



Diocese of Owensboro
Office of Vocations

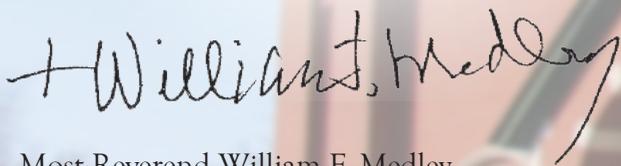
Vocation Plan

Prayerful & Practical Strategies
To Promote Priestly Vocations
Within Parishes, Schools, and College Campuses

Our Diocesan Vocation Plan

“Follow me.” This gospel invitation of Jesus is still spoken. We are all called to be disciples of the Lord. Disciples of the Lord are looking for good shepherds and leaders. Jesus speaks this invitation to follow through all of us. By your prayer and affirmation will you join our efforts to call men and women to distinct vocations to priesthood and consecrated life?

The harvest is plentiful. Let us pray that the Lord will call laborers for this harvest.



Most Reverend William F. Medley
Bishop, Diocese of Owensboro



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A Plan for Promoting Vocations and Creating a Culture of Vocation Awareness in the Diocese of Owensboro

The Diocese of Owensboro Office of Vocations is inviting every parish, school, and campus ministry to participate in our Four-Point Plan (adapted from a similar plan in the Archdiocese of New York) to promote vocations to priesthood:

- 1. PRAY:** Pray for more priestly vocations in our diocese.
- 2. INVITE:** Personally Invite young men to consider a vocation to priesthood and to attend vocation events in the diocese.
- 3. TEACH:** Help young men discern their vocation by incorporating discernment into the school and youth ministry curriculum.
- 4. CELEBRATE:** Make sure your parish, school, and campus ministry observe the Church's annual vocation dates, such as National Vocation Awareness Week in the fall and the World Day of Prayer for Vocations in the spring.

This booklet is a guide for participating in and implementing these four steps into your parish, school, and campus ministry. Our office is ready to assist and support you in promoting vocations. We know that God is calling young men to priesthood. It's up to us to help amplify the call.

**“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.”
-Isaiah 43:1**



Why is prayer important for the work of vocations?

Praying for vocations is an easy and effective way to promote vocations. Pope Francis once said, "Behind and before every vocation to the priesthood or to the consecrated life there is always the strong and intense prayer of someone: a grandmother, a grandfather, a mother, a father, a community... This is why Jesus said: 'Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest,' that is, God the Father, 'to send out laborers into his harvest' (Mt 9:38). Vocations are born in prayer and from prayer; and only through prayer can they persevere and bear fruit."

The Lord promises to give us what we need if we ask. It is important that we all take an interest in vocation ministry so that our children and grandchildren will have ready access to the sacraments in the future.

"In our congregation, we used to have adoration once a week for one hour, and then in 1973, we decided to have adoration one hour every day. We have much work to do. Our homes for the sick and dying destitute are full everywhere. And from the time we started having adoration every day, our love for Jesus became more intimate, our love for each other more understanding, our love for the poor more compassionate, and we have doubled the number of vocations. God has blessed us with many wonderful vocations."

-Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

"Vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life are first and foremost the fruit of constant contact with the living God and insistent prayer lifted up to the 'Lord of the harvest,' whether in parish communities, in Christian families or in groups specifically devoted to prayer for vocations."

- Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the 48th World Day of Pray for Vocations, May 15, 2011

1. PRAY

Will your parish, school or campus ministry make a commitment to pray for more priestly vocations?

We are asking every parish, school, and college campus ministry to make a commitment to pray that young men say yes to God's call! Please consider implementing one or more of the following initiatives.

Holy Hour for Vocations

Parishes, schools and campus ministries can raise awareness of and encourage priestly and religious vocations by holding a "Holy Hour" in their church. What better way to pray for vocations than in the presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Vocation Prayer Apostolate

This program invites the sick and homebound to offer their prayers for priests, seminarians, and for vocations.

Vocation Prayer Groups

Parishes can form a group to pray regularly for vocations. This might include a monthly Holy Hour for Vocations, Rosary for Vocations, Stations of the Cross for Vocations, and other methods of prayer.

The Invisible Monastery

Join others from around the world by pledging to pray for vocations at www.invisiblemonastery.com. Be sure to click on the Diocese of Owensboro in the drop-down menu.

Prayers of the Faithful

Praying for vocations at Sunday Mass should be observed in each parish, school, and campus ministry in the diocese. The Office of Vocations will distribute petitions monthly. Will your parish use these to pray for vocations?

Find more prayer materials at www.owensborovocations.com.





Young Men Need Encouragement

Most, if not all, priests will tell you that their discernment was either initiated or supported by the encouragement of others. Have you ever seen or met a young man in your parish who you have thought might make a good priest? Have you ever reached out to him and told him or asked him if he ever thought about priesthood? That simple gesture may be all he needs to begin his prayerful discernment. This is the kind of encouragement and invitation that a young man needs. Have you ever thought that God might be using YOU as an instrument for calling forth new priests?

2. INVITE

Why do most guys begin thinking about priesthood? Because someone mentioned it to them.

Every young, healthy Catholic man should consider all vocations, including whether or not God is calling him to priesthood. However, if not invited or encouraged to think about priesthood, it may never be considered. Many young men do not have enough information to properly discern their vocation and so they need the help of the Church, their family, and their peers.

There are two main things you can do to help. First, if you know a young man, encourage him to consider priesthood! Second, make sure to promote our annual vocation events in your parish, school or campus ministry.

