

Diocese of Springfield- Cape Girardeau

Priestly Life and Vocation Summit

August 9, 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 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*)

Pope 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

Pope Benedict XVI

“.....configured to Christ who emptied himself taking the form of a servant, the priest lives a life of simplicity, chastity and humble service, which inspires others by example.”

Address to the Bishops of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands (June 26, 2005)

During the Pontificate of Pope John Paul II

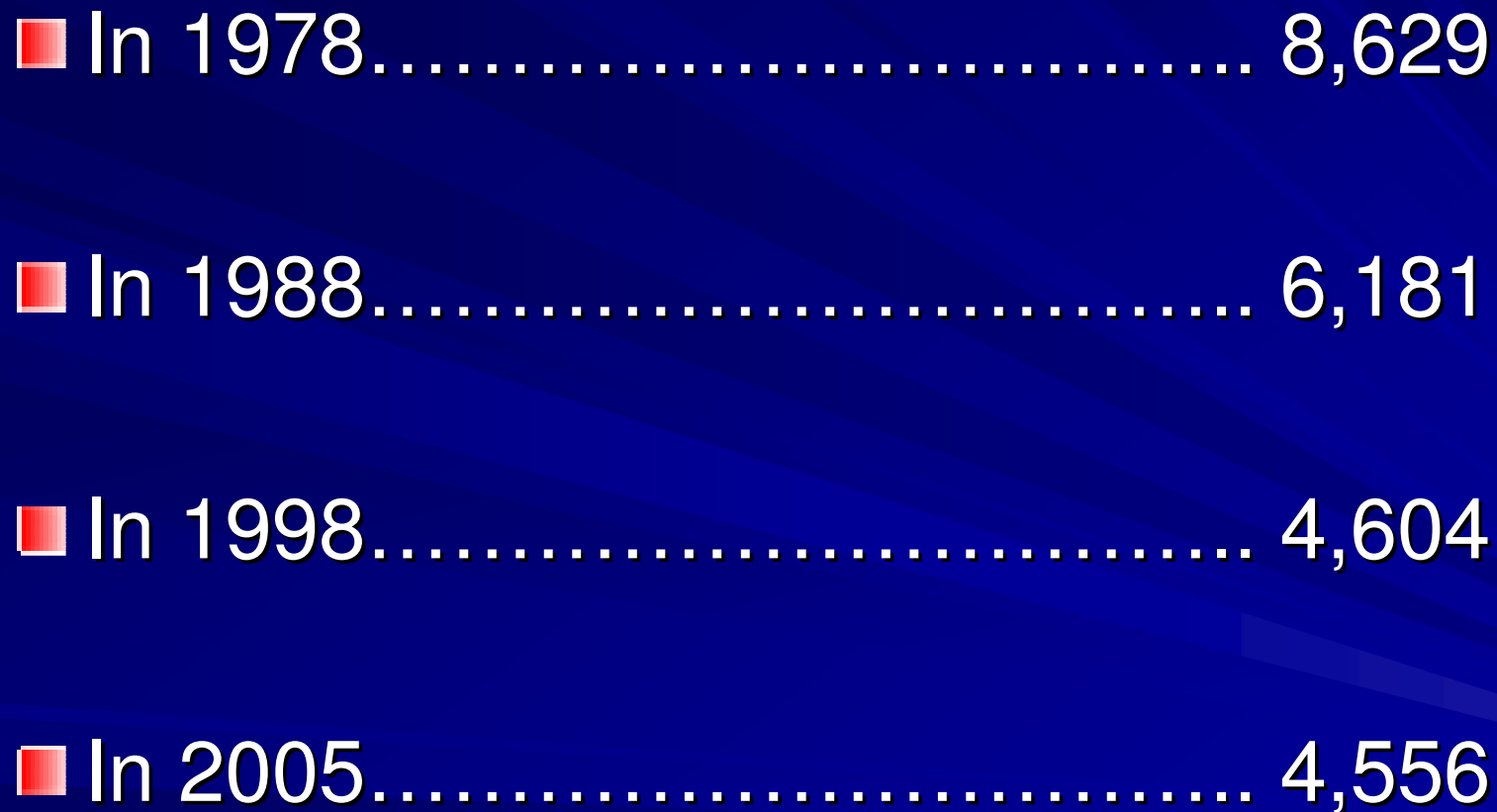
WORLDWIDE SEMINARIAN POPULATION

In 1978 – 63,882

In 2002 – 113,199

An increase of over 75%

Seminarians in the United States



■ In 1978.....	8,629
■ In 1988.....	6,181
■ In 1998.....	4,604
■ In 2005.....	4,556

Recent Ordinations

2003

- 449 men were ordained for the Church in the U.S.

2004

- 544 men were ordained for the Church in the U.S.

Priests of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau

■ 24 Priests Ordained from 1985-2005

■ Places of Origin

– Springfield-Cape	9
– Other U.S. Dioceses	9
– Other Countries	6

■ 32 Priests have died during this time--and many of those who are retired continue to be of service

Status of those Ordained in the last 20 years

■ Active Ministry	19
■ Left the Ministry	3
■ Retired	1
■ On Leave	1

Current Seminarians and those in Discernment for our Diocese

■ Places of Origin and Level of Education:

– Diocese of Springfield-Cape	5
– Other U.S. Dioceses	0
– Other Countries	4
– College	2
– Theology	7

Creating a Culture for Vocations in Southern Missouri

Reflecting on our own
journey.....

Priests and Seminarians of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape

Table discussion:

1. What / Who awakened your realization that God may be calling you to the Priesthood?
2. What were your initial excitements and hopes?
3. How would you describe your feelings and aspirations now?

Session II

Review of the Questions
previously submitted

Open Forum

4. During seminary, what confirmed and strengthened your vocation to priesthood?
5. What deeply nurtures and sustains your relationship with God today?
6. What expressions of support and encouragement from your brother priests are most important to you?

Written Response to Question of Priestly Identity

Report to the Larger Group

Session III

Looking at the Big Picture

Open Forum--Questions of Priestly Life

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. From your experience, why should a man consider a vocation to priesthood?

The Question of Support and Invitation

13. Is there a time you recall when you were of help to a man who was considering a vocation to the priesthood? What did you say or do that seemed most beneficial?

A Vocation Culture within the Springfield-Cape Presbyterate

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

Session IV

Resolutions

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

Written Response on Steps to be Taken

Report to the Larger Group

We find the following to be helpful
in establishing a Culture of
Vocations in the U.S. and in our
Diocese.....

New Resolutions

- Tasks and follow-up

Thank you for your participation!

Priestly Life and Vocation Summit

EVALUATION