

VOCATIONS, RELIGIOUS AND SEMINARIANS

Promotion of Vocations¹

The experience and nurturing of vocation takes place in all dimensions of the living Church. It will start in the home where parents witness their faith and love for God and their desire to know and do what God asks of them for their children by their lifestyle and their guidance. The parish community nurtures the vocation of each member as they offer affirmation and support to one another in living out the call that each has received. The priests and religious of the Church have a special role to play in encouraging vocations by the joy they show and share in living faithfully their calling.

Everyone is involved in helping others to recognize and respond to God's call: first to love Him above all things and then to serve Him in our brothers and sisters. In so doing we will help some to discover their call to priesthood or religious life.

The Office of Vocations seeks to provide guidance and support to parishes, groups and individuals as they carry on this work.

Director of Vocations²

The Director of Vocations works under the guidance of the bishop and is directly accountable to him. He is responsible for the recruitment, evaluation and formation of candidates for ordination to the priesthood for the Diocese of Fresno.

Included in this responsibility are these tasks:

- Establish and work with the diocesan vocations committees in developing and carrying out the vocations programs and activities in the Diocese.
- Foster an understanding and appreciation of the ordained priesthood among the faithful of the Diocese and the people of the area.
- Inform the priests and religious of the Diocese of the status of vocations and programs and seek their input and support regarding these.
- Actively recruit and evaluate candidates for ordination to the priesthood for the Diocese.
- Establish policies and procedures for the formation of candidates for ordination.
- Seek out and identify seminaries and other institutions and programs that will adequately provide the desired formation.
- Supervise the formation of the candidates for ordination to the Diocese.
- Provide opportunities and sources of spiritual, emotional and financial support to the candidates as appropriate.
- Develop and work with associations and groups of the faithful in providing this support.
- Evaluate and make recommendation to the Bishop as to the readiness of candidates for ordination.

¹ Issued May 1998

² Issued December 2000

Candidate Assessment Committee

The Vocation Discernment and Formation Committee is composed of clergy, religious and laity who have extensive experience and knowledge of the priesthood and its requirements. They are concerned with evaluating the suitability of a candidate and identifying the most appropriate formation process for the candidate. In this, they will be involved in these tasks: screening (includes interviews), formation program selection, formation assessment and development, seminary interaction, special programs and internships.

Vocation Awareness and Support Committee

The Vocation Awareness and Support Committee is composed primarily of laity and religious from parishes and organizations of the Diocese. They are concerned with fostering the understanding and appreciation of vocations to priesthood and religious life. They also provide encouragement and support to those men and women who are considering a vocation or are in the process of formation. Their activities include outreach to organizations and parishes, school and parish programs, retreats and recollection days, vocation fairs and booths.

RELIGIOUS

Men Religious³

Religious priests and deacons are encouraged to integrate with all the priests of the Diocese by coming to vicariate meetings, vicariate luncheons, the yearly retreat, the Convocation, the Chrism Mass, as well as all other events and workshops to which all the priests are invited. We form the one fraternity of priests of this Diocese. Religious brothers are invited to all things to which priests are invited with the exception of the yearly retreat and the yearly convocation. If any would like to attend either of these, they need simply ask the bishop.

Religious priests and brothers who are in diocesan appointments and working for diocesan entities receive the same stipend and benefits as diocesan priests. An amount equal to what a diocesan entity pays for the retirement of the diocesan priests will be sent to the religious order for their retirement needs. The diocesan entity, which employs the religious priest or brother, is responsible for this benefit as well as all other benefits due.

Women Religious⁴

We are blest with the presence of many women religious serving throughout the Diocese. They are involved in numerous and diverse ministries (i.e., Catholic school administrators and teachers, hospitals, homes for the aged, women's shelter, prison chaplains, campesinos, and the marginalized). They minister in parishes as Directors of Religious Education, liturgists, R.C.I.A., and adult education coordinators, etc.

Women religious who work for diocesan entities receive the stipend and benefits that are approved for all the dioceses in the Los Angeles Province. They are reviewed and updated yearly and current information is sent to all pastors/administrators.

The Vicar for Religious has an advisory board composed of five religious women, who are elected by the religious in their vicariate. One sister from Mexico is appointed by the bishop to represent the sisters from congregations. The board meets four times yearly, including once with the bishop. They assist in planning the annual clergy/religious gathering in fall, an annual religious

³ Issued May 1998

⁴ Issued May 1998

day of reflection in the spring, World Day for Consecrated Life activities and other opportunities for spiritual growth. Additional information or questions regarding religious may be obtained from the Vicar for Religious.

Women Religious New to the Diocese of Fresno

Whenever a woman religious is new to the Diocese, the Vicar for Religious should be consulted to verify that proper procedures have been followed regarding her placement and superior's approval.