his Catholic slave owners, the Berards. When the Berards became poor, Pierre supported them through his income as a hairdresser. Granted his freedom, he married and became well-known for his charitable acts. He is buried with honor in New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral.

St. Thomas More (d.1535) was married with four children when he was Lord Chancellor of England under King Henry VIII. The King refused to recognize the Pope as head of the Church and wanted to create his own church by declaring himself the head of the Church of England. Thomas wanted to remain faithful to the Catholic Church, so he resigned his position in the government. King Henry viewed this as an act of treason and had Thomas arrested, put in prison, and finally sentenced him to death. Before he was beheaded, Thomas More declared that he was "the King's good servant but God's first."⁹





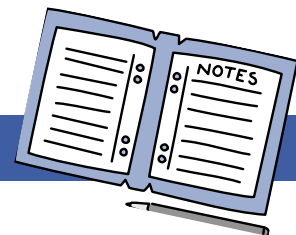
St. Gianna Molla (d.1962) was a married doctor, born in Italy, who gave special attention to mothers, their babies, the poor, and the elderly. When pregnant with her fourth child, she was advised to abort the baby to save her own life. She refused to kill her baby even though she knew it would mean giving up her own life. She died seven days after giving birth to a healthy baby girl. Her daughter read this prayer at her beatification: "Thank you mother, for having given me life two times: in conception and when you permitted me to be born, deciding for my life. Intercede and help always all mothers and all families that come to you with confidence."¹⁰

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

1. How can a married person help their spouse to go to Heaven? How can they help their children become holy?
2. What are some ways we can help our parents be good mothers and fathers? How can we help them be good husbands and wives?
3. What are some characteristics that would make someone a good spouse? What are some things married people can do to build a strong family?

VOCABULARY

Marriage
Vow
Sacred bond
Domestic church
Deacon
Holy Orders



Write about it!

Journal options:

- If God called you to marriage, describe what your ideal family would be like. What are some challenges involved in raising a Christian family? How can these challenges be overcome?
- In the Bible, St. Paul writes "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her" (Eph 5:25-26). What does this tell us about the love of Christ for the Church? What does it tell us about the love between a husband and wife?

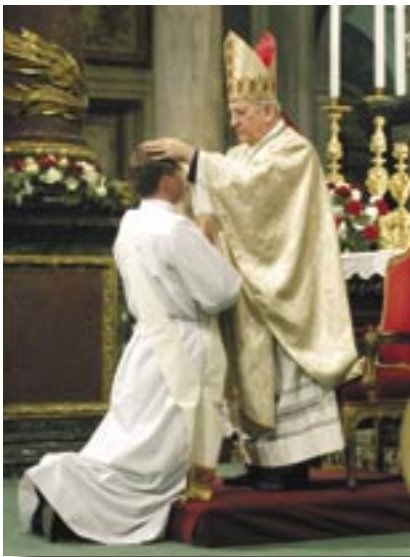
Priesthood: What is a Priest?

THE GIFT OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Jesus Christ knew that it would be difficult to live the Christian life here on earth, so He gave us the Church and the sacraments to help us along the way. He also chose a special group of men from among his disciples to guide the Church and celebrate the sacraments. These men were the first priests. Today, he continues to call certain men to the priesthood so that they can fulfill these special duties. All people are called to be disciples of Christ, but those who God chooses for the priesthood imitate him in a particular way. They live like Jesus did here on earth by completely dedicating themselves to serving the Church.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit.

John 15:16



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THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

The priesthood is so important to the life of the Church that becoming a priest is one of the seven sacraments. This sacrament is known as Holy Orders. When a man receives this sacrament, we say he is ordained, and the ceremony is known as an **ordination**. In the sacrament of Holy Orders, a priest is ordained by a bishop to share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ in a special way. "A priest is a man chosen and called by Christ from among God's faithful people to serve them in the person of Christ, the head of the Church, by forming, leading, teaching and sanctifying them as a community."¹¹

PRIESTLY PROMISES

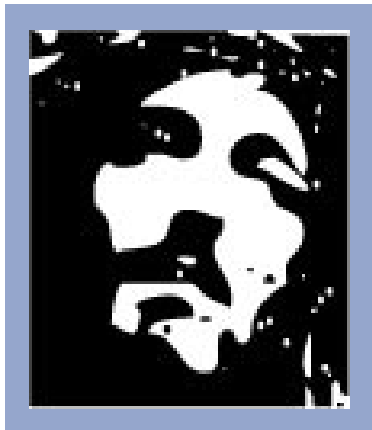
In order to fully dedicate himself to his mission, a priest promises to live in a way that will help him be more Christ-like.

