



**USA Council of Serra International**

# **Handbook for Vocation Activity**

**An excellent vocations resource guide  
for Parish Vocation Committees  
and others**

Revised Jan 2006

# Handbook for Vocation Activity

This handbook is designed to be a resource guide for use by all Catholics interested in fostering and encouraging Vocations to the ministerial priesthood and religious life.

It lists and describes many of the best known and tested activities and programs currently in use by someone, somewhere. All source citations are correct as of this date, and are subject to correction over time. To get updated information contact the USA Council of Serra International, the publisher of this Handbook.

The USA Council of Serra International  
65 East Wacker Place, Suite 802  
Chicago, IL 60601  
USA  
(312) 201-6549  
(888) 777-6681 USA only  
FAX (312) 201-6548  
FAX (888) 777-6803 USA only  
[www.serraus.org](http://www.serraus.org)



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# **Collaborating Organizations**

## **for vocations in the United States**

This is a nearly complete list of Catholic organizations that include in their statement of purpose a support of Vocations to the priesthood and vowed religious life. E-mail and web site addresses are easily found by typing the name of the organization directly into your computer search engine.

**Archbishop of the Military Services**  
Washington, DC (202)269-9100

**Catholic Campus Ministries Association**  
Cincinnati, OH (888)714-6631

**Conference of Major Superiors of Men**  
Silver Spring, MD (301)588-4030

**Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious**  
Washington, DC (202)832-2575

**Institute on Religious Life**  
Chicago, IL (773) 267-1195

**J S Paluch Company Inc**  
Franklin Park, IL (800)621-5197

**Knights of Columbus**  
New Haven, CT (203)752-4000

**Knights of Peter Claver**  
New Orleans, LA (504)821-4225

**Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR)**  
Silver Spring, MD (301)588-4955

**National Association of Diocesan Directors of Campus Ministry (NADDCM)**  
Chicago, IL (312)829-0670

**National Association of Directors of Campus Ministry**  
Athens, OH (740)592-2711

**National Association of Hispanic Priests**  
Houston TX (713)528-6517

**National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS)** Irvine, TX (972)580-2114

**National Coalition for Church Vocations (NCCV)** Chicago, IL (773)955-5453

**National Conference of Catholic Women (NCCW)** Arlington, VA (800)506-9407

**National Conference of Diocesan Vocations Directors (NCDVD)**  
Neillsville, WI (715)254-0830

**National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM)**  
Washington, DC (202)636-3825

**National Federation of Priests' Councils (NFPC)** Chicago, IL (888)271 6372

**National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC)** Chicago, IL (773)363-5454

**Rogationist Fathers**  
Van Nuys, CA (818)782-1765

**NET Ministries**  
West St. Paul, MN (651)450-6833

**Serra International**  
United States of America Council (USAC)  
Chicago IL (888)777-6681

**Serra International Foundation**  
Chicago, IL (800)488-4008

**US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)**  
Washington, DC (202)541-3033

## Lay people involvement

- JPII says in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* “**Vocations is Everybody’s Business**”
- American Bishops have said that “**The solution to the vocation shortage is their responsibility**”
- One of the things they will do is “**Build a Culture of Vocations in American Families**”
- And **they are** asking lay people and lay organizations for help

## **Arenas of vocation activity**

- Parish level
- Diocesan (or deanery) level

## **Basic areas of vocation activity**

- Prayer
- Awareness (inviting/discernment)
- Affirmation
- Support
- Parish Vocation Committee

# Parish level

These programs and materials are being used somewhere at a parish or local level

## PRAYER ACTIVITIES

### ITEMS

### MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM:

**EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION for VOCATIONS**  
Routine schedule for same day of each week or month

Serra Club of Southwest Denver  
(303) 985-8968

**HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS**  
Similar to Eucharistic Adoration (above)

Serra Club of Southern Maryland  
(301) 994-0235

**PRAYER CARDS FOR SHUT-INS**  
Big print – Already prepared

Vocations Office – Archdiocese of Denver  
(303) 715-2000

**SUGGESTED PARISH BULLETIN PRAYERS**  
34 separate written vocation prayers from many sources, designed for use in parish bulletins

USAC

**PARISH BULLETIN CLIPS for VOCATIONS**  
A collection of many beautiful bulletin clips specifically designed for use in church bulletins

USAC

**THIRTY-ONE CLUB**  
Attend one extra Mass per month for vocations  
How to do it instructions and preprinted sign-up sheets

USAC

**TRAVELING CHALICE PROGRAM**  
Family opportunity to pray for and learn about vocations as chalice moves weekly from home to home. Works well at mass time or in school

USAC, and  
Serra Club of Southwest Denver  
(303) 985-7234

**ELIJAH CUP**  
Similar to Traveling Chalice Program

USAC, and  
Serra Club of Northwest Atlanta  
(770) 428-0793

**TRAVELING CRUCIFIX**  
Similar to Traveling Chalice Program

NRVC

**VOCATION PRAYER CARDS**  
Big variety

Rogationist fathers, and  
NCCV



**Parish level**  
**PRAYER ACTIVITIES**  
(continued)

<b>DAILY VOCATION PRAYERS</b> Sunday to Saturday	USAC
<b>VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK –</b> Early January each year– Complete planning kit, homily preparation, bulletin inserts, and activities	NCCV
<b>WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE</b> Early February each year– Complete planning kit, homily preparation, bulletin inserts, and activities	NCCV
<b>WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS</b> Fourth Sunday of Easter – Complete planning kit, homily preparation, bulletin inserts, and activities	NCCV
<b>ALL-SCHOOL MASS FOR VOCATIONS</b>	Local parish/school
<b>A COLLECTION OF FAVORITE PRAYERS</b> Four-fold prayer pamphlet with Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity and Contrition; along with a listing of Spiritual & Corporal Works of Mercy, Fruits of the Holy Spirit, and Holy Days of Obligation; and a <i>How to Pray the Rosary</i> section; and much more.	Serra Club of North Minneapolis (763) 571-3288
<b>LET US PRAY FOR VOCATIONS</b> A Prayer Book for Vocations	Rogationist Fathers
<b>SERRA PRAYER CRUSADE FOR VOCATIONS</b>	USAC
<b>VOCATION PRAYERS</b> For inclusion in Prayers of the Faithful at Masses	NCDVD, NRVC, and NCCV
<b>SERRA PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS and SERRA PRAYER FOR PERSEVERANCE OF VOCATIONS – two sided prayer card</b>	USAC
<b>OFFICIAL VOCATIONS PRAYERS</b> <a href="http://www.nccbuscc.org/vocations/prayereng.htm">www.nccbuscc.org/vocations/prayereng.htm</a>	USCCB

