

Diocese of Arlington Vocations Prayer

Heavenly Father, bless our diocese with the grace of many vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. Through the intercession of the Blessed Mother, grant to those You have called the willingness and generosity of spirit to give of themselves in devoting their lives and talents to the service of our Lord and to His Church. Increase the faith of those You have called and will continue to call. We ask this through Christ, Your Son. Amen.

With Ecclesiastical Approbation



Rev. Brian Bashista
Catholic Diocese of Arlington
Office of Vocations
200 N. Glebe Road, Suite 901
Arlington, VA 22203
(703) 841-2514
E-mail
b.bashista@arlingtondiocese.org
www.arlingtondiocese.org/vocations



THEN I HEARD THE VOICE
OF THE LORD SAYING,
WHOM SHALL I SEND?
ISAIAH 6:8

Mission of the Diocese of Arlington Office of Vocations

To seek men of prayer who can preach with courage, teach with clarity, and serve with charity. We focus on the resoration of all things in Christ through prayer, hard work, generosity and sacrifice. We strive to form men deeply rooted in an abiding love for Jesus Christ, especially in His Eucharistic Presence and for our Blessed Mother, so they may become holy priests who come to 'serve,' not 'to be served.'



f there is a masterpiece in this world it is the formation of good priests: nothing greater, nothing more important can be thought of.”

St. Vincent DePaul, 1658

that is, not married. He must want to grow spiritually. He wants to serve God and His people. He must really want to be a priest.

Studies for the priesthood ordinarily include four years of college, one or two years of pre-theology, a possible spirituality year and four post-graduate years in a Masters of Theology program. A candidate accepted by the diocese will, during the course of his training, attend a college, spirituality center and theological seminary designated by the bishop.

During these college years, a seminarian for this diocese will receive a partial scholarship from the diocese as well as assistance in securing a government (or other) insured loan. A full scholarship is given by the diocese during the seminarian's pre-theology, spirituality year and masters program of theology.

Entrance into the seminary is not a definite decision to become a priest. Rather, the seminary program is designed to help one make that decision by means of academic, spiritual, human and pastoral formation.

A candidate need not be absolutely positive but should give serious thought to his decision by seeking information, asking for advice, seeking guidance of competent people, evaluating himself and, above all, praying to the Lord for light and courage to discern and do His will.

NOTES CONTACTS, RETREATS, ETC.

physician's form provided by the diocese.

- Psychological evaluation report. (*Paid for by the diocese*)
- An F.B.I./fingerprinting and state(s) sex offender and criminal history background checks. (*Paid for by the diocese*)
- Completed *Confidentially Release Form*.
- Completed *Policy Questionnaire* regarding the *Diocese of Arlington Policy on the Protection of Children/Young People and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse*, as well as a completed *Acknowledgement of Receipt Form* found on the last page of the policy.
- A (4-10) page written autobiography.
- Two (2-4) page written essays.

Application Review

After the candidate submits all the information and necessary paperwork as outlined above, the Director of the Office of Vocations, after careful review and consultation with the Bishop's Delegate for Clergy, determines if the process should continue. If his decision is favorable, the Director of the Office of Vocations then recommends the candidate to the Bishop and discusses with the Bishop a possible seminary placement.

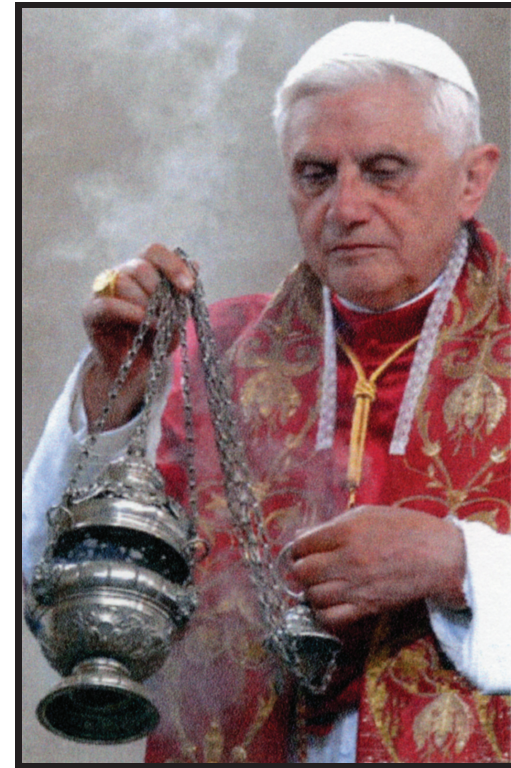
Miscellaneous

Individual circumstances may adjust or vary the sequence of events outlined above. The general necessary time frame to compile and complete all required application material is between two to four months. Applicants normally receive word of acceptance or non-acceptance within two months of submitting a completed application, but generally no later than the first week of July.