Before he is ordained a priest, a man makes three special promises: he promises to pray certain priestly prayers everyday, he promises **obedience** to his bishop, and he promises to remain celibate his whole life.

The promise of daily prayer is an important part of a priest's life. Prayer helps a priest to remain close to God and connected in prayer to the people he serves. Every single day priests say a special set of prayers called the Liturgy of the Hours. We will more learn about this in the next lesson.

Another priestly promise is obedience to the bishop. Just as a priest guides the people he serves, he looks to his bishop and the pope for guidance because God has called them to lead the Church. A priest promises to remain loyal to his bishop and to follow the teachings of the Church. Obedience does not mean blindly following orders; it means paying





attention to God's will and for a priest, part of doing God's will is obeying his bishop.

Priests promise to live a celibate lifestyle as part of their commitment to God. **Celibacy** means not being married. Just as married people promise to give their whole self, body and soul, to their spouses, celibate priests promise to give themselves completely to God.

God gives priests special help to live this calling, despite any limitations or shortcomings they might have. God knows that they are not perfect. God calls whomever He wants, and promises to help them live their promises no matter what their strengths or weaknesses. A priest is only able to live his priestly promises with Jesus' help. Even if a priest had lots of personality, intelligence, and skill, without Jesus' help, he would be unable to fulfill his mission as a priest.

THE PRIESTLY MISSION

By definition, the priest is called to be, like Jesus, a priest, prophet and king: a priest to offer the sacrifice of the Mass, a prophet to preach the faith, and a king to lead his people to Heaven like a shepherd guides his flock. Jesus Christ is the one acting in and through the priest when he celebrates the Mass or any of the sacraments. Whenever a priest administers the sacraments, he acts *in persona Christi*, which is a Latin phrase meaning "in the person of Christ." The main responsibility of a priest is to allow the Lord's presence and grace to work through him for the salvation of all people and for God's glory.

A priest brings Christ to us when he:

- Celebrates the Mass, transforming the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.
- Preaches and teaches about Jesus
- Anoints the sick and the dying
- Forgives sins through the sacrament of Reconciliation
- Baptizes new Christians
- Celebrates marriages
- Consoles the grieving, sad and depressed
- Performs wake and funeral services
- Receives new Catholics into the Church
- Prays with and for his parish
- Cares for the poor and homebound



The "arch" before the words diocese or bishop denote the importance and large number of people in a diocese, governed by the bishop.

DIOCESAN PRIESTS IN SERVICE TO THE CHURCH

There are two basic types of priests: diocesan priests and religious priests. A diocesan priest serves within a geographical area called a diocese (or archdiocese) usually as a pastor or an associate pastor of a parish.

Diocesan priests live their vocation focused on the needs of the people in their parish and diocese. A diocesan priest promises obedience to the bishop of the diocese. Most diocesan priests live and minister in parishes, although some serve in hospitals or universities, some teach in schools, some work in the diocese's offices, and some serve in other special assignments such as chaplains for police or fire departments.

As a pastor, a diocesan priest is called to be a shepherd for God's people. A pastor plays an important part in the lives of the people in his parish. He shares in their times of joy, such as baptisms and weddings, as well as in difficult times, during sickness and death. The pastor helps to run the parish and its programs. The diocesan priest is called to live in and among God's people everyday as their shepherd.

PRIESTHOOD WITHIN A RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION

A religious priest is a priest that belongs to a religious community. A religious community (also called a religious order or congregation) is a group of individuals who make **vows** to live their Christian faith together in a particular way. They focus their service to the Church by fulfilling a specific mission.

A religious priest is ordained as part of a **religious community** and makes special promises called vows that are different than a diocesan priest's promises. Religious priests take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The vow of poverty means that they do not own material possessions for themselves. Instead they share things in common with their community, such as houses or cars. They also use some basic things, such as clothes, shoes, or watches that will help them in their service to the Church. The vow of obedience that a religious priest makes is to follow the head of the religious community, known as the **religious superior**. The vow of chastity is similar to the promise that diocesan priests makes to remain celibate, meaning he does not get married.