**Parish level**  
**VOCATION AWARENESS ACTIVITIES**  
 (continued)

<b>PHOTO and POSTER OF LOCAL SEMINARIAN or POSTULANT</b>	Parish family and Parish files
<b>PHOTO GALLERY OF PRIESTS and RELIGIOUS FROM PARISH</b> Display in church, school or parish hall	Local Diocesan Vocations Office and parish files
<b>VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK –</b> Early January each year– Complete planning kit, homily preparation, bulletin inserts, and activities	NCCV
<b>WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE</b> Early February each year– Complete planning kit, homily preparation, bulletin inserts, and activities	NCCV
<b>WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS</b> Fourth Sunday of Easter – Complete planning kit, homily preparation, bulletin inserts, and activities	NCCV
<b>CALLED BY NAME</b> A diocese or parish based program covers 3 weekends Parishioners participate	NCCV
<b>ALTAR SERVER AWARD PROGRAM</b> Award Medals and Certificates are available	USAC
<b>STUDENT and ADULT VISITS TO LOCAL SEMINARY and/or MOTHERHOUSE</b>	Local Diocesan Vocations office
<b>VOCATION BOOKMARKS</b>	NCCV
<b>POSTAGE METER AD PLATE</b> “Pray and Work for Church Vocations” on parish outbound envelopes	Pitney Bowes Call your local dealer
<b>PARISH VISITS BY GROUPS OF SEMINARIANS FOR SUNDAY MASS AND BRUNCH</b>	Local Seminary and Vocations Office

## Parish level

These programs and materials are designed for best use at parish or local level  
**VOCATION AWARENESS (INVITING/DISCERNMENT) ACTIVITIES**

### ITEMS

### MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM:

**VOCATIONS CLASS** – Junior/Senior high  
One hour in school or religious ed

Serra Club of Northwest Denver  
(303) 422-0404

**TAKE THE JOURNEY** - Junior high  
Transport students to seminary for vocations retreat

Serra Club of Baltimore  
(410) 668-4525

**COLLEGE VOCATION AWARENESS PROGR**  
90 minute meeting on campus of students and  
vocations oriented speakers

Serra Club of Baltimore  
(410) 668-4525

**GOD STUFF PROGRAM** – 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> graders  
Take Polaroid pictures of kids in mockup of priest  
or sister. Classroom or parish festivals

Serra Club of North-Minneapolis  
(763) 571-3288

**VOCATION VIEWS**  
52 short lectionary-based reflections for weekly  
parish bulletins – a new one for each week.

NCCV

**ESSAY & POSTER CONTEST  
IN SCHOOL and RELIGIOUS ED**  
Awareness program for 8<sup>th</sup> graders

Serra Club of Santa Clara  
(408) 243-4647, and  
Local teachers and principals

**PRAYER CARD (HOLY CARD) CONTEST**  
5<sup>th</sup> grade Catholic school and Religious-ed classes

Serra Club of Baltimore  
(410) 668-4525

**PARISH BULLETIN CLIPS**  
These short bulletin articles are an inexpensive  
and simple way to keep vocations in mind

USAC

**VOCATIONS LITERATURE RACK  
IN CHURCH VESTIBULE**  
Literature and prayer cards

USAC, NCDVD, NRVC, and NCCV

**PRAYER CARDS and VOCATIONS POSTERS**  
wide assortment

NCCV, and Rogationist fathers, and  
local Diocesan Vocations Office

**Parish level**  
**VOCATION AWARENESS ACTIVITIES**  
 (continued)

<b>HOMILY AT MASS AND VISIT AND TALK IN SCHOOL CLASSROOM BY SEMINARIAN</b>	Local Seminary and Vocations Office
<b>VOCATION HOMILIES AT CERTAIN SUNDAY MASSES</b>	NCCV, and Local Diocesan Vocations Office
<b>TRAVELING CHALICE PROGRAM</b> New home each week. Transfers is made at mass or school or Religious Ed class	USAC, and Serra Club of SW Denver (303) 985-7234
<b>ELIJAH CUP</b> Similar to Traveling Chalice Program	USAC, and Serra Club of Northwest Atlanta (770) 428-0793
<b>TRAVELING CRUCIFIX</b> Similar to Traveling Chalice Program	NRVC
<b>HOME-MADE VOCATION PRAYER CARDS</b> grade school children	Parish school or R/E principals and teachers
<b>ME A PRIEST? THINK ABOUT IT....</b> <b>ME A SISTER? THINK ABOUT IT</b> Ad inserts for parish bulletin	NCCV
<b>PARISH YOUTH AS LECTORS AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS</b>	Parish staff
<b>GOD'S DESIGN</b> Lesson plan booklet to support interactive CD (listed on next page)	NCCV
<b>OPERATION ANDREW</b> Helps parish/diocese invite men to consider priesthood. One day event	NCCV
<b>OPERATION MIRYAM &amp; JOSEPH</b> Helps parish/diocese extend invitation to men and women to consider religious life	NCCV

