



FIVE STAR PROGRAM

TO ESTABLISH



A CULTURE OF VOCATIONS

IN YOUR PARISH

Many parishes today want to establish a *Culture of Vocations* in their parish but question "How to do it?" We know marriage, single life, priestly and religious vocations are all paths to holiness. Our focus is on religious and priestly vocations as the priest and religious are instrumental in helping the other states of life.

The following **Five Star Program** which has tried and true ideas can accomplish that goal.



## STAR ONE: THE TRAVELING CHALICE/CRUCIFIX

The Traveling Chalice or Crucifix Program with accompanying prayers is recommended as the first step. We will refer to the Chalice model but the program can also be done using a crucifix.

The Traveling Chalice Program directly involves the parishioners. At the end of a Sunday Mass, a family, couple or individual receives the Chalice from the priest. They take the Chalice home, place it in a prominent location and pray daily for vocations. It may be the first time this topic has been explored, and may be a very important week for the family. This might be an opportunity to invite family and friends to join in sharing and prayer.

Participants use a Memory Book to comment on their experiences, thoughts and ideas as well as prayers or plans that result from it. The memory book then becomes a source for potential members of a parish vocation team (PVT).

To implement the Program: one, obtain the support of the Pastor and select one "key" individual to administer the Program. Two, purchase or obtain a Chalice from the parish, a case, a Memory Book and vocation prayers and if appropriate, a child's Mass kit for families with young children. Please refer to the Supplement for specific resources.

The key person needs to encourage all parishioners to welcome the chalice into their home. An enthusiastic invitation by the pastor is the best way to get started. Frequent articles in the church bulletin and listing the names of those taking the chalice for the next four weeks are good. Sign-up cards can be placed in the pews and in the church vestibule. Where there is a school, an invitation can be sent home with students.

The prior week's participants should be reminded to return the chalice to the parish office on Friday or to bring it the correct Mass on Sunday. The next recipient should be reminded when they will receive the chalice. Once a rhythm of getting names is established, this is not a challenging job.



## STAR TWO: USE THE CHURCH BULLETIN TO ADVANTAGE

A weekly vocation oriented item in the bulletin is a great way to keep the parish praying and thinking about vocations. There are excellent suggested inserts available on [serraus.org](http://serraus.org) that you can print or copy and paste into your bulletin. Possible announcements for Five Star activities are also included.



## STAR THREE: THE "*31 CLUB*"

The "*31 Club*" is a prayer program built around the concept of people attending Mass and praying for priestly and religious vocations every month on a specific date. Calendars (available from [serraus.org](http://serraus.org) or you can enlarge a calendar) can be attached to foam board and displayed along with an attached pen with which people sign up. Reminder cards should be available for those signing up.

After this, all that is needed are invitations in the parish paper (or perhaps reminder notes in the pews), plus occasional reminders by the pastor to join or be faithful to this "no dues, no meetings" club. Simple, but oh so powerful!



## STAR FOUR: CELEBRATE PRIESTLY AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

Another way of developing vocation awareness in a parish is to celebrate one or more of the established National Vocation Events throughout the year. The main annual events are Priesthood Sunday, World Day of Prayer for Vocations, World Day for Consecrated Life, and National Vocation Awareness Week. We suggest a parish focus on just one of these the first year, and add more gradually.

Many parishes start with PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY (traditionally celebrated in the fall). This is a great time to show appreciation for our priests, pray for them and celebrate priestly vocations. The Serra website, [serraus.org](http://serraus.org), has a list of good ideas for these four special times each year.



## STAR FIVE: A HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS

At least once during the year, the PVT should schedule a Holy Hour for Vocations. (Some parishes do it weekly or monthly!) Review the many options for different programs at [serraus.org](http://serraus.org) and move forward with one that meets your needs.

### CONCLUSION:

Although these steps can be rearranged to fit your parish, we suggest the Traveling Chalice Program continue for about six months before the "key" person begins to contact people who have had the Chalice in their home, to inquire about their possible membership in a Parish Vocation Team. This begins to build awareness of vocations in a parish.

The Traveling Chalice Program, vocation bulletin announcements and the "31 Club" in the parish at the same time clearly set the tone for a *Culture of Vocations*.

After the year of implementing the **Five Star Program**, we suggest celebrating by having a social time with the pastor, the key person, members of the vocation team and other interested participants.