STUDYING FOR THE PRIESTHOOD FOR THE DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

FORMATION PROGRAM

The candidate should be a high school graduate with the ability to do college level work. He should be in good shape physically and emotionally. He must be a baptized and confirmed practicing Catholic. He should be free to enter into this state in life,



“...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 gives you everything. When we give ourselves to Him, we receive a hundred-fold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ - and you will find true life. Amen.”

-Pope Benedict XVI

POPE JOHN PAUL II ON THE ROLE OF PRIESTS

*Extracts from an article by Msgr. George A. Kelly
on "PRIESTS AND POLITICS"*

This particular Pope has recently made clear what he thinks of the priestly role in his recent directives to bishops about the kind of future priests he wants trained in today's seminaries.

Their first duty is to commune with their God. They must be men of prayer and teachers of prayer.

They must love Christ – the Word of God, especially in the Mass. They must celebrate Mass every day, even if they are alone. They must adore Christ in the Eucharist – apart from Mass.

They must remember to be the Church's chief ministers of the liturgy. The true Catholic doctrine of the priesthood makes them irreplaceable in this sacred role.

They must be men of penance. They must practice self-denial. They must confess their sins regularly to another priest.

They must be men of obedience says the Holy See: The word 'obedience' must stop being a forbidden word. One cannot claim to be obedient to God when one refuses to obey those to whom God has confided His Mission.

They must be devoted to the Mother of Jesus. This is no optional matter for one who devotes himself to the Word of God.

They must dress like priests. Clerical dress is their public sign before the faithful. Negligence of proper dress, especially during the Mass has disastrous consequences.

There are many other aspects of the priesthood but without these sacred qualities the priest is in no position to present himself as an Alter Christus.

ASSESSMENT AND APPLICATION PROCESS

Guided by our overall diocesan goal to nurture and develop holy and well formed priests, great care is taken to insure a careful and thorough assessment and application process for all potential seminarian candidates. This assessment and application process or sequence of events generally encompass the following:

Initial Contact:

- Through the recommendation of a faithful priest, religious or lay person.
- By letter, e-mail or phone call of inquiry.
- By active participation in the annual vocations retreat or another discernment group activity.

Formal Interview

Once contact is established, a formal interview follows between the Director of the Office of Vocations and the potential candidate in which the following topics are discussed.

- Personal health and well-being.
- Family and employment history.
- Religious and educational background.

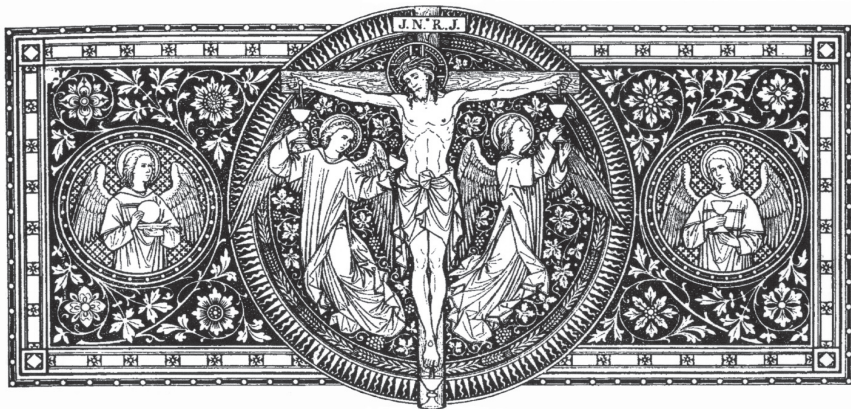
Application Process

Acceptance into the diocesan priesthood formation program requires that a candidate demonstrate emotional maturity, academic ability, personal stability and consistent growth in the practice of the faith. If, after the formal interview, the director believes the individual possesses suitable psychological, intellectual and spiritual attributes, the candidate is then invited to begin the formal application process. The general components of the application encompasses the following:

- Completed *Diocese of Arlington Priestly Formation Application Form*, including three passport type photos.
- Contact information for requested letters of recommendation.
- Two copies of requested personal sacramental records and parents' marriage records.
- Two copies of high school and, if applicable, undergraduate/graduate college official transcripts.
- Recent physical examination with completed patient/

In addition to the general qualifications and specific criteria listed above, if a candidate is not currently either a citizen or permanent resident of the United States he must also meet the following:

- Live on a self-sustaining basis within the Diocese of Arlington for at least two years prior to entering the seminary.
- Have legal status or lawful presence here in the United States prior to beginning the application process.
- Be able to obtain an F-1 Student Visa or, if circumstances warrant, an R-1 Religious Worker Visa upon acceptance.
- Have a command of the English language acceptable to the seminary formation program.
- Avail himself, on an as needed basis and at the discretion of the Bishop/Director of the Office of Vocations, of some form of 'U.S. Cultural Adaptation Program' which could range from seminars or coursework at the seminary to a pastoral year assignment within the diocese.
- While in seminary formation, non-citizen or non-permanent resident seminarians who are approaching diaconate ordination would be required to obtain an R-1 Religious Worker Visa if they currently have an F-1 Visa. During their first year of priesthood, they would then be strongly encouraged to work toward U.S. Citizenship but must, as a minimum, obtain permanent residency status as soon as possible.



PRIESTHOOD OPEN TO ALL MEN

The big challenge right now is to the men who believe in the Gospel and who are willing to give their lives in service to others because of it; men like Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, men called by God Himself, through every age, men who have found the truth by joining hearts with Christ.

The priesthood offers men meaning and purpose and fulfillment by living their lives for others in the spirit of Christ. It is the way of life that goes beyond all mortal work, for the priesthood is the celebration of the Eucharist to strengthen men with the life of the Spirit. It is the best hope for peace.

The Vatican II Decree on the ministry and life of the priest isolates three fundamental services that priests offer to the Christian community: to proclaim God's Word, to celebrate liturgy, and to witness through service. These are unique to the priesthood and essential to the life of the Church.

Pope John Paul II in his Easter 1979 letter to priests, which reflects his own living vocation, said:

The only priest who will always prove necessary to people, is the priest who is conscious of the full meaning of his priesthood: the priest who believes profoundly, who professes his faith with courage, who prays frequently, who teaches with deep conviction, who serves, who puts into practice in his own life the program of the Beatitudes, who knows how to love disinterestedly, who is close to everyone, and especially those in need.

The path to the priesthood is open to all men of good will who meet established requirements and are in the active years of their life – through college and beyond. As Pope John XXIII said: "The response to the divine call may come at any age ... the years do not count before God, but rather the intensity of the love with which one answers Him."

THE CALL TO HOLINESS

*For those seeking priesthood
Make holiness something familiar
Talk about it – Think about it – Pray about it*

Whether we are priests, religious, seminarians or lay persons, the call to holiness with on-going spiritual development is essential. To achieve this in its briefest form keep in mind the big three of spirituality: the Sacraments, personal prayer and spiritual reading.

Quoting from Pope John Paul II, "The call to holiness is a universal call, valid for all human beings without distinction of age, profession, race or language. Just as all are redeemed, so all are called. The vocation to holiness, in fact, means putting into practice in one's own daily life, the example and teachings of Jesus Christ."

From Holy Scripture we read: "It is God's will that you grow in holiness, that you abstain from immorality." (1Thess 4:3) And again: "In a word, you must be made perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

The following areas are suggested to help achieve these worthwhile goals in this spiritual journey:

- ☐ *Attendance at daily Mass and reception of Holy Communion whenever possible*
- ☐ *Spiritual direction and frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance, at least monthly*
- ☐ *Pray the rosary daily*
- ☐ *Daily spiritual reading and study of the lives of the saints*
- ☐ *Become familiar with the Liturgy of the Hours or Divine Office*
- ☐ *Fasting one day a week in addition to observance of Friday abstinence*

Readiness to serve in the manner to which he is called by God, through his Bishop.
A developing spirit of detachment that helps him be in the world but not of the world.
Freedom to enter this state in life.

In addition to the general qualifications above, a candidate must also meet the following specific criteria:

- Be between the ages of 17-55. (*Rare exceptions are considered on a case by case basis regarding this upper age limit.*)
- Does not have personal financial liability, i.e. car or personal loans, credit card(s), etc. verses personal assets that exceeds \$3,000; nor have total outstanding college student loan debt that exceeds \$40,000.
- Have some familiarity with the Diocese of Arlington and the people with whom the candidate feels called to serve here as a future priest, i.e. by living (past or present), working or studying within the diocese. (On a case by case basis, consideration will be given to those who do not meet this criterion only after they have seriously considered the possibility of serving in their home diocese with the consultation of their home Bishop and/or Vocation Director.)
- Not suffer from a disordered sexual orientation, i.e. not consider oneself to be homosexual.
- If the candidate has previously been dismissed from another priestly formation program or from an institute of consecrated life or society of apostolic life, he must wait at least two years prior to being considered for the priestly formation program in the Diocese of Arlington.
- If the candidate is a recent convert to the faith or has recently returned to the regular practice of the faith, he must wait at least two years prior to acceptance into the priestly formation program in the Diocese of Arlington.