Rather than serve a specific diocese, religious priests work with their religious community in their common mission spread over a wide area, perhaps even worldwide. A religious priest administers the sacraments. He works with other priests and religious brothers in a variety of ministries. Their work may include parish ministry, missionary work, work with the poor, counseling, vocational guidance, teaching, or hospital chaplaincy. Religious priests and communities are the focus of the next unit.

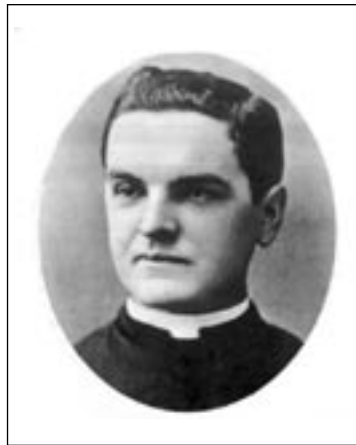


Priestly vows:
Prayer
Celibacy
Obedience



Remember that you are chosen from among God's people and appointed to act for them in relation to God. Do your part in the work of Christ the Priest with genuine joy and love, and attend to the concerns of Christ before your own.

– Rite of Ordination¹²



SAINTLY PRIESTS

Fr. Michael McGivney (d.1890) saw the need for a worldwide organization of men who could help the Church support widows, orphans and other needy individuals. To accomplish this work, he founded the Knights of Columbus, the largest organization of its kind in the world with over 12,000 councils. Fr. McGivney was born and raised in Connecticut and he played an important role in the history of American Catholicism. The process for declaring his sainthood has begun.



Fr. Nelson Baker (d.1936) lived in an era when many families were too poor to care for all of their children and were sometimes forced to abandon them. To provide these children with a loving home, Fr. Baker established an orphanage. His orphanage became so well known that children sometimes arrived by train with a note pinned to their coat which read, "Fr. Baker's, Lackawanna" (New York). During the Great Depression he served over a million free meals a year to those suffering from hunger. He has been declared a Servant of God, the first step on the road to being declared a saint.

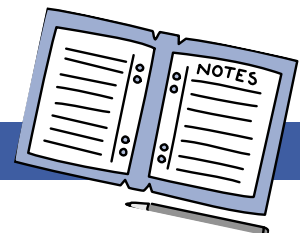
VOCABULARY

Ordination
Obedience
Celibacy
Vows
In persona Christi
Religious community
Religious superior

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

1. How did the priests mentioned above contribute to the Church? How were their lives important?
2. In what way has your parish priest, or any priest, affected your life?
3. What would happen to the Church, the People of God, if there were no priests?
4. What are some ways that priests follow the example of Christ?

Write about it!



Journal options:

- What are some reasons to be thankful to God for the priesthood?
- Write a "Thank You" letter to God, or directly to your favorite priest for all the things that the priestly vocation does for us.

The Spirituality of Diocesan Priesthood

PRIESTHOOD: A CHALLENGE OF LOVE

"To sail when the wind is favorable is no great thing, but when the wind is unfavorable, it becomes a real challenge. In a society that pursues success, a career, [excessive pleasure], financial standing, the young man who responds to the priestly call tries to orient his life another way, seeking not what is [passing] but enduring values. And this is the challenge that young men love: to go against the current."¹³ Priests face many joys and challenges in living out their vocation to bring Christ to the world. A priest receives his strength from his spiritual life and his relationship with Jesus Christ.

"Do not be afraid."

A LIFE OF PRAYER AND SERVICE

A priest's life is essentially one of prayer and service. These two parts make up a priest's **spirituality**. He prays so that he can serve with the strength and inspiration he needs. He serves so that God may work through him to assist His people. The spirituality of a diocesan priest is centered on his personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the call to bring Him to the members of the local faith community, his parish. The diocesan priest is called to be in and among the people of his parish, for his own fulfillment and the benefit and **sanctification** of his parishioners. His life is marked by the characteristics of love, generosity and self-sacrifice.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

A priest must be a spiritual man, whose trust and hope are solely in the Lord. They give a witness of how we should trust in God above all things. A priest must be a man whose faith rests firmly in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. His joy in the risen Lord comes from his experience of Jesus working in his own life. This allows him to stand firm and strong as he leads the Christians under his care.