# Parish level

## VOCATION AWARENESS FILMS, DVD's and CD's

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM</u>
<b>PARISH VOCATION COMMITTEE</b> Why? How? DVD helps motivate local action	USAC
<b>COME FOLLOW ME</b> an exciting DVD about the lifestyle of Seminarians during training	Serra Club of Boulder (303) 499-9056.
<b>GOD'S CALL – A FAMILY AFFAIR</b> Young people considering a vocation share their aspirations and concerns with family and friends who are asked to encourage and support young people as they respond to the call of priesthood and religious life.	USAC
<b>A CALL TO CHRIST</b> Pope John Paul II reflects on his vocation to the priesthood. Intended for senior high school students and adult audiences.	USAC
<b>TO BE A PRIEST</b> This documentary traces the life of one man during the last year of his seminary training and his first year in a parish.	USAC
<b>GOD'S DESIGN</b> An exciting interactive CD of Religious Vocations & the Diocesan Priesthood (see lesson plan booklet listed on page 11)	NCCV
<b>WHAT I REALLY WANT TO SAY</b> A six part video series, each approx. 30 min., in which 11 Catholic youth and a dynamic priest hit the hottest topics facing teens. Excellent vocations coverage in video #6.	Catholic Youth 2 Youth (800) 298-9543

## Parish level

These programs and materials are being used somewhere at a parish or local level

### VOCATION AFFIRMATION ACTIVITIES

#### ITEM

#### MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM:

#### **AFFIRMATION CERTIFICATE –**

Present a personalized, handcrafted anniversary certificate to your priest or religious Outstanding inexpensive kit.

USAC

#### **NUNS APPRECIATION LUNCHEON**

Including a personal rose

Serra Club of Denver (303) 680-9033

#### **GOLF TOURNAMENT for clergy**

Serra Club of West Omaha (402) 894-9952

#### **APPRECIATION DINNER**

for clergy and religious

Serra Club of Greeley (970) 352-6270

#### **PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY**

Celebrated in October of each year. Complete Program – posters – homilies - activities

USAC

**2<sup>nd</sup> THURSDAY** – Supportive group attends a monthly mass, rotating within the area, for vocation of the celebrant

Serra Club of SW Denver (303) 985-9127

### Use your imagination on these following suggestions

#### **ATTABOY APPRECIATION –**

Recognition of heavy work load of priests and parish staff

**MEAL INVITATIONS** – Individual luncheon and dinner with priests, religious, and seminarians

#### **PARISH BULLETIN BIRTHDAY**

**NOTICES** - Monthly notices for parish priests and religious

**HOMILY “HUGS”** – Immediate commendation and praise to priests for good homilies

**THANK YOU** – Written appreciation for special services performed

**THUMBS UP** – Support your pastor and staff in your personal conversations with friends

**RECREATION** – Attend sports and cultural activities with your priest or

**NOTES, LETTERS, AND CARDS** – Individual Christmas and anniversary cards and gifts to priests, religious, seminarians and staff

#### **ANNUAL PARISH CELEBRATION**

Honor the priest or religious of the parish

## Parish level

These programs and materials are being used somewhere at a parish or local level

### SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

#### ITEMS

#### MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM:

**TWO BITS FOR SEMINARIANS**  
Parish Sunday collection for personal needs of local seminarians

Serra trust fund for Vocations  
Serra Club of Greeley (970) 356-1962

**GOLF TOURNAMENT for clergy**  
fund raiser

Serra Club of West Omaha (402) 894-9952

**CODICIL FOR VOCATIONS**  
In your personal estate plan

USAC, and/or  
Serra International Foundation

**ANNUAL COLLECTION** for  
retired and infirmed priests

Vocations Office – Denver Archdiocese  
(303) 715-2000

**CRAB FEED** Annual fundraiser for  
local seminarians

Serra Club of Sacramento (916) 424-1078

**CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
Annual fundraiser for local seminary

Serra Club of Santa Clara (408) 725-1898

**ACCEPT INVITATION** to serve on local  
seminary board

Serra Club of Spokane (509) 926-8540

**PARTNER (ADOPT) A SEMINARIAN**  
and follow him thru Ordination

Serra Club of Southeast Denver  
(303) 756-8972

**VISIT TO SEMINARY**  
Planned meeting of interested adults with  
Seminarians on the seminarians' turf

Serra Club of Southern Maryland  
(301) 994-0235

# **SAMPLE OF PARISH BULLETIN PRAYERS**

For a comprehensive list go to USAC

Also see page 9, "Vocation Views"

## **PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS**

Loving God, help us follow the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary in willingly giving ourselves in service to your church. Stir up the grace of priestly and religious vocations in the hearts of many within our community, and send your Spirit to guide and strengthen them in answering your call. Amen.

Most Reverend Robert J Carlson, Chair,  
Bishops' Committee on Vocations

## **PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS**

Jesus, we ask you to bless our parish and all those living their commitment to you as married couples, singles, sisters, priests, deacons and brothers. We pray that our young people may know their vocation and respond with enthusiasm and generosity of spirit. Increase the faith life of our parish and strengthen our family life. Bless our parish with many vocations. Grand, Lord, that faithfully sharing your mission in this life, we may come together to share your eternal life in heaven. Amen.

Archdiocese of Hartford

## **PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS**

Dear God, you gift us with life. Through baptism you have called us to new life. May we be a sign of your love in the world. We pray that you will continue to fill women and men with an abundance of courage to follow the path you set before them today. May those who feel compelled to serve as lay ministers, brothers, sisters, deacons and priests be blessed with passion and vision to make the world a better place. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

National Coalition for Church Vocations

## **PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS**

Lord God, you know me. You know when I sit and when I stand. You have me always in your heart. I thank you for this, Lord. You know the path for my life and what will make me happy. Show it to me, Lord. Bless me, guide me and be my Lord, so that whatever road I choose, I may choose it for your glory. Amen.

Archdiocese of Detroit Vocations Office

## **PRAYER FOR THE PERSEVERANCE OF VOCATIONS**

O God, You have constituted Your only begotten Son supreme and eternal Priest for the glory of Your majesty and the salvation of mankind: grant that those whom He has chosen ministers and dispensers of His mysteries may be found faithful in fulfilling the ministry they have received.