THE ARLINGTON PRIEST

The Arlington Priest is called to meet all the challenges the developing Church of Northern Virginia has to offer. He is a viable part of a rapidly expanding diocese which extends from the Potomac River resorts of the Northern Neck to the scenic beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Arlington Diocese is the home

of approximately 400,000 Catholics who are served by their priests in 66 parishes and six missions.

A parish priest's primary concern is to meet the spiritual needs of his people, to aid their growth and develop a sense of community among them. His aim is to build up the local Church within the context of the wider Church and to inspire his people to respond each to their own particular call to holiness- "so that from east to west a perfect offering may be made to the glory of Your Name."

(Eucharistic Prayer III)

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS & CRITERION FOR ACCEPTANCE

Baptized, confirmed and practicing Roman Catholic men with a desire to serve God and His people as a priest here in the Diocese of Arlington must possess the following general qualifications:

Faith in, and love for Christ and His Church.

Good moral character.

A high school diploma with favorable academic abilities.

Emotional balance and maturity.

Good physical health.

Psychological readiness and capacity to pursue a sustaining, life-long commitment.

A deepening habit of prayer and a balanced devotional life.

Maturity to recognize and the willingness to respond to the needs of others.

VOCATION RETREAT OF PRIME IMPORTANCE FOR DISCERNMENT

The Diocesan Office of Vocations annually schedules a Vocation Retreat for young men ages of 17 and older who may be thinking about the priesthood or religious life. This week-end spent in prayer, reflection and discussion on the ministry of the priest and religious brothers will certainly help a potential candidate to discern his vocation.

The potential candidate may not know whether he has the signs of a priestly vocation but he will know that he is moving along the right path when:

He has a sense of satisfaction thinking of himself serving God and His people in the priestly ministry.

He has a positive spiritual reason to want to share God's goodness with others, and to help them enjoy the special happiness he has found.

He has talked with a priest, or priests, and understands the demands, both physical and spiritual, of the priestly life.

He believes that he has the ability to live that life as it should be lived, in God's service.

He thinks, he wonders, he prays. Is God really calling me? He looks and hopes for answers – and this is where a vocation retreat is so important to him.



SELF EVALUATION FOR THE POTENTIAL CANDIDATES SEEKING THE PRIESTHOOD

(Questions you should ask yourself & meditate on)

Do I really want this life, or am I being pressured by someone or something? Does this life appeal to something in my own heart?

Why does this life attract me? What am I really looking for? Am I seeking to get something for myself, or do I really want to give of myself in service to others?

Am I in reasonable good physical health?

What about my mental and emotional stability? Can I cope with stress reasonably well? Or am I often restless, under tension, or struggling with my moods?

How important to me is the intimacy and companionship of women? Have I considered marriage as a possible vocation?

How well do I get along with other people? Am I basically at ease with them or do I feel threatened much of the time? Can I stand alone if I have to? Can I work together in a group without demanding my own way?

Do I have a taste for prayer and for things of the Spirit? Am I willing to work seriously at developing a solid spiritual life, a life centered in God and radiating out in service to His people?

Do I honestly desire to be a priest or am I really seeking security, the prestige of the priesthood, or other non-valid reasons?

Am I fully aware of the difference of "vocation" and career or profession? (Vocation is the Lord's call to you to a particular state of life. Career or profession is the way in which I carry out that vocation.)

VOCATION REFLECTION

Have you discovered yet that there is more to life than what only material thing have to offer? We live in the Spirit. Only in the Lord can we find lasting peace. Speak the good news.

SUGGESTED READING MATERIAL

What does God Want? A Practical Guide to Making Decisions,
by Michael Scanlan, T.O.R.

Our Sunday Visitor, copyright 1996
ISBN: 0-87973-584-8

Prayer Primer: Igniting a Fire Within

by Thomas Dubay, S.M.
Ignatius Press, copyright 2002
ISBN: 1-56955-339-4

**When God Asks for an Undivided Heart:
Choosing Celibacy in Love and Freedom**

by Andrew Apostoli, CFR
Daughters of St. Paul, copyright 1995
ISBN: 0-102999-89-7

Priests for the Third Millennium

by Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan
Our Sunday Visitor, copyright 2000
ISBN: 1-87973-319-5

**Virginity: A Positive Approach to Celibacy
for the Sake of the Kingdom of Heaven**

by Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap
Alba House, copyright 1995 by the Society of St. Paul
ISBN: 0-8189-0745-2

I Will Give You Shepherds (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*)

Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II
March 25, 1992

WEB-SITES

www.arlingtondiocese/vocations
www.religiouslife.com

www.catholic-pages.com
www.vatican.va