

Diocese of _____

Priestly Life and Vocation
Summit

May 18, 2005

Project Information

■ Collaboration

- JPII Cultural Center Grant
- Bishops' Committee on Vocations
- Bishops' Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry
- NCDVD, NRVC , NOCERRC, NFPC, Military Archdiocese

■ Premise & Objective: Personal invitations by priests are vital in creating a vocation culture and increasing priestly vocations

The gift and power of the Priesthood

In persona Christi...
we use the words of Christ

- This is my body...
This is my blood...
- I absolve you...

The gift and power of the Priesthood

Come follow me...
I will make you fishers of men.

The gift and power of the Priesthood

“Fan into flame the gift you received when I laid hands on you.”

2Tim1:6

Gift and Authority

- *He who made His disciples fishers of men, enclosed within His nets every kind of authority.*

St. Augustine

- *To so great a promise they trusted, and believed that they should catch others by those same words by which themselves had been caught.*

St. John Chrysostom

Gift and Authority

The spiritual gift which priests receive at their ordination prepared them not for a sort of limited and narrow mission but for the widest possible and universal mission of salvation "even to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), for every priestly ministry shares in the universality of the mission entrusted by Christ to His apostles.

Vatican II Documents
Presbyterorum Ordinis

National Perspective

In a recent USCCB survey of men scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in 2003, 78% of them said that a priest invited them to consider the priesthood.

National Perspective

- A 2001 USCCB survey indicates that only 30% of our priests actively invite men to consider the priesthood.
- In a poll of young adult Catholics, only 15% indicated that they had been encouraged to think about a vocation to the religious life or priesthood.

■ (Dean Hoge, *et al.*, *Young Adult Catholics: Religion and the Culture of Choice*)

John Paul II

- I turn, finally, to you who are already consecrated to the Lord and, in a special way, to you *priests*: you have already heard and recognized the call of the Good Shepherd; lend your own voice to him who today still calls many to follow him. Speak to your young people, letting them hear about the beauty of following the Lord, and accompany them along the paths of life, which at times can be full of difficulties. Above all, witness with your life to the joy of being in the Lord's service.

■ World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 1993

Pope John Paul II

- In the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* I stressed that "a necessary requirement of this pastoral charity towards one's own particular Church and its future ministry is the concern which the priest should have to find, so to speak, someone to replace him in the priesthood" (n. 74). While it is known that God calls those whom he wills (cf. Mk 3: 13), it must nevertheless be the concern of every minister of Christ to pray with perseverance for vocations. No one better than he is able to understand the urgency of a generational exchange that guarantees generous and holy persons for the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments.

■ World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 2004

During the Pontificate of Pope John Paul II

WORLDWIDE SEMINARIAN POPULATION

In 1978 – 63,882

In 2002 – 113,199

An increase of over 75%

Priests of the Diocese of

Review of the questions:

1. What awakened your realization that God may be calling you to the Priesthood?
2. What were your initial excitements and hopes?
3. What expressions of support and encouragement from your brother priests are most important to you?

Questions

4. During seminary, what confirmed and strengthened your vocation to priesthood?
5. What deeply nurtures and sustains your relationship with God?
6. Describe an experience of God which had to be shared with others.

Questions of Priestly Life

7. Describe an experience when you felt a true sense of serving the Church.
8. (For Religious) What aspect or quality of your experience in community is most life-giving?
9. Describe a time when you experienced a profound sense of serving in the Person of Christ.

Questions

10. What helps you live *in persona Christi* in view of the many demands you face?
11. What do you value most about your vocation to the priesthood?
12. Why should a man consider a vocation to priesthood?

Questions

13. Recall a time when you were of help to a man who was considering a vocation to priesthood. What was most helpful?

Our Resolutions...

■ To accept the responsibilities of priesthood

– *At your ordination you accepted the responsibilities of the priesthood out of love for the Lord Jesus and his Church. Are you resolved to unite yourselves more closely to Christ and to try to become more like him by joyfully sacrificing your own pleasure and ambition to bring his peace and love to your brothers and sisters?*

– Chrism Mass

Our Resolutions...

■ To be ministers of the mysteries of God

– *Are you resolved to be faithful ministers of the mysteries of God, to celebrate the Eucharist and the other liturgical services with sincere devotion?*

– Chrism Mass

Our Resolutions...

■ To imitate Jesus Christ

– *Are you resolved to imitate Jesus Christ, the head and shepherd of the Church, by teaching the Christian faith without thinking of your own profit, solely for the well-being of the people you were sent to serve?*

– Chrism Mass

A Vocation Culture within the Wilmington Presbyterate

- The Eucharist
- Qualities to look for in a prospective candidate for the priesthood.
- The invitation process

New Resolutions

- Establishing a Vocation Culture
- Tasks and follow-up

Priestly Life and Vocation Summit

EVALUATION