Serra International

## **PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS**

O God, who wills not the death of a sinner but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech you, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary ever virgin, Saint Joseph her spouse, Blessed Junipero Serra and all the saints, an increase of laborers for your church, fellow laborers to spend and consume themselves for souls, through the same Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Serra International

## **PRAY FOR VOCATIONS**

Good and gracious God, you have called us through baptism to discipleship with your son, Jesus Christ, and have sent us to bring the good news of salvation to all peoples. We pray you to grant us more priests and religious to build up your church here within our country. Inspire young men and women by the example of Blessed Junipero Serra to give themselves totally to the work of Christ and his church. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

Roger M. Mahoney,  
Archbishop of Los Angeles

## **PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS**

Lord, our God, you established the church as a sign of your continuing presence in the world. We ask you to raise up the faithful ministers to your church in the priesthood and religious life, so that the message of faith, justice and love contained in the gospel may be brought into the hearts of all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

John R. Quinn  
Archbishop of San Francisco



# Diocesan level

These programs and materials are being used somewhere at a diocese or deanery level

## PRAYER ACTIVITIES

### ITEMS

### MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM:

**EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION for VOCATIONS**  
Routine schedule for same day of each week or month

Serra Club of Southwest Denver  
(303) 985-8968

**PRAY FOR A PRIEST PROGRAM**  
Organized program insures every priest in diocese is being prayed for

Serra Club of Santa Clara (408) 725-1898

**PRAYER CARDS FOR SHUT-INS**  
Big print – Already prepared

Vocations Office – Archdiocese of Denver  
(303) 715-2000

**VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK –**  
Early January each year– Complete planning kit, homily preparation, bulletin inserts, and activities

NCCV

**WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE**  
Early February each year– Complete planning kit, homily preparation, bulletin inserts, and activities

NCCV

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS**  
Fourth Sunday of Easter – Complete planning kit, homily preparation, bulletin inserts, and activities

NCCV

## Diocesan level

These programs and materials are designed for best use at diocesan or deanery level  
**VOCATION AWARENESS (INVITING/DISCERNMENT) ACTIVITIES**

### ITEMS

### MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM:

#### **VOCATION POSTERS**

Inspirational art or photos to use for church gathering space, and school bulletin boards

NCCV and,  
Local Diocesan Vocations Office

#### **VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK --**

Early January -- Planning kit

NCCV

#### **WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE**

February -- Planning kit

NCCV

#### **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS**

Late April or early May -- Planning kit

NCCV

#### **CALLED BY NAME**

A diocese or parish based program covers 3 weekends Parishioners participate

NCCV

#### **ALTAR SERVER AWARD PROGRAM**

Award Medals and Certificates are available

USAC

#### **ESSAY & POSTER CONTEST IN SCHOOL and RELIGIOUS ED**

Awareness program for 8<sup>th</sup> graders

Serra Club of Santa Clara  
(408) 243-4647, and  
Local diocesan vocations office

**Diocesan level**  
**VOCATION AWARENESS ACTIVITIES**  
(continued)

**PARISH VISITS BY GROUPS OF SEMINARIANS FOR SUNDAY MASS AND BRUNCH**

Local Seminary and Vocations Office

**EXPLORE**

A weekend at local seminary for boys, grades 7 – 12

Vocations office of  
Galveston – Houston Diocese  
(713) 659-5461

**INSIGHT**

For junior & senior high school women

Vocations Office of  
Galveston – Houston Diocese

**STUDENT and ADULT VISITS TO LOCAL SEMINARY and/or MOTHERHOUSE**

Local Diocesan Vocations office

**SINGLE ADULT DISCERNMENT PROGRAM**  
Weekend retreat for adults (ages 20 to 50)

USAC

**OPERATION ANDREW**

Helps parish/diocese invite men to consider priesthood. One day event

NCCV

**OPERATION MIRYAM & JOSEPH**

Helps parish/diocese extend invitation to men and women to consider religious life

NCCV

## **Diocesan level**

These programs and materials are being used somewhere at a diocese or deanery level

### **VOCATION AFFIRMATION ACTIVITIES**

#### **ITEM**

#### **MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM:**

**NUNS APPRECIATION LUNCHEON**  
Including a personal rose

Serra Club of Denver (303) 680-9033

**GOLF TOURNAMENT** for clergy

Serra Club of West Omaha (402) 894-9952

**APPRECIATION DINNER**  
**FOR CLERGY and/or RELIGIOUS**

Serra Club of Greeley (970) 352-6270

**PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY**  
Celebrated in October of each year

USAC

**2<sup>nd</sup> THURSDAY** – Traveling group  
rotates monthly between parishes in deanery  
offering mass for vocation of the celebrant

Serra Club of SW Denver (303) 985-9127

## **Diocesan level**

These programs and materials are being used somewhere at a Diocesan or deanery level  
**SUPPORT ACTIVITIES**

### **ITEMS**

### **MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM:**

**TWO-BITS FOR SEMINARIANS**  
Parish Sunday collection for Seminarian's  
personal needs

Serra trust fund for Vocations  
Serra Club of Greeley (970) 356-1962

**GOLF TOURNAMENT** fund raiser  
for clergy

Serra Club of West Omaha (402) 894-9952

**ANNUAL COLLECTION** for  
retired and infirmed priests

Vocations Office – Denver Archdiocese  
(303) 715-2000

**CRAB FEAST** Annual; fundraiser for  
local seminarians

Serra Club of Sacramento (916) 780-0151

**CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
Annual fundraiser for local seminary

Serra Club of Santa Clara (408) 725-1898

**PARTNER (ADOPT) A SEMINARIAN**  
and follow him thru ordination

Serra Club of Southeast Denver  
(303) 756-8972

# Parish Vocation Committee

## WHY IN THE PARISH?

- Because future vocations are in the parishes.
- Because the Holy Father has stated that the laity must accept responsibility to encourage broad parish support of parish vocation programs.
- Because the Church needs strong large-scale local crusades to offset today's negative social and materialistic culture.
- Because there is great need for many laity to help increase awareness of and to serve as inviters for vocations.
- Because parish priests and religious need positive affirmation from parishioners in order to help enrich and sustain their own personal vocation initiatives.
- Because diocesan vocation directors and bishops need to witness proven and successful parish vocation programs for extension to other parishes.
- Because parish school officials will cooperate in promoting vocation programs once they see their value.
- Because it is at the parish level that families can be most effectively educated and inspired to promote vocations for their children.
- Because parish youth need encouragement from parents, family members, friends, and peers when considering recognition of God's call.
- Because of the inner satisfaction Parish Vocation Committee members and coordinators realize when they see the results of the vocation activities in use in their parish.
- Because the Church has great need for many more Church vocations in order to achieve the Church's Mission of preaching, teaching, and evangelizing.