**Pray hard, work diligently and you will create a  
*Culture of Vocations* in your parish!**

**There is also a PowerPoint presentation to introduce this program available through [serraus.org](http://serraus.org).**

**Resources for the 5 Stars are also available at [serraus.org](http://serraus.org). These include purchasing information for the Chalice, Bulletin Inserts regarding Vocations, Bulletin Announcements, "31 Club" supplies, detailed information for Priesthood Sunday, suggested Scripts for a Holy Hour and more. Please check them out.**

## RESOURCES FOR THE FIVE STAR PROGRAM

### Traveling Chalice or Crucifix:

There are many different suppliers and options to obtain your traveling chalice or crucifix and case. We are going to just provide a few for you.

If you are using a chalice, your parish or priest may know of a chalice you can use. The Knights of Columbus may even be willing to purchase the chalice and carrying case for you. Often a parishioner may want to build the case for transporting the chalice or crucifix.

Shown below are examples products from *Leaflet Missal* to give you ideas. Chalices range in price from \$92 for a 5 inch high one to many thousands. Item below: Chalice and Paten (\$315), Crucifix and removable base (\$23) and Carrying Case (\$150).



The following websites seem to have items at reasonable prices:

- ✓ [www.leafletonline.com](http://www.leafletonline.com)
- ✓ [www.st-jude.com](http://www.st-jude.com)
- ✓ [www.churchsuppliescatalog.com](http://www.churchsuppliescatalog.com)
- ✓ [www.thecatholicshop.com](http://www.thecatholicshop.com)
- ✓ [www.oconnorscatholicssupply.com](http://www.oconnorscatholicssupply.com)

### Prayer Journal

A journal is an important part of the program as it allows you to keep track of people interested in vocations and get their ideas. It is nice if the journal fits in the carrying case so we recommend using a smaller spiral notebook with an attractive cover when you can print—something like:

#### **St. Mary's Traveling Chalice Program**

On the first page, ask participants to record their reactions to praying for vocations and sign their name. It is good to include the name and contact

information for the coordinator of the program on the inside of the front cover in case of questions.

**Here are some suggested vocation prayers.**

### **Vocation Prayers**

#### **Prayer #1**

Almighty and eternal God, in your unfailing love you provide ministers for your Church. We pray for those whom you call to serve the Church of \_\_\_\_\_ as priests. Inspire in them a generous response. Grant them courage and vision to serve your people. May their lives and service call your people to respond to the presence of your Spirit among us that, faithful to the Gospel and hope of Jesus the Christ, we may: announce glad tidings to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives, set prisoners free and renew the face of the earth.

#### **Prayer #2**

O God, Father of all Mercies, Provider of a bountiful Harvest, send Your Graces upon those You have called to gather the fruits of Your labor; preserve and strengthen them in their lifelong service of You.

Open the hearts of your children that they may discern Your Holy Will; inspire in them a love and desire to surrender themselves to serving others in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ.

Teach all Your faithful to follow their respective paths in life guided by Your Divine Word and Truth. Through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, all the Angels, and Saints, humbly hear our prayers and grant Your Church's needs, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

#### **Prayer #3**

Loving and Generous God, it is You who call us by name and ask us to follow You.

Help us to grow in the Love and Service of our Church as we experience it today.

Give us the energy and courage of Your Spirit to shape its future.

Grant us faith-filled leaders who will embrace Christ's Mission of love and justice.

Bless the Church of \_\_\_\_\_ by raising up dedicated and generous leaders

from our families and friends who will serve Your people as Priests, Sisters, Brothers, Deacons and Lay Ministers.

Inspire us to know You better and open our hearts to hear Your call.

We ask this through our Lord. Jesus Christ, Amen.

#### **Prayer #4**

O God, Who wish all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of Your truth send, we beg You, laborers into Your harvest, and grant them grace to speak Your word with all boldness; so that Your word may spread and be glorified, and all nations may know You, the only God, and Him Whom You have sent, Jesus Christ Your Son, Our Lord, Who lives and reigns world without end. Amen.

#### **Prayer #5**

Heavenly Father, You have asked us to pray for vocations, that there might be young men and women willing to give of themselves for the sake of the Gospel. Hear the prayers of your Church and, through the merits of Your Passion and Death, send an abundance of good and holy priests, Religious and other consecrated persons to serve faithfully the People of God. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Mary, Mother of all vocations, pray for us!*

#### **Prayers of Pope Benedict XVI -On the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2006**

Grant, O Father, that the Church may welcome with joy the numerous inspirations of the Spirit of Your Son and, docile to His teachings, may she care for vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life. Amen.

