



SUNDAY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Use these optional announcements to promote vocations. The first should be used on the weekends of December 30 -31, 2006 and January 6-7, 2007. The later ones can be used at a time of your choosing.

From January 7-13, we celebrate Vocation Awareness Week. A "vocation" is a calling and we all have one. We are all called to be saints, but the exact path God wants us to follow to heaven will be different than the path He has laid out for others. As God is the source of all lasting good, the vocation He is calling us to will be the one that will bring our lives the greatest joy and satisfaction possible. During this week, we pray in a special way for those whom God is calling to the priesthood, religious life and diaconate. We pray that they will have courage, humility, charity and obedience to hear and respond to God's call. Encourage those you know, who may have a calling to service for the Church, to earnestly explore this possibility. Listen as well to God's call in your own life and be willing to prayerfully discern what He wants for you.

The powerful examples of holy people are inspirational to young people who seek authentic witnesses to truth in our broken world. The lives of people like Blessed Teresa and Pope John Paul II serve as a challenge to the young to live boldly for God as a radical witness to the saving Gospel of Christ. Roughly one third of all young people report feeling they might be getting called to priesthood or religious life in their youth. If you are young, courageously explore this possibility. If you know young people or have young children, encourage them to be open to any option in their pursuit of God's will.

Discerning our vocation in life is usually a difficult process. As they say "there are rarely trumpets and midnight visions." But, as Christians, we are called to follow Christ, who always obeyed the will of God the Father, no matter what. Pope Benedict XVI spoke on this topic of God's will when he ended his first homily as Pope, saying:

"Are we not perhaps all afraid in some way? If we let Christ enter fully into our lives, if we open ourselves totally to him, are we not afraid that He might take something away from us? Are we not perhaps afraid to give up something significant, something unique, something that makes life so beautiful? Do we not then risk ending up diminished and deprived of our freedom? . . . No! If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. And so, 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 he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life. Amen."

Please pray that many will courageously step forward from our parish as priests, deacons and consecrated religious.