## Parish Vocation Committee

(continued)

### **WHY** should you and your parish get involved?

Simply stated: *THERE IS A VOCATION SHORTAGE* of priests, sisters, and brothers.

**JOHN PAUL II** states in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* that vocations are everyone's business. Further he says, "I wish to draw the attention of the People of God especially to the specific role of parishes, together with the contribution of the family, towards the promotion of vocations. The fostering of vocations cannot be considered a marginal activity, but must be fully incorporated into the life and activity of the community."

**OUR AMERICAN BISHOPS** have expressed that they accept full responsibility to solve the problem. They propose to work toward building a *Culture for Vocations* in parishes. They ask our help to *Improve the Vocation Environment* in families.

**LAY INVOLVEMENT:** With this clear directive from our hierarchy, it is fitting that the faithful become more active in bringing the vocation effort into their respective parishes.

### **WHO** should do it in your parish?

**PASTOR:** The ultimate leader. He will function in consortium with your bishop. However it isn't only his responsibility. He needs active cooperation (implementation) from parishioners.

**VOCATIONS COMMITTEE (OR COORDINATOR):** A group of interested local people who are selected by the pastor and recognized as the spearhead for the vocations awareness thrust in your parish.

### **HOW** to get started:

**PASTOR:** Appoints his parish vocations coordinator or parish vocations committee, and presents his ideas to them.

**CHECK WITH THE DIOCESE:** A local bishop often has a plan, and may wish to encourage a specific structure or procedure. The diocesan vocations office will usually have good ideas for your consideration.

**LOOK FOR HELP:** Consider contacting any of the resources listed in the front of this Handbook. They'll gladly talk with you and give you good parish referrals. Most are also an excellent literature source.

**Parish Vocation Committee**  
(continued)

**SUGGESTIONS that may help you get started**

1. **PASTORAL APPROVAL:** Given the necessary approval and positive support of the Parish Pastor, one or more dedicated parishioners will decide to form a Parish Vocation Committee.
2. **RECRUITING:** The person who initiates this effort, next recruits three or four (at the outset) known and interested other parishioners to form the nucleus of a Parish Vocation Committee (PVC). The Parish Staff is to be asked to provide names of likely candidates for the PVC.
3. **SCHEDULE MEETING AND HAVE AGENDA:** The chairman (pro tem) schedules the first meeting of the nucleus of the PVC. The chairman is to provide a meeting agenda to the committee members in adequate time before the first meeting.
4. **SAMPLE AGENDA:** The first committee agenda is to include the following statements:
  - Committee Mission
  - Committee Goals
  - Committee Objectives
  - Suggested Activities in the four categories.
5. **ORIENTATION:** The first committee meeting is to be considered one of orientation whereby committee members obtain some understanding of and become familiar with the Committee's Mission, Goals, Objectives, and proposed Activities; and also have an opportunity during this first meeting to get answers to their questions.
6. **SIZE:** Also in the first committee meeting, discussion and initial consideration can be given to enlarging the committee to include the following: two grade school students, two high school students, two young adults, two or more parents, and two or more senior parishioners.
7. **PARTICIPATION OF STAFF:** In general, the Pastor and other busy Parish Staff are not to be active committee members because of their heavy workload. An Associate Pastor, Parish Youth Minister, R/E Coordinator, and/or School Principal, should be invited to become committee members. The work of the PVC devolves almost exclusively to the laity. Nevertheless, it is imperative that the Pastor and key Parish Staff be kept informed by regularly sending them committee agenda and minutes. They should be considered a resource for specific items as necessary and appropriate.
8. **SECOND MEETING:** The second meeting is to be scheduled approximately one month after the first meeting. The Committee is to review the list of vocation programs targeted at the first meeting, decide which programs they want to initially implement, and make assignments to specific members. They should limit themselves in the beginning to only 2 or 3 of the simpler activities. They could possibly select from these:
  - 31 Club
  - Weekly Holy Hour
  - Daily prayer for vocations before Mass or during intercessions
  - Promote participation in any Diocesan Vocation programs
  - Weekly bulletin prayer
  - Promote World Day of Prayer



## Parish Vocation Committee

### SUGGESTIONS that may help you get started

(continued)

9. **AGENDAS AND MINUTES:** For every Committee meeting, the Chairman, or his/her designee, is to prepare a written agenda for distribution to committee members a week or more prior to the meeting date. In addition, the Committee meeting minutes are to be published and distributed promptly to committee members, pastor, appropriate parish staff members, and the Bishop's Vocation Office (if appropriate).
10. **RESOURCES:** The Committee Chairman is to obtain vocation activities resource materials from the local Serra Club, the local Diocesan Vocations Director, and other resources listed in earlier pages of this handbook.
11. **'HOW-TO' VIDEO AVAILABLE:** At some time during the first two or three meetings, the Committee should take a look at the very current eleven-minute DVD "*Parish Vocation Committee*". It is a brief description of the purpose of and how to start a Vocation Committee. The film is available from USAC – Chicago.
12. **USE OF PARISH EQUIPMENT:** The Committee Chairman is to investigate the parish-published policies about using parish equipment and staff, and to arrange for usage. Of particular importance can be meeting space, office copy equipment, and secretarial assistance if needed.
13. **THIRD MEETING:** The Committee Chairman is to schedule the third committee meeting approximately one month after the second meeting in order to develop some momentum in launching initial vocation programs. The format is still to have agenda prepared and minutes written while at the same time encouraging initiative and creativity by all committee members.
14. **ADDITIONAL MEETINGS SCHEDULE:** When it is evident to committee members that several vocation programs are under way, the Chairman may wish to schedule vocation committee meetings on a quarterly basis, with normally no July and August meetings.
15. **BULLETIN INSERTS:** After three months or so, or sooner, the Vocation Committee is to begin planning to have weekly prayer inserts in the parish bulletin, along with other items in the parish bulletin on a frequent basis.
16. **BUDGET:** After a period of six months or a year, the Vocation Committee is to consider any budget implications for the parish and obtain the Pastor's approval in this matter, with this budget forecast subject to revision on specific items and recommendations as may emerge.
17. **SERRA:** It is helpful to have a Serran on the committee.