A priest receives great joy from serving others, but he must remember that at the root of his vocation is his relationship with God. To nourish it and keep it strong he has to pray every day. Here are some of the many ways a priest prays each day:

Features of a priest's life:

Love

Generosity

Self-sacrifice



Celebrating the Eucharist.

During the Mass, a priest offers up his prayers and our own prayers to God through His Son Jesus in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Praying the Liturgy of the Hours. Priests pray the **Liturgy of the Hours**. This is a series of prayers made up of psalms, scripture passages, and intercessions that help a priest to lift his eyes towards God at certain times throughout the day.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Adoration is a way to spend time with Jesus, who is present in the Eucharist, listening and praying without the distractions of everyday life. Every day of the sixty years of his priesthood, Archbishop Fulton Sheen prayed for one hour in front of a tabernacle.

Praying the Rosary. The rosary is a **meditation** on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The rosary is also a way to ask the Blessed Virgin Mary to pray for our needs and for the Church.

In addition to daily prayer, a priest reads religious or spiritual books. He goes on an annual spiritual retreat to renew himself and his ministry. A priest should also have a spiritual director with whom he can talk about his faith and about spiritual matters. Priests also go to confession on a regular basis.

AT THE SERVICE OF OTHERS

A diocesan priest must be a man at the service of others, “For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). As Jesus taught us, the greatest gift we can give is to lay down our life for a friend. Priests lay down their lives for their people every day. In little ways, they give their time, energy, and lives to those who need help, thus being like Christ here on earth.

Diocesan priests live their unique spirituality in and among the people they serve. All people are called to a relationship with Jesus Christ, to a life of prayer and service, and so the priest is an example and a guide for others to follow. A priest is with his parishioners in all the moments of joy and sadness that come throughout their lives. He is there, in the role of a shepherd, like Jesus, to lead and accompany God’s people on their journey of faith. The priest strives to increase the holiness of the people of God so they may in turn sanctify the world. In growing in his own spiritual life, he becomes more like Christ, and is a visible sign to other people of happiness in this life and of our final goal: eternal life.

Meditation: *A way of prayer in which we focus our minds on a religious image, idea or scripture passage.*

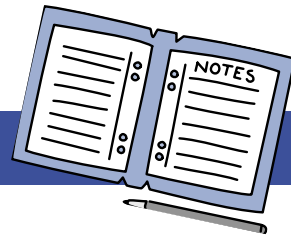
LET’S TALK ABOUT IT!

1. Why is it important for every Christian disciple to pray daily? Why is it especially important for a priest to pray daily?
2. What benefits does the priest get out of prayer? What would happen if a priest stopped praying?
3. How does a priest’s prayer life affect his ability to serve? What are some ways that your parish priest serves your community?

VOCABULARY

Spirituality
Sanctification
Consecration
Liturgy of the Hours
Meditation

Write about it!



Journal options:

- Write this bible passage in your journal and memorize it:
"Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (Jn 15:13).
What are some small ways that you can give your life to serve others everyday?
- Write how this bible passage applies to the priesthood. How does it apply to the vocation of marriage? What about the single life?

Can You Solve This?

If Archbishop Fulton Sheen prayed in front of a tabernacle for one hour every day of his priesthood, and his priesthood was 60 years, how many hours did he spend adoring Jesus Christ in the Eucharist? (Hint: there are 365 days in every year. Also, there is no need to calculate for leap years unless you want to.)



Witness of a Priest

Unit Two: Lesson Three

INTRODUCTION

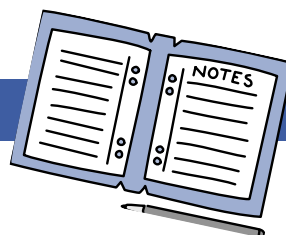
We have learned a lot about the mission and spirituality of a priest. Today, we welcome a diocesan priest who will tell us what it is like to live his vocation, and how he discovered what God wanted him to do in his life. At the end of the discussion, there will be an opportunity to ask Father any questions that you may have about the priesthood.



SUMMARY

Priests are chosen by God to serve God's people in the Church. A priest is like every other disciple trying to follow the Lord as best he can by living the command to love God and love his neighbor as himself. Ultimately, a priest is trying like everyone else to be holy and become a saint. The importance of prayer and regular reception of the sacraments are as important for a priest as they are for all disciples who desire to grow closer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Write about it!



Journal options:

- What did you learn about priests today?
- How did the talk help you understand the life of a priest?
- What was one thing that you could relate to in what he said?