Sustain, O Lord, bishops, priests and deacons, consecrated men and women, and all the baptized in Christ, so that they may faithfully fulfill their mission at the service of the Gospel. Amen.

#### **Bulletin Inserts**

Bulletin announcements concerning vocations are of varying length are available at [serraus.org](http://www.serraus.org). Simply cut and paste or print from the 52 week supply.

[http://www.serraus.org/resources/vocations/parish\\_bulletin\\_clips.pdf](http://www.serraus.org/resources/vocations/parish_bulletin_clips.pdf)

#### **Publicity Announcements for Events**

Please note: there are materials for all of these programs on the [serraus.org](http://www.serraus.org) website for you to use each year.

#### **Traveling Chalice Announcements:**

**We** are launching the "Traveling Chalice Program" in our parish. We encourage parishioners to take the Chalice home for a week and pray for vocations! Simply put it in a prominent place, pray (prayers are included) and talk about vocations.

We will start with the \_\_\_\_ Mass. Sign up will be next weekend!

To promote family prayer and awareness of vocations, we are introducing The Traveling chalice Program. It will be easy to participate in the program. Each week, a parishioner will take the Chalice home, put it in a prominent place and pray daily for vocations.

Suitable prayers are included. They may wish to talk about vocations, the need for priests and religious and how they can affirm priests and religious in their vocations.

In response to Christ's call, "**Pray the LORD of the Harvest that there be laborers for the vineyard**", we are presenting the *Traveling Chalice Program*. Each week a family or individual will accept the responsibility of praying for vocations. They will be provided with the prayers and Chalice to use as a focal point and reminder during meals. Watch for the sign up weekend coming soon!

#### **The "31 Club" Announcements:**

The "31 Club" is a great club to belong to! **No dues, no meetings**, just put your name on the sign in the in the vestibule of the Church and attend one Mass a month to pray for vocations. (Some say a Rosary or spend an hour in an Adoration Chapel.) You pick the day of the month and pray particularly for vocations on that day. Remember our most powerful ally when it comes to vocations is prayer!

The "**31 Club**" is a group of people in our parish who are praying for vocations. There will be an opportunity to join "the Club" this week and next weekend. We will have cards in the pews for you to sign if you can go to Mass, offering it for an increase in vocations, on a date you choose, each month for a year. Although everyone has a vocation (priesthood, consecrated life, marriage or single life) prayers are requested for an increase of those called to priesthood or religious life to respond generously. If you cannot attend Mass, you may want to say a Rosary, pray at an Adoration Chapel or say extra prayers for vocations. Watch for the poster showing the names of those who joined "the Club"!

#### **Priesthood Sunday Announcements:**

**Priesthood Sunday** is a special day set aside to honor the priesthood in the United States. It is a day to reflect upon and affirm the role of the priesthood in the life of the Church as a central one. In keeping with the theme, our parish is planning .....

**Priesthood Sunday** is a day when Catholic parishes show support for their priests with prayer, celebration and dialogue. The purpose of Priesthood Sunday is to engage every level of the church in a conversation about the priesthood. Let's show appreciation for ..... who serves us so faithfully! We are planning to .....



**Priesthood Sunday** is next weekend. Our priests give of themselves every day in so many different ways. It is an honor to recognize them and show appreciation for all that they do for us. Priesthood Sunday is celebrated across the United States and our parish is planning .....

Today is **Priesthood Sunday**, a day to reflect on all our parish priests do for us. They are there for us from cradle to grave and we rely on them day in and day out. Without the Sacrifice of Holy Mass, we would have no Eucharist, the heart of our faith. Please join us as we.....

**Information for other Vocation events:**

**World Day of Prayer for Vocations**

**WDP** is celebrated on Good Shepherd Sunday (the fourth Sunday of Easter).

Resources available at:

[http://www.serraus.org/serrausa/serra\\_nccv.htm#download](http://www.serraus.org/serrausa/serra_nccv.htm#download) these planning kits include lesson plans, promotion announcements, prayer service ideas, and more. Additional information can be found at <http://www.vianneyvocations.com> and <http://usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/>

**World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life**

**National Vocations Awareness Week**

**WDCL and NVAW** are the other two major events. There are, again, resources at: [http://www.serraus.org/serrausa/serra\\_nccv.htm#download](http://www.serraus.org/serrausa/serra_nccv.htm#download) these planning also have extensive aids and suggestions.

## SCRIPT FOR HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS

### **1. Format without priest present**

1) Opening Song: Be not Afraid, Here I am, Lord, Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service, Servant Song, Ubi Caritas, Where Charity and Love Prevail, We are Called, The Summons, (or other fitting vocation/servant songs).