**Parish Vocation Committee**  
(continued)

**MISSION, GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The Committee **MISSION** defines the Committee's business.

A recommended Committee Mission – *To foster and affirm ordained and consecrated leadership in the Catholic community.*

The Committee **GOAL** is a broad statement of what the Committee wishes to achieve with its activities.

A recommended Committee Goal – *To foster and affirm vocations to the priesthood, sisterhood, brotherhood, and permanent diaconate.*

The Committee **OBJECTIVES** are specific statements that identify the achievements required to support the goals.

A recommended Committee Objective – *To call forth priests, sisters, brothers, and permanent deacons from among the faithful in the parish, and to affirm those who now serve the church.*

The Committee **ACTIVITIES** are programs to be performed to achieve the objectives. They fit into four categories:

**PRAYER ACTIVITIES** – *To petition God's help in providing Priests and Religious.*

**AWARENESS ACTIVITIES** – *To bring about religious vocation awareness among candidates, families, peers, and other support groups, and to identify and invite candidates to the priesthood and religious life.*

**AFFIRMATION ACTIVITIES** – *To show love, respect, gratitude, and encouragement to those who have accepted the religious vocation call. To help them avoid undue mental and physical stress, and assist them in rehabilitation programs if appropriate. To counteract any negative reference to religious life.*

**SUPPORT ACTIVITIES** – *To assist seminarians, priests, or religious with personal involvement or by monetary means.*

# A TYPICAL PARISH VOCATION COMMITTEE

## Mission, Goals, Objectives & Activities

- Mission:** From the Parish Mission Statement: "To foster and affirm ordained and consecrated leadership in the Catholic Community".
- Goals:** To foster and affirm vocations to the priesthood, consecrated religious life, and permanent diaconate.
- Objectives:** To call forth priests, sisters, brothers, and permanent deacons, from among the faithful in our parish, and to affirm those who now serve the church.

### Activity Categories

**Prayer Activities** To petition God's help in providing Priests and Religious

- Thirty one Club membership drive
- Serra Vocation Chalice program
- Prayer card distribution to our students and faculty (four times during school year)
- Prayer card distribution to sick and infirmed parishioners and Care Center residents
- Prayers for Vocations in "Prayers of the Faithful"
- Serra Family Prayer Program Table Tent Cards
- Distribution to parish households "A Collection of Favorite Prayers"
- Serra Prayer Crusade for Vocations – daily prayers for priesthood and religious life for 1 year
- Outreach to other parish groups for prayer
- Eucharistic Adoration for Vocations

**Awareness Activities** To bring about a religious vocation awareness among candidates, families, peers and other support groups

- Vocation pamphlet rack in Church vestibule
- Photo Gallery of Priests, Sisters, Brothers, and Deacons from our parish
- Vocation Awareness Week in January
- World Day of Prayer for Vocations material
- School Essay and Poster Programs and vocation posters in Church and school
- "Called by Name" Program
- Ministry Potential Discerner Program to 8<sup>th</sup> graders & religious education students
- Student visits to Seminary, Cathedral, and "Motherhouse" of Religious Orders
- Postage meter ad plate for parish mailings: "Pray & Work for Church Vocations"
- Vocation video tapes for parish classes and meetings
- Development of homemade vocation prayer cards by school age children
- Use "Handbook for Vocation Activities" available from USA Council of Serra International.
- "Me a priest" - free ad insert for available space in our local newspaper

**Affirmation Activities** To show love, respect and gratitude to those who have accepted the call to a religious vocation

- Celebrate anniversaries for parish priests and religious
- Publish monthly birthday notices
- Send letters of affirmation to all present and previous parish priests and religious
- Send letters of affirmation to our school and Religious Education teachers

**Support Activities** To assist seminarians and novices either with personal involvement or by monetary means

- Arrange for visits by seminarians and religious orders to our Church and school
- Arrange for talks by seminarians after some weekend masses and at youth meetings
- Distribute names of seminarians and those preparing for consecrated life to students & parishioners for personal contacts
- Encourage "Adopt a seminarian and/or novice" by the parish

# Theology of Vocation

*Go into the whole world and make disciples of all nations.*

Matt 28:19

**Vatican II** teaches that every Christian has a personal call (vocation) to holiness and to contribute to the mission of the Church to go into the whole world and make disciples of all nations. This is the common Christian vocation that is rooted in the baptism of each person.

The vast majority of Christians are called to correspond to this vocation in the ordinary circumstances of their daily lives as young people, students, workers, husbands, wives, parents and members of society without in any way feeling the need to become involved in organized Church ministry.

The purpose of the dedicated ministry of priests, religious and committed laity is to support all the faithful in living out their Christian vocation, thereby contributing to building up the Church and bringing about a more human way of life in society.

**Consultation Document for *A Future Full of Hope: A National Strategy for Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life*, NCCB Committee on Vocations 1996**

**The Church** must reclaim its sense of sacrament. In order to address the vocation concerns of the church, we need to recapture and reclaim part of our identity; namely, the sacraments are central to what makes us unique. Ordained priesthood is a sacrament that brings a very special and essential gift of life to the community, the church. Priests who feel good about themselves and about their priesthood will, naturally, want to invite others to share in and continue their work. We need to fully embrace that vocation ministry is connected to mission of the church. Ordained and laity must work together. There needs to be serious responsibility for revitalizing the mission of the church.

