

# Vocations Parish

The Vocations Office of the Archdiocese of Chicago has created the "Vocations Parish" model in response to the call of the Church, through the late Holy Father John Paul II, as defined in his message for the XXXVIII World Day for Vocations (2001):

## **Purpose:**

*Vocation is the word that leads us to understand the dynamisms of God's revelation, and thus reveals to man the truth about his existence. "An outstanding cause of human dignity lies in man's call to communion with God. From the very circumstance of origin, man is already invited to converse with God. For man would not exist were he not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it. And he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to his Creator" (Gaudium et Spes n. 19).*

## **Mission:**

*Today, however, this Christian reading of existence must reckon with some characteristic traits of Western culture where, in everyday life God is, for all intents and purposes, pushed to the sidelines. That is why we need a unified effort of the whole Christian community to "re-evangelize life".*

## **Framework:**

*For this fundamental pastoral effort, there has to be the witness of men and women who show the fruitfulness of an existence that has its source in God, that has its strength in its docility to the workings of the Spirit, that has its guarantee of the authentic meaning of daily toil in its communion with Christ and the Church. Within the Christian community, each person must discover his or her own personal vocation and respond to it with generosity.*

## **Focus:**

*Every life is a vocation, and every believer is invited to co-operate in the building up of the Church. On the "World Day of Prayer for Vocations", however, we turn our attention, in a special way, to the need and to the urgent requirement for ordained ministers, and for persons who are ready to follow Christ on the arduous path of consecrated life in the profession of the evangelical counsels.*

## **Goal:**

*May the Holy Spirit stir up an abundant number of vocations to special consecration, so that these, in their turn, can encourage the Christian people to adhere ever more generously to the Gospel, and so that they can help all people to understand more easily the meaning of existence as the manifestation of the beauty and holiness of God.*

*The following division of responsibilities is suggested, and should be adapted to meet the particular parish environment. The key is to ensure that everyone knows their role and the expectations of that particular role in promoting vocations. The list is not exhaustive; additional ideas and programs are welcomed.*

*Pastor/Assistant(s):*

- Support all parish programs designed to promote vocations
- Live out vocation in a way which inspires men to consider priesthood
- Identify and invite men to consider the priesthood
  - Invite men to Andrew Dinners
  - Invite men to assist around the parish—sacristan, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, lector, minister of care, parish committees, etc.
- Offer catechetical opportunities to inform parishioners about the importance, development, and discernment of Christian vocations
  - After-mass “Coffee And...”, Adult Faith Formation programs, etc.
  - Bulletin articles
- Include vocations in Prayers of the Faithful at mass when appropriate
- Give homilies about vocations when the readings at mass are pertinent
  - Promote InSearch and Exploring Priesthood Weekends during announcement time at mass
- Be an active presence in parish school and CCD programs
- Offer prayer opportunities for an increase in vocations
  - Eucharistic Adoration for vocations, 40 hours devotion, Benediction
  - Arrange for Pope John Paul II monstrance visit
  - Traveling prayer statue/cross/chalice for vocations

*Catholic School Principal:*

- Adopt “What is My Vocation” 3-week curriculum program for 6<sup>th</sup> grade
  - [www.wimv.org](http://www.wimv.org)
- Invite seminarians/religious to visit school
  - School-wide assembly as well as individual classroom visits
  - See “Family Vocation Festival/Coffee And...” under DRE section
- Make the fostering of all Christian vocations a goal of the school
  - See “National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States, ‘Sharing the Light of Faith,’ #232”

*Sacramental Preparation Director (this may be the DRE, Youth Minister, Deacon, school teacher, lay catechist, etc., depending on parish):*

- Include vocations awareness in sacramental preparation programs
  - i.e. connection between priest and first Communion, Confirmation, etc.
- Middle school “Rocked by God” retreat or equivalent
- Parental discussions/presentations during sacramental prep.
  - Also have parents of seminarians/religious talk to parents
  - Provide materials on how families can talk about/promote vocations
    - See “Resources/ for Families” section of [www.ChicagoPriest.com](http://www.ChicagoPriest.com)

*Youth Minister:*

- Promote vocations-inspiring events:
  - High School – Youth 2000
  - Kairos Retreat (coordinate with local Catholic high school(s))
  - Invite youth/teens to take active role in parish – lector, catechist, choir, etc.
  - See “Family Vocation Festival/Coffee And…” under DRE section

*Catholic School Teachers/CCD Instructors:*

- Use of Seminarian Prayer Calendar in class
  - “adopt a seminarian”
- Invite seminarian/religious to visit class
- Choose Religion class curriculum which has a major focus on vocations

*Parish Secretary/Bulletin Editor/Webmaster:*

- Bulletin/website articles about vocations, seminarians, religious communities, and saints
  - Include “Vocation Bulletin Announcements” sent in batch mail/e-mail by Vocation Office
  - Promotion of InSearch, Exploring Priesthood Weekend, Andrew Dinners
- Create parish vocations bulletin board with seminarian stories, invitation posters, religious community information, etc.

*Deacons/Sacristans/Lay Volunteers:*

- Invite seniors to get involved in vocations efforts (Seminarian Prayer Calendar, etc.)
- Invite college students and young adults to attend World Youth Day
- Create program for college students/young adults similar to “Catholic Youth Expeditions”
  - <http://www.cyexpeditions.org/>
- Altar Server Outing
  - Recommended 1-day event, separated for boys and girls, but at same location

*Director of Religious Education:*

- Coordinate/promote “Totus Tuus” week-long summer catechetical program
  - [www.TotusTuusChicago.com](http://www.TotusTuusChicago.com)
- Organize “Family Vocation Festival/Coffee And…” event with Pastor, Youth Ministry, school, and CCD program
  - Invite seminarians and religious orders to come and speak at school on Friday and after communion at masses on weekend
  - Visit may be longer if coordinated with area Catholic high schools
  - Each classroom should “host” a religious/seminarian
  - Visiting religious/seminarians should stay with a host family

- Include activities/information about diocesan priesthood/ religious order in school during Event
- Publicize Event in bulletin, letters to parents, at mass, etc.
- See also “Sacramental Prep Director” section

*Parish Vocations Committee/Director:*

- Provide assistance and support to all parish staff/lay volunteers noted above
- Should be coordinated with pastor and pastoral council
- This may be one person or an oversight board, but the goal is to not have a separate committee, so that all organizations/offices in the parish are responsible for promoting vocations

The Vocations Office of the Archdiocese of Chicago is here to assist you. For more information, please contact:

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Also, please check the following websites, which will be updated and improved during 2007-2008 with helpful resources and information:

[www.ChicagoPriest.com](http://www.ChicagoPriest.com)

[www.TotusTuusChicago.com](http://www.TotusTuusChicago.com)

<http://www.archdiocese-chgo.org/departments/vocation/home.shtm>