2) Brief introduction and invitation to prayer by the leader:

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **All: Amen.**

**Leader:** Lord we ask you to open our minds and hearts to your Spirit. Help all of us to be open and ever discerning of Your will for our lives. We pray that all of us may respond generously and lovingly to unique calling to a state of life that you have designed us to live and have planned for us. We pray to have hearts as Mary, always freely and joyfully saying “yes” to you in all your plans; that we may say with Mary “Be it done unto me according to your will, Lord!” We ask this through Christ our Lord, **All: Amen**

3) Reading of Scripture: One or two selections of readings can be chosen for this time.

Suggested readings: Harvest is abundant **Lk 10:1-9**, You didn't choose me, but I chose you **JN 15:16-17**, Come and see **JN 1:35-39**, calling of Samuel **I Sm 3:1-10**, Parable of the Five Talents **Mt 25:14-30**, Joseph be not afraid to take Mary as your wife **Mt 1:18-25**, Give your as a living sacrifice **Rm 12:1-2**, Calling of Jeremiah **Jer 29:11-16/Jer 1:4-9**)

Reflection/Meditation on the Scripture

5) Silent prayer and possible music (the Rosary may also be said here).

6) Intercessions (use these or write your own)

As we gather here to pray together, let us ask that God opens our hearts to His call for each of our lives.

We pray for all those who are seeking their calling to a permanent state of life, that they may not fear the calling of the Lord and that they may respond lovingly. We pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who are married, that they may be a faithful witness to all people of God's faithful and fruitful love in the world. We pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all of our priests, that they may be a true and faithful witness of Christ in the world, loving and sacrificing themselves for the Church and Her people.

We pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those in religious orders and those in a form of consecrated life, that they may be faithful witnesses to the world of the destiny of heaven, the marriage of us and God.

We pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all of us, that we may be faithful to the calling of the Lord in the midst of suffering, despair, or desert times that will come in our lives.

We pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Lord, hear all these prayers and those that are in the depths of our hearts. We pray that You open our hearts and will to hear Your voice when You call each of us by name. We ask all these prayers through Christ our Lord. **All: Amen**

### **Our Father...**

7) Closing Prayer (use one of the two options): A prayer from St. Paul to the Ephesians (1:11-14) "In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ. In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed\* with the promised holy Spirit, which is the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God's possession, to the praise of his glory."

We ask this through Christ our Lord, **All: Amen**

A prayer from St. Paul to the Romans (12:1-2) "I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect."

We ask this through Christ our Lord, **All: Amen**

8) Closing Song: Be not Afraid, Here I am, Lord, Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service, Servant Song, Ubi Caritas, Where Charity and Love Prevail, We are Called, The Summons, (or other fitting vocation/servant songs).

## **2. Format when Priest is Present**

1) Opening Song: *O SALUTARIS Hostia*.

2) Brief introduction and invitation to prayer by the leader:

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **All: Amen.**

**Leader:** Lord we ask you to open our minds and hearts to your Spirit. Help all of us to be open and ever discerning of Your will for our lives. We pray that all of us may respond generously and lovingly to unique calling to a state of life that you have designed us to live and have planned for us. We pray to have hearts as Mary, always freely and joyfully saying “yes” to you in all your plans; that we may say with Mary “Be it done unto me according to your will, Lord!” We ask this through Christ our Lord, **All: Amen**

3) Reading of Scripture: One or two selections of readings can be chosen for this time.

Suggested readings: Harvest is abundant **Lk 10:1-9**, You didn't choose me, but I chose you **JN 15:16-17**, Come and see **JN 1:35-39**, calling of Samuel I **Sm 3:1-10**, Parable of the Five Talents **Mt 25:14-30**, Joseph be not afraid to take Mary as your wife **Mt 1:18-25**, Give your as a living sacrifice **Rm 12:1-2**, Calling of Jeremiah **Jer 29:11-16/Jer 1:4-9**,...(any other fitting Scripture)

4) Homily or Reflection/Meditation on the Scripture.

5) Silent prayer and possible music (the Rosary may also be said here).

6) Benediction hymn: *Tantum ergo*:

7) **Leader:** You have given the Bread from Heaven **All: Having all sweetness within it.**

**Leader:** Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, You gave us the Eucharist as the memorial of Your suffering and death. May our worship of this sacrament of Your body and blood help us to experience the salvation You won for us and the peace of the kingdom where You live with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **All: Amen.**

8) Divine Praises:

9) Closing Song: *Holy God We Praise Thy Name*

(Other songs that may be sung: *Be not Afraid, Here I am, Lord, Lord Whose Love in Humble Service, Servant Song, Ubi Caritas, Where Charity and Love Prevail*, (or other fitting songs).)

