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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK SET FOR JANUARY 13-19

**Time for parishes to promote vocations with prayer, education
Hundreds of thousands consider career of service to Church, need encouragement
Parish resources available on Web**

WASHINGTON--The Catholic Church in the United States will celebrate National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW) January 13-19. The annual event earmarks a time for parishes to consider their role in promoting the role of priests, deacons and religious order brothers and sisters to Catholics deciding on their future.

“National Vocation Awareness Week gives dioceses and parishes across the country a chance to promote vocations through prayer and education,” said Archbishop Robert Carlson, chairman of the Bishops’ Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. “This is especially important in this Year of Faith and as the Church continues to focus on the New Evangelization. Vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life are essential in the Church’s mission of spreading the joy and love of Jesus Christ. Our world and culture needs the Good News of Christ more than ever.”

Father Shawn McKnight, executive director of the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations (CCLV), said research shows more youth consider a lifetime of service to the Church than family and friends realize.

“A recent study found significant interest among never-married Catholics ages 14-35 in priesthood and the consecrated life,” he said. “We estimate that over 600,000 youth and young adults have seriously considered a religious vocation in the Church. This is good news. The challenge is to pray for them and encourage them to take the next step as they discern God’s call.”

The study, “Consideration of Priesthood and Religious Life Among Never-Married U.S. Catholics,” was conducted by the Georgetown University-based Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/survey-of-youth-and-young-adults-on-vocations.cfm> and commissioned by the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations.

Vocation Awareness Week reminds Catholics that they have responsibility to pray for vocations and to invite young people to consider a call to ordained ministry and consecrated life, said Father John Guthrie, CCLV associate director.

“When someone is encouraged by three or more people to consider a religious vocation in the Church, they are more than five times more likely to seriously consider it, the CARA study showed. We need to be less shy about encouraging someone with the right qualities for religious life to think about it,” Father Guthrie said.

The CCLV office will provide dioceses web resources such as prayer cards, suggested prayers of the faithful and bulletin-ready quotes. Materials can be downloaded from the USCCB Vocations page, www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/national-vocation-awareness-week.cfm

Observance of Vocation Awareness Week began in 1976 when the U.S. bishops designated the 28th Sunday of the year for the celebration. In 1997, it was moved to coincide with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, this year marked on January 13. Beginning in 2014, Vocation Awareness Week will be moved to the first full week of November.

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