



# VOCATION SPIRIT NEWS

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YEAR FOR PRIESTS

## Twenty-four men in seminary at one Ann Arbor Parish

Stephanie Fenton, annarbor.com

It may be uncommon to spot a "religious vocation" table at many university career fairs, but Catholic churches across the country will be highlighting this choice during [National Vocation Awareness Week](#) (NVAW) next week.

U.S. bishops have declared the promotion of vocations to priesthood and religious life as one of their current most pressing priorities.

Last June 19, Pope Benedict XVI declared a Vatican-sponsored "[Year for Priests](#)." Churches across the nation are being encouraged to highlight the works of their dioceses, bring attention to priestly vocations on their Web sites and provide information to young people interested in this life choice.

[Christ the King Catholic Church](#) in Ann Arbor - a church which, according to clergy members, has been recognized by the Catholic bishops in Washington, D.C. as probably having more men in seminary than any other Catholic church in the United States.

At a time when the Catholic Church is battling a decline in clergy interest, Christ the King's accomplishment is noteworthy - particularly when some dioceses can't reach the number (24) of men that the Ann Arbor parish has.

The secret? According to clergy members, both religious leaders and church members strive to help those considering a consecrated life or ordination to the priesthood every day of the year. Of importance, they also say, is that they don't push the pursuit of religious vocation on everyone.



Picture from Wikipedia

Rather, part of the church's mission remains to open young people's ears and to support those who do find themselves following a religious vocational path.

"As Catholics, we believe a call to a vocation is something Jesus does, and what a parish strives to do is to help people to hear the call," said [Deacon Dan Foley](#) of Christ the King Catholic Church, also a member of the church's vocations committee. "We don't push. Maybe someone was meant for something else - married life, to become an evangelist or teacher - we want them to discern what Jesus wants. We help them to hear the voice of the Lord and we encourage families to be supportive of them."

"Awareness of the radical social changes that have occurred in recent decades must motivate the best ecclesial forces to supervise the formation of candidates for the ministry," stated the Pope.

And how would the Catholic Church go about reaching the young people of today? Well, through Web sites like Facebook, of course.

The [Year for Priests on Facebook](#) has 6,515 official fans, quotes, discussions and more.

Even if specific events aren't

scheduled for next week's National Vocation Awareness Week, Catholic churches in Ann Arbor - such as [St. Mary Student Parish](#) - continually have educational material available and priests, nuns and other clergy members available for questions or to talk.

At Christ the King Catholic Church, support for vocations remains at the top of the list of priorities.

"The nature of our parish is to be open to men being called, and we try to support them in a practical sense while Fr. Ed (Fride) mentors them," Foley said. "We have supportive families and good priests as models - the kind of priests these men want to be. And every Thursday, we have a Mass intended to pray for those in the seminary."

So, How DO I Know?

**VOCATIONAL AND YOUNG ADULT QUICK LINKS:**

[thinkpriest.org](http://thinkpriest.org)

[HOW DO I KNOW?](#)

[HOUSE OF PEACE](#)

[Cardinal Stritch Campus Ministry](#)

[Capuchin Volunteers](#)

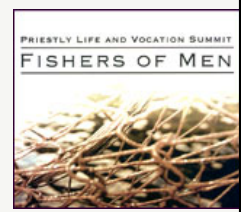
[Franciscan Sisters of Charity](#)



Name: Think Priest



THE CATHOLIC PRIEST TODAY



## January 10th to 15th is Vocation Awareness Week



The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord marks Jesus' initiation into public ministry. At his baptism Jesus is named the Beloved Son of God. With this celebration we recommit ourselves to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Initiated through our baptism we too are the Beloved of God, commissioned to proclaim Good News with our lives. The observance of National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW) began in 1976 when the National Conference of Catholic Bishops designated the 28th Sunday of the year as the beginning of NVAW. In 1997 this celebration was moved to coincide with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

[CLICK HERE](#) to learn more at [thinkpriest.org](http://thinkpriest.org)



Ministerial Priesthood in the History of Church

From [vocationboom.com](http://vocationboom.com)

The Roman Catholic priesthood began on the first Holy Thursday over 2,000 years ago when Jesus Christ celebrated the Last Supper in the Upper Room in Jerusalem with His apostles. On that night, Jesus gave the Church both the Sacrament of Holy Orders – the priesthood – and the Sacrament of the Eucharist. For this reason, the Catholic Church places great importance on the ministerial priesthood because it continues the call of Jesus and the response of the apostles to His command to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19).