**Archbishop Pio Laghi, Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, at the NCCB National Symposium on Vocations, June 1998**

## **A Theology of Vocations** (continued)

**It is helpful** to think of three aspects of vocations:

- 1.** The common Christian vocation in which all members of the Church share by reason of Baptism and Confirmation — the vocation to love and serve the Lord and proclaim his good news to others.
- 2.** Vocation in the sense of state of life, whether clerical or religious, matrimony or the life of the single person in the world. Each of these involves important, distinct specifications of the common vocation.
- 3.** Vocation in the sense of a unique personal calling, the particular response to Jesus Christ which each individual, and only he or she, is asked to make in the special circumstances of his/her life as defined by vocational commitment in each of the first two senses.

It is clear in this perspective that every member of the Church lives in a rich and challenging vocation context which should define and orient his/her life in all its dimensions.

**Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, *Chicago Catholic*, January 7, 1983**

**From the baptismal privilege** flows the role of inviter as a privilege and responsibility that belongs to each member of the body of Christ in encouraging others to consider their Christian Vocation. Each member of the parish has the responsibility for encouraging others in living their Christian Vocation and presenting the options of priesthood and religious life.

*A Future Full of Hope: A National Strategy for Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life, NCCB Committee on Vocations*

**Single and married laity, religious and secular priests** live the common Christian vocation in special ways, but each special vocation shares certain elements: It is the Father's choice, it comes from him and is his gift, it derives from the Church, it finds fulfillment in the Church, and it is given as a service to the Church.

*Pastores Dabo Vobis, 35*

# A Theology of Priesthood

*Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins...No one takes this honor upon himself, but only when called by God.*

*Hebrews 5: 1-4*

**The priest** has a special relationship with Jesus Christ. “By the sacrament of orders priests are configured to Christ, the Priest, so that as minister of the head and coworkers of the episcopal order they can build up and establish His Whole Body which is Christ.”

**Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, #12**

**The basic elements** of the priestly ministry are:

- a)** To proclaim the Gospel
- b)** To preside over the sacraments and liturgy
- c)** To build up and serve the community which in turn serves the world.

**The Report of the Bishops Ad Hoc Committee  
for Priestly Life and Ministry, p. 25**

**The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood** of bishops and priests, and the common priesthood of all the faithful participate, each in its own proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ. While being “ordered one to another, “ they differ essentially ... While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the faithful by the unfolding of baptismal grace — a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit, the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed the unfolding of baptismal grace of all Christian. The ministerial priesthood is a means by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his church. For this reason, it is transmitted by is own sacrament, the sacrament of Holy Orders.”  
(Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1547)

# A Theology of Religious Life

*He went up the mountain and summoned those whom he wanted and they came to him. He appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach*

*Mark 3: 13-14*

**The consecrated life**, deeply rooted in the example and teaching of Christ the Lord, is a gift of God the Father to his Church through the Holy Spirit. By the profession of the evangelical counsels the characteristic features of Jesus — the chaste, poor and obedient one — are made constantly “visible” in the midst of the world and the eyes of the faithful are directed toward the mystery of the Kingdom of God already at work in history, even as it awaits its full realization in heaven.

In every age there have been men and women who, obedient to the Father’s call and to the prompting of the Spirit, have chosen this special way of following Christ, in order to devote themselves to him with an “undivided” heart. Like the Apostles, they too have left everything behind in order to be with Christ and to put themselves, as he did, at the service of God and their brothers and sisters. In this way, through the many charisms of spiritual and apostolic life bestowed on them by the Holy Spirit, they have helped to make the mystery and mission of Church shine forth, and in doing so have contributed to the renewal of society. (*Vita Consecrata*)

**The religious state** is the one way of experiencing a “more intimate” consecration, rooted in Baptism and dedicated totally to God. In the consecrated life, Christ’s faithful, moved by the Holy Spirit, propose to follow Christ more nearly, to give themselves to God who is loved above all and, pursuing the perfection of charity in the service of the Kingdom, to signify and proclaim in the Church the glory of the world to come

. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #916)

**The appropriate renewal** of religious life involves two simultaneous processes:

- 1) A continuous return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original inspiration behind a given community
- 2) An adjustment of the community to the changed conditions of the times.

It is according to these principles that such renewal should go forward under the influence of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the Church.

**Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life, #2**

**By a life perfectly and entirely consecrated** to [such] sanctification, the members of these institutes share in the Church’s task of evangelization, “in the world and from within the world,” where their presence acts as a “leaven in the world.” Their witness of a Christian life aims “to order temporal things according to God and inform the world with the power of the Gospel.” They commit themselves to the evangelical counsels by sacred bonds and observe among themselves the communion and fellowship appropriate to their “particular secular way of life.”

**Catechism of the Catholic Church, #229**

# Multi Cultural Vocations

*Keeping in mind that the Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, additional efforts should be made to promote multi cultural vocations. The very word culture comes from the Latin word colere, which means to cultivate the ground.*

## Who are we?

The program booklet from *Encuentro 2000 – Many Faces in God’s House* – states:

“Each of us is made in the image and likeness of God. Each of us is a gift from God. Each of us is a gift from God to the World, and each of us is unique. I am the color, the race, and the ethnicity that I am, and yet, I am more. I am American, African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, European American, Native American, Arabic American, and I am a blend of some, and yet I am more. My roots can be found in Africa, Asia, South and Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, North America, the Middle East, and yet, I am more. I live in the inner city, and I live in a small town; I live in the suburbs, and I live in a gated community, and yet, I am more.” (p. 3)

## What is our direction?

The following texts on promoting and respecting the multiplicity of ethnic cultures in America give us a sense of the direction we should pursue.

“The Son of God, by taking upon himself our human nature, became incarnate within a particular people, even though his redemptive death brought salvation to all people...The gift of his Spirit and his love are meant for each and every people and culture, in order to bring them all into unity...For this to happen, it is necessary to inculcate preaching in such a way that the Gospel is proclaimed in the language and culture of its hearers.”