Come and See Weekend

At least once a year we will schedule a "Come and See" weekend for high school men at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and Marian University. This is an opportunity for young men to see and experience the seminary environment and interact with seminarians, priests, and seminary staff. This weekend answers questions and helps young men gain clarity and a better image of what seminary is like.

Focus 11

Several studies have shown that many priests and religious first thought about ministry around age eleven and then had that thought reinforced during their junior year in high school. The result of these findings was the Focus 11 Program, first introduced in the Archdiocese of Detroit in 1989. This is an intentional effort by the Diocesan Vocations Office to promote vocations to all ages, but with a particular emphasis on 6th graders (11 year olds) and 11th graders. Building on the research and the experience of other dioceses, we will be targeting these populations within our schools and parishes.

Made for More

This is a camp at Gasper River Catholic Camp & Retreat Center which seeks to help young men know that they are made for so much more than what the world seems to offer. What are you supposed to do with your life? More importantly, what does God want you to do with your life? This camp helps young men begin to ask those questions and seek God's will for them. They will do all the activities camp has to offer: zip-line, low elements, vertical playground, giant swing, Jacob's Ladder, and more while celebrating the sacraments, learning and praying to be open to being the best Catholic man they can be. This camp is for high school aged young men who want to courageously and boldly live their Catholic Faith.

Catholic Schools, Catholic Campus Ministry, Youth Ministry and Vocations

Research shows that the teenage and young adult years are critical times for discerning one's vocation. 58% of recently ordained priests say they first seriously considered priesthood between the ages of 13 and 18. For this reason, vocation discernment should be a priority of every Catholic school, campus ministry, and youth ministry program.

*"Say not, 'I am too young.' To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak."
Jeremiah 1:5*

3. TEACH

Children and youth dream of the possibilities for their life.

We must make it our priority to ensure that priesthood or religious life is on their list!

Catholic schools, Catholic campus ministry, and parish youth ministry programs are all about helping children, youth, and young adults remain connected to Christ through His Church. These years are also critical times for discovering and praying to know the plan God has for them. It is the Church's responsibility to introduce all vocations and to emphasize the joy and excitement that accompany giving one's life to God according to his or her particular vocation.

Youth Ministry "Vocation Nights"

Invite the vocation director to come for a "Vocation Night" with your youth group. There are also resources and guides for vocation-themed meetings available through the Vocations Office.

College Discernment Groups or Men's Faith Groups

College campus ministers can offer opportunities for young men and women to grow in their faith and begin prayerfully discerning their vocation by hosting discernment or faith groups. Resources and suggestions for these gatherings are available through the Vocations Office.

Vocations as Part of Every Catholic School Curriculum

Catholic Schools are a valuable tool for cultivating vocations in our diocese. Every school should include vocation discernment as part of its curriculum. Resources are available through the Vocations Office. The vocation director is ready to visit classrooms, participate in retreats, preside at school Masses and assist the faculty in promoting vocations and discernment.

The overall goal is to give children, youth, and young adults an appreciation of each vocation and to give them the tools they need to discern God's call in their own lives.







4. CELEBRATE

Every year, the Church offers several opportunities to promote vocations.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

The most important thing we can do to promote vocations is to pray! The World Day of Prayer is a perfect time to have a Holy Hour for vocations or launch a new prayer initiative.

Priesthood and Deacon Ordinations

Men are ordained to diaconate and priesthood in the spring. These are some of the Church's most beautiful liturgies. Attending these celebrations, as well as a new priest's first Mass is a great way to offer your prayers and support.

Priesthood Sunday

The last Sunday in October is like a "father's day" for our parish priests. It is a time to express love, support, and gratitude for their ministry and dedication to the priesthood.

National Vocation Awareness Week

This week-long celebration is a time to promote vocations through preaching, religious education, bulletin inserts, activities, school visits, and more. Take time to plan this week for your parish!

VOCARE

This diocesan-wide celebration is a time to come together to celebrate and promote vocations. It is also a time to benefit the diocesan vocation endowment fund, to secure the education of seminarians for the future. Each parish is asked to reserve a table and join us for this great time together.

World Day for Consecrated Life

Each year, on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, we honor religious brothers and sisters, and hold up consecrated life as a model of faithful discipleship.

Get Creative

The Office of Vocations invites all parishes, schools, and campus ministries to participate in this Vocation Plan. You are also encouraged to be creative as you come up with new ways to promote vocations.

Promote vocations in a way that resonates with the people in your parish.

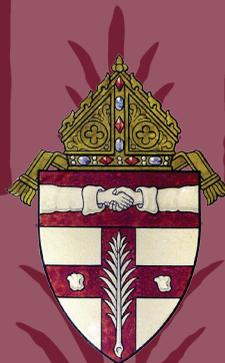
When you initiate an activity or come up with a plan for promoting vocations, please share your ideas. Take photos that we can place in our publications, website, and Facebook. Our office and other parishes would love to hear about it!

A Vocation Ministry in Every Parish and School

The Diocese of Owensboro is asking every parish, school and campus ministry to form a Vocation Task Force. The mission of this ministry is to implement the Vocation Plan found in this guide and to promote vocations to priesthood. Will you join us in our effort to create a culture of vocations in the diocese? Visit owensborovocations.com to request more information and resources.

Schedule a Visit

The vocation director is happy to visit your parish, school, or campus ministry to speak about vocations. We can also provide guidance as you form your new Vocation Ministry.



DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

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