How Does a Man Become a Priest?

COME AND SEE

John and Andrew were two friends from a small town. One day, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, they were standing near the road when Jesus walked past them. Something about Him caught their attention, though they did not quite know what it was, so they began to follow him. As they began to follow Him, Jesus turned and asked them, "What do you seek?" They wanted to find out who He was and where He came from; they wanted to learn all about Him, so they responded "Rabbi, where are you staying?" Jesus wanted them to experience being Christian disciples for themselves so He invited them to follow Him saying, "Come and see!" From that day forward they became disciples of Jesus Christ. Jesus makes the same invitation to any young man who is interested in following Jesus more closely in the priesthood, or even just learning more about it. Jesus invites them to come and see what it is like, try it out, and discover if it is their vocation.



*Come
and See!*

Read John 1:35-39

STEPS TO BECOME A PRIEST, SISTER, OR BROTHER

Step 1: Find out! Learn about the different kinds of priests, sisters, and brothers to see if you might be interested in a vocation to priesthood or religious life.

Step 2: Act! Contact a **Vocation Director** and take part in vocation activities in order to learn more about the diocesan priesthood or religious communities.

Step 3: Join! Join your diocese or a religious order to begin training to be a priest, sister or brother. During this time of preparation you can discover whether or not it is your vocation. This is a rewarding experience, even if you discover that it is not your vocation.



THE SEMINARY

Men who are preparing to be ordained as priests attend a special school called a **seminary**. These men are called **seminarians**. Historically, there have been three types of seminaries. The first kind is a high school seminary for boys considering the priesthood. The second is called a minor seminary or college seminary and it is for college-aged men who are interested in the priesthood. The high school and college seminaries are not required but highly recommended for boys and young men interested in being priests. This early preparation is a way for them to explore their vocation with other people who are also **discerning** the priesthood.

The third is a major seminary for seminarians who have



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finished college. A major seminary is the final preparation for seminarians before becoming priests. These seminarians take classes to learn about our Catholic faith, as well as classes to practice celebrating mass and hearing confessions.

Many dioceses do not have their own seminaries, so they send their seminarians to minor or major seminaries located elsewhere.

In addition to classes, seminarians learn how to pray and are trained in spiritual practices. They begin serving at parishes or as chaplains in various places including hospitals, jails, nursing homes, and juvenile detention centers. They also enjoy sports and other school activities just like everyone else.

Being a seminarian does not automatically make someone a priest. Studying at a seminary simply means that a man is open to being called to the

priesthood and wants to try it out to see if it fits. By attending a seminary, a man opens his heart to accept a possible vocation and gives to God a greater opportunity to call him. Seminaries are environments in which men can openly consider and discern a possible calling to the priesthood while receiving the support they need to do it.

During this time, some seminarians may determine that God is not calling them to be priests. They are free to go and find whatever vocation God wants for them. These men are usually glad that they were in the seminary because it allowed them to deepen their faith, receive a good education and develop life-long friendships. They know that they have been open and generous with God and they are confident that He will continue to guide them.

A seminarian who does seek the diocesan priesthood is ordained by a bishop after he completes his training at the major seminary. His ordination to the priesthood includes the promise of a life-long commitment to serve the people of God as a priest of Jesus Christ in the local diocese. At his ordination, he joyfully reaches the goal of his preparation, but his adventure is just beginning!

*To **discern** means to try to discover with God's help something that takes time to sense or understand.*

***Discernment** is the process of discovering your vocation.*



The Seminaries of the Archdiocese of Chicago:

Mundelein Seminary

www.usml.edu

St. Joseph College Seminary

www.stjoseph.luc.edu

Archbishop Quigley Preparatory Seminary High School

www.quigley.org

Archdiocese of Chicago vocation website:

www.chicagopriest.org



Giving God the first chance.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

Activity A: Find out!

Imagine yourself in the future, beginning to think that God is calling you to a religious vocation. Even if you never thought about it before, it is possible that it could happen! Listed below are some ways to find out more information about what a vocation really means and how to pursue it.

Instructions: Choose three options that you would pursue in order to find out more information about a religious vocation.