*Apostolic Exhortation, Ecclesia in America, Jan.22, 1999, no.70)*

“Just because a Catholic does not understand or express his or her belonging to a faith community in a way that is conventional to a specific culture, this does not mean that this person is less Catholic than the one who does. To understand and respect this distinction is key to achieving the U.S. Bishop’s goal to foster cultural diversity within the unity of the Church.”

*Go and Make Disciples, p.18)*

In addition, the Pontifical Council for Culture has stated: “When people love their culture, it is in that culture that they live and profess their Christian faith.” The Council document, *Toward a Pastoral Approach to Culture*, dated June 17, 1999, states:



## Multi-Cultural Vocations

(continued)

“Through inculturation the church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community. She transmits to them her own values, at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within. Through inculturation the church, for her part, becomes a more intelligible sign of what she is, and a more effective instrument of mission.”

**Redemptoris Missio, 52)**

### What is being said?

In an interview Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz, Chairman of the Bishop’s Committee on Vocations, stated:

“Priests are ordained to serve all Catholics, but often priests from a particular culture can be more effective in ministering to their own people. Likewise, their participation in diocesan activities can enable them to represent the concerns of their cultural community.”

Bishop Stephen E. Blaire stated the following in a lecture given in San Gabriel;

“Christianity is rooted in and transforms culture. Knowledge and revelation come from the religious symbols and practices of the people they serve. The Church must exhibit reverence for traditions without creating divisive spaces. The Church must meet each group on its own turf.”

In *Ministry for a Multicultural Church*, an address given by Fr. Peter Schreiter, CPPS, at the annual convention of the National Federation of Priests’ Councils on April 26, 1999, he said three goals to strive for in effective cultural interaction are:

- 1)** Recognition of the other
- 2)** Respect for cultural differences
- 3)** Healthy interaction between cultures

We must honor the cultural diversity in the one Body of Christ and respect cultural identity (language, customs and the material aspects of dress, food, etc.).

“The multicultural reality of American society is a source of enrichment for the Church. The Hispanic faithful bring their own particular gifts to the local church, not least the vitality of their faith and their deep sense of family values. The same should be said about the members of the African-American community, who also are a vital presence in all your churches. Their love of the word of God is a special blessing to be treasured.”

## **Multi-Cultural Vocations**

(continued)

### **What is our lived experience?**

- The Archdiocese of Los Angeles serves 102 different ethnicities. It is home to a multilingual church where weekend Masses are said in 55 languages.
- As regards the Hispanic population, the official 2000 Census estimated a Hispanic population of nearly 35 million, about 12.5 percent of the total population. The nation's Hispanic population (not including Puerto Rico) is conservatively approximated at 36 million in 2004, an increase of 56 percent since 1990. As a result, over 1 in 9 Americans are Hispanic.
- According to the Catholic Almanac, 80% of U.S. Hispanics are Catholic.
- By the end of the second decade of this century, the Church in the United States could easily be nearly 50 percent Hispanic.
- As regards the African American population, the same official 2000 Census estimated an African American population of nearly 34 million, about 12.3% of the total population. Of these about 2.5 million are Catholics, and we have only about 500 African American priests.
- A recent study conducted for the NCCB Committee on Vocations found that many Hispanics and African Americans are quite likely to say that they have seriously considered a vocation. However, the two cultures are poorly represented among today's seminarians and those in religious formation programs.

### **What is the challenge?**

Vocation ministries need to be effectively multicultural, particularly since a greater proportion of minorities report thinking seriously about a vocation. Mentoring and outreach approaches need to be fully multicultural, and those ministering in multicultural settings should make special efforts to directly invite these youth to consider vocations.

As the population in the United States grows more diverse, we need to attract men and women of all cultures to ministry within the Church. Our recruitment efforts have to extend to all races and cultures. Our vocation efforts cannot be limited to people who look like us. Since vocations are for the whole church, it is important to create an environment to interface – to know the other's culture – and to interact effectively.

The early church struggled with these same challenges. In the beautiful hymn that opens the Gospel of John, the Christian community found a way to praise Jesus in an image that appealed to both Jews and Greeks. So too, our programs will have to be adapted to the many cultures that make up our Church.

## Multi-Cultural Vocations

(continued)

**We need to become acquainted** with people of other cultures in order to invite vocations from them:

- Take a look at the demographics of your parish – Take a look at the demographics of your larger community. Be aware of the possibilities of your service.
- Participate in programs that appeal to people of differing cultures.
- Welcome people of other races/nationalities by personally inviting them to take part in parish events (like a potluck, where you can sample ethnic foods...ask for their recipes).
- Invite men and women of other cultures to join your organizations.
- Financial help is critical for the personal needs of seminarians and those entering religious life whose families are economically disadvantaged or recent immigrants.
- Find or make Welcome, Thank You, Holiday, Congratulations, or Birthday cards in other languages.
- Renew your interest in Marian devotions, which appeal to many cultures.
- Open yourself to the vibrancy of different music and different ways of praying.
- If you are proficient in another language, help a seminarian learn it. (In some dioceses, all seminarians are learning a second language – often Spanish.)
- Prayer Breakfasts with African Americans
- How about a “language exchange”, where you learn some new words and help others learn English
- Learn from the leaders and directors of ethnic ministry offices in our diocese. Invite some of them to speak to groups of vocation inviters. (Filipino family ministry, African-American, Pacific Asian, key Hispanic leaders of ministry in the diocese).
- Involve priests and religious from a specific culture to tell their vocation stories to a group of that culture. It is important for young people to see religious and priests who “look like them.”
- Engage leaders from a specific culture to be the ones who initiate, plan and implement vocation strategies among their culture. They know best how to reach the youth of their culture; the approaches, means, music, language, etc.
- Have parents from a culture listen to priests and religious of that same culture to address issues of family support for a Church vocation and to dispel the myths surrounding that vocation.

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**United States of America Council (USAC)  
of Serra International**  
65 East Wacker Place #802  
Chicago IL 60601  
(312) 201-6549  
(888) 777-6681  
[www.serraus.org](http://www.serraus.org)  
[serraus@serraus.org](mailto:serraus@serraus.org)  
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