From the very beginning, priests have celebrated the sacraments, taught the Church’s teachings, and provided leadership to the people. The priesthood is mainly about service and is dependent upon the priesthood of Christ to help the Christian faithful become holy and gain eternal life.

Today, there are more than 400,000 priests in the world, called by Christ from every region and nationality. This diversity helps to show that the priesthood is the same everywhere, but the Church always remembers that the ministry of ordained priests is measured always against the one supreme model of Christ the eternal High Priest.

For 2,000 years, Jesus has called men to this unique life of sacrifice and service: “I will give you shepherds after my own heart” (Jer. 3:15). In these words from the prophet Jeremiah, God promises His people that He will never leave them without shepherds to gather them together and guide them on their way to eternal salvation.

What was important for the first followers who said “yes” to Jesus’ invitation to join Him in His ministry remains so today for those engaged in priestly formation. Men who are open to the power of the Holy Spirit by choosing to pursue a vocation to the priesthood are surely helping to bring about the New Springtime in the Church.

Upcoming Events

Wisconsin Catholic Youth Rally ~ 2010

March 27, 2010. For more information, visit the WYRE Ministries Web Site: [wyreministries.org](http://wyreministries.org)

Thank you Jan, Susi and Fr. Jim!



Archdiocese Vocations Office Team: Here to hear about your calling! Call us @ (414) 747-6437 if we can help you.

Women Discerning During Vocation Week

January 13, 2010

Green Bay, WI ([MetroCatholic](http://MetroCatholic)) – For National Vocation Awareness Week 2010, the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity invite discerning young women to visit the Franciscanized World page at <http://www.fscc-calledtobe.org> for insight into the “Facets of Franciscan Calling”, Franciscan service and ministry lived in community.

Featured are some of the podcasts documenting facets of their ministry, including:

Sr. Ann Marie Lom, OSF reflecting on her call to be a Catholic woman religious, as well as a trained spiritual director on staff at St. Raphael Parish, Oshkosh, WI.

The profession of Sr. Hannah Johnecheck, OSF. and her thoughts on Franciscan community and service.

Sr. Marie Kolbe Zamora, OSF, who discusses her theological studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

The “Sent To Serve” posting explores the Sisters’ postulants and novices formative mission experiences. These service opportunities enable new members to learn more about the spirit and life of the Congregation by enjoying smaller local community living in various geographical locations while shadowing the Sisters’ rewarding ministries.

Established in 1869, the Roman Catholic Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity serve in Catholic health care, education and parish ministries in dioceses across the United States (Green Bay, Superior, Phoenix, Tucson, Honolulu, Chicago, Marquette, Jackson, Lincoln, Omaha, Columbus and Steubenville).

<http://www.fscc-calledtobe.org>

A Vocation must be Heard or Felt with Passion

From James VanOosting, dean of college of Arts and Sciences, Seton hall.

Vocation focuses on obedience, accountability, and faithfulness to the caller. Vocation demands life-ordering disciplines to ensure responsiveness and also requires silence, in order to be attentive to the caller.

Discerning one’s vocation relies on a process quite different from choosing a profession. A vocation must be heard or felt with passion. This passion—to write, to paint, to heal, to teach—must be confirmed first by oneself. Second, it needs to match one’s gifts. And, finally, it needs to be confirmed by a community of others or by a mentor. This final step helps preclude mistaking a personal compulsion with a genuine vocation.

Elizabeth O’Connor, in her book *Eighth Day of Creation: Gifts and Creativity* (Word Books, 1971), wrote insightfully of vocation from a religious perspective:

*If I develop one gift, it means that other gifts will not be used. Doors will close on a million lovely possibilities. I will become a painter or a doctor only if denial becomes a part of my picture of reality. Commitment at the point of my gifts means that I must give up being a straddler. Somewhere in the depths of me I know this.... My commitment will give me an identity. When asked who I am, I will be reminded that the answer lies in the exercise of my gifts.*

Rainer Maria Rilke, the late 19th-century poet, wrote in his volume *Letters to a Young Poet* a passage that could serve as a primer on vocational thinking:

*Nobody can counsel and help you, nobody. There is only one single way. Go into yourself. Search for the reason that bids you write; find out whether it is spreading out its roots in the deepest places of your heart, acknowledge to yourself whether you would have to die if it were denied you to write. This above all—ask yourself in the stillest hour of your night: must I write? Delve into yourself for a deep answer. And if this should be affirmative, if you may meet this earnest question with a strong and simple “I must,” then build your life according to this necessity: your life even into its most indifferent and slightest hour must be a sign of this urge and a testimony to*

(translation by M. D. Herter Norton, The Norton Library edition)