- Ask my Religious Education teacher
- Ask my school principal
- Call a Vocation Director
- Search the Internet for vocation websites
- Write a letter to a Vocation Director
- Check ads in Catholic magazines or newspapers
- Ask my parish priest
- Ask a religious sister
- Email a Vocation Director
- Read a book or magazine about vocations
- Ask my Mom or Dad
- Ask my friends or classmates

VOCABULARY

Vocation Director
Discern
Seminary
Seminarians

Activity B: Just do it!

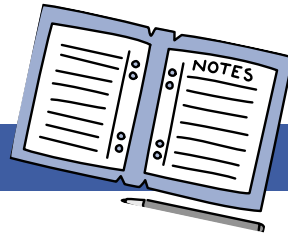
If you think you may have a religious vocation, even if it is just a feeling or a hunch, it is important that you do something about it and take steps to pursue it. Below are some ways that will help you learn more about the lives of priests, sisters, and brothers.

Instructions: Which of these would you find interesting to do right now or in the future?

- Volunteer alongside sisters, brothers, or priests at your parish or elsewhere to learn more about what they do.
- Have a conversation with a religious sister, brother or priest. Find out what they do and how they live.
- Go on a retreat weekend for people who want to learn more about being sisters, brothers or priests.
- Join a service program and work alongside sisters, brothers and priests as a full-time volunteer for a year.
- Visit a seminary or convent where people prepare for the priesthood or religious life. Take a tour and see what it is like to live there.
- Find out about the prayer life of priests, sisters and brothers. Pray with them or get a copy of their prayers and pray them to see if their spiritual way of life fits you.
- Read about the lives of sisters, brothers and priests in books, magazines, or on the internet to learn about how they lived.



Write about it!



Journal options:

- In preparation to meet the seminarian who will speak tomorrow, each student should prepare at least one question to ask the seminarian.

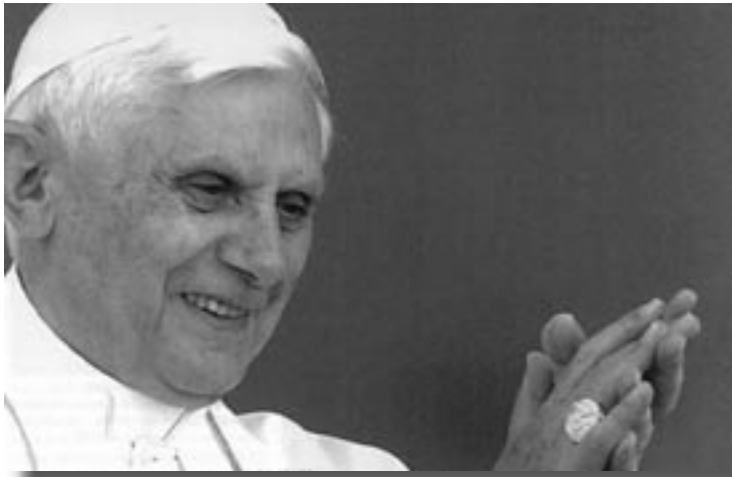


Photo courtesy of Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus

*If we let Christ into our lives,
we lose nothing, nothing,
absolutely nothing of what
makes life free, beautiful
and great. No! Only in this
friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship
is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in
this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. And so,
today, with great strength and great conviction, on the basis of
long personal experience of life, I say to you, 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. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ
– and you will find true life.*

– Pope Benedict XVI¹⁴

Witness of a Seminarian

Adopt a Seminarian

INTRODUCTION

We have learned about seminarians, and how they prepare to be priests. Today we welcome a seminarian, who will tell us what led him to the seminary and what his life is like. If you have already prepared questions for the seminarian, then you may ask them at the conclusion of his presentation.



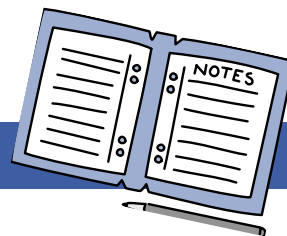
LET'S PRAY ABOUT IT!
Adopt a Seminarian Prayer



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SUMMARY

Seminarians are men whom God has called to actively prepare for the priesthood. Some of them are 100% sure that this is the vocation God has blessed them with, while other seminarians are still trying to listen to the voice of the Lord and to determine what God is calling them to do. Seminarians need our prayers and support as much as we need theirs.



Write about it!

Journal options:

- What is one thing you found interesting about the speaker's presentation and why?
- What was one thing that you could relate to in what he said?
- What do you most admire about the seminarian?
- Why is it important to pray for him?