Source: [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) (Search for holy hour for vocations to see more options.)

## **BUILDING A CULTURE OF VOCATIONS BULLETIN INSERTS**

**IN TALKING WITH YOUR CHILDREN**, remember to raise the call to Church ministry? The process of answering God's call begins in childhood. Throughout adolescence and adulthood, the attitudes assumed in childhood begin to influence the course of one's life. A vocation or a talent will not grow to fruition unless it is nurtured in childhood and adolescence by a parent.

**CHILDREN OFTEN TALK** about what they want to be "when they grow up": doctors, lawyers, athletes, nurses, movie stars, teachers, carpenters. They may talk about these roles, but do they ever talk about being a priest, sister or brother? You are the hand of God — you can encourage your children to consider Church ministry.

**WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE** become priests, sisters or brothers?

Are they people who don't relate well with other people? No. They are people who love others — people who find real satisfaction chatting with a 93-year-old parishioner, holding the hand of a cancer patient, listening to the troubles of a streetwise teen.

They are people with the courage to touch lives, hearts and souls in a high-tech, unchurched world.

Are you that kind of person?

**ALL TOO OFTEN WE** forget to express appreciation to those in service-oriented jobs, including priests, sisters and brothers. We forget because we think, "It's their job to help." Priests and religious aren't superhuman. They need genuine support from those they serve. Let them know how you feel.

**A STUDY COMMISSIONED** by the Knights of Columbus revealed that 75% of Catholic young people who had seriously considered religious life felt they were never encouraged to pursue that goal. Do you know someone who would make a good priest? Why not tell him so? Your encouragement may be all he needs.

**HOLINESS** is a challenge for all of us, whatever our specific vocations. We are called to be holy in all aspects of our lives. This is an ongoing process, often slowed by setbacks. When the saints were alive, they did not regard themselves as saints; rather, they knew they were sinners — and they strived to be saints. The process of becoming holy is, even for saints, filled with struggle. Know you are a sinner; strive to be a saint.

**CHRIST SPOKE** of the talents each one of us has, talents which must not be buried. Our calling is to take those talents, develop them fully, and then use them in establishing His kingdom on earth. Are you using your talents to fulfill your vocation to service? Take some time today to reflect on how you might use your special talents in the service of the Kingdom.

**FAMILY LIFE** can build values integral to a strong vocation — whether to priesthood, religious life or marriage. Teaching your children to value commitment, service and prayer will help them make strong vocation decisions as adults and live out those vocations with success and fulfillment.

**A MISCONCEPTION** among some Catholics is that the priest has an ideal job: he works one day each week, Sunday. They forget that the other six days a week, the priest works long and hard behind the scenes: bringing communion to the sick and elderly, counseling troubled families, visiting school classes, preparing individuals for sacraments. Often the job is frustrating, exhausting and thankless, but always of vital importance. Take some time this week and express appreciation to your priests for the difficult work they do.

**THE LOVING ENVIRONMENT** of a family draws forth an individual's greatest talents and gifts. We've come to realize that creating an atmosphere in which children can hear the Lord's call is one of the most significant responsibilities resting on our shoulders as parents. Our own lives must reflect the presence of God, His Word, and the love He offers His people.

**PARENTS**, do you encourage your children to develop their talents and gifts? Do you encourage your children to think of Church ministry as a possible life choice?

**PRAYER** is a moving force in vocation development. Prayer is effective; prayer is powerful; prayer is essential. Few are called to priesthood or religious life, but all are called to pray for vocations.

"Lord, your Church is in need. Touch the hearts of many within our parish with the desire to serve you. Call forth from this community sisters, brothers, deacons, priests and lay leaders. Help us to live lives that will nurture childhood trust into adult commitment. May this parish be a source of hope and a source of ministers for your Church, your people and your world. Amen."

**JESUS COMMANDED US** to pray for vocations with his words, "Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Mt. 9:38). Take on prayer for vocations as your personal effort to increase the number of priests, sisters, brothers, and lay ministers.

**WHAT IS A SISTER?** A Sister lives in a religious community that follows a constantly renewed tradition, patterned on the life and teaching of the founder of the community. The work she generally does will depend upon the ministries of that community as influenced by the needs of the Church and its people — for example: teaching, social work, administration, nursing, peace and justice ministry, etc.

If the lifestyle of a Sister sounds attractive to you contact the diocesan vocation office for more information.

**A VOCATION** must be nurtured for a lifetime, not just until ordination or the taking of vows. You can help nurture the vocations of priests, sisters and brothers by praying, listening, and expressing appreciation. A life of service needs support from those served.

**HOW** will you work out your life response to God?

**CELIBACY** is a gift and a promise to love very deeply and to express that love for others without using those physical expressions proper to marriage. The lives of many men and women religious are rich and loving within the context of celibate love as are the lives of happily married couples.

**IN A WORLD** waging war on poverty, men and women religious choose to live as Jesus did — simply. Because they share expenses and try to keep their personal and communal needs simple, they can get along very well on very little. Everyone has a vocation; pray for yours.

**A STUDY** of Catholic young people in the United States and Canada showed that 75% feel they were never encouraged to pursue the religious life.

**DID YOU KNOW...** that just because a young man goes to the Seminary doesn't automatically mean he will become a priest? Those young men are discerning whether they are indeed called into that particular kind of service to our LORD. They would appreciate your prayers for them!

**DID YOU KNOW...** we all have a "vocation"? The way we live our life is our vocation - Marriage, Priesthood, Religious life or the Single life! It is how YOU are meant to live and contribute to the Body of Christ! The important thing is to pray for discernment.

**DID YOU KNOW...** every member of the Church needs to consciously feel responsibility for promoting vocations, especially since God's voice may be drowned out by "other voices?" A wealth of vocation information is available at [uscbb.org](http://uscbb.org), the website of the U S Bishops.

**DID YOU KNOW...** "Nuns" are women religious who have professed solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and live a life of prayer and penance within cloistered communities? There is a difference between a "nun" and a "sister."

**DID YOU KNOW...** "Sisters" are women religious who also have taken traditional religious vows but are engaged in active ministries among the public? They usually live in a convent.

**PARENTS...** don't be afraid to encourage service in your children. Mothers are often the main influence in a man's discernment to the priesthood.



**DID YOU KNOW...** "Brothers" live in Religious Communities. They take vows and promise to use their talents to serve God wherever the Community decides they are needed. Brothers are not ordained.

**WHEN PEOPLE** wish to destroy religion, they begin by attacking the priest, because when there is no longer any priest there is no sacrifice, and where there is no longer any sacrifice, there is no religion. **St. John Vianney**

**THE FIRST WORD OF JESUS** in the Gospel was "come"; the last word of Jesus was "go." **Ven. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen**

**HOW WOULD YOU REACT** if your son said he wants to be a priest?

- a. I would ask him if he's gone mad, and I would remind him that we must take into consideration what others might think.
- b. I would ask him to give it considerable thought and to have a university degree first.
- c. It would give me one of the greatest joys of my life, and I would support him fully.

**"IF PRAYING ALIENATED YOU**, took you away from your real life, beware: it would not be true prayer," Pope Benedict XVI said. "On the contrary, dialogue with God is the guarantee of truth, of truthfulness with oneself and with others and, therefore, of liberty."

**FAITH AND PRAYER** do not resolve problems, but enable one to address them with a new light and strength, in a way fitting to man, and also more serenely and effectively. **Pope Benedict XVI** Pray to hear God's call.

**IN A WORLD** where human frailty is acutely felt, they (religious men and women) remind us of God and bring Christ's redemptive love to all they meet. **Archbishop Robert J. Carlson of St. Louis**

**"THE SECRET OF A VOCATION**," Pope Benedict XVI told youth, "lies in the capacity and in the joy of distinguishing [God's] voice, of listening to and following His voice. But to do this, it is necessary to accustom our heart to recognize the Lord, to hear Him like a person who is near me and who loves me." Moments of "interior silence in the day-to-day routine" are essential, he said. "But once one has learned to hear this voice and to generously follow it, "one fears nothing, he or she knows and feels that God is with him or her, and that He is a Friend, Father, and Brother."

**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. **Pope Benedict XVI**

**HAVE YOU HEARD** of Serra Clubs? That is Serra Clubs, not Sierra Clubs! The mission of Serra is to pray for, foster and affirm vocations. It seeks to help the faithful understand that each person has a vocation and especially to help vocations to priesthood and religious life. Serra is named after Blessed Junipero Serra, who started a series of missions in California to bring Catholicism to them. Their website is [serraus.org](http://serraus.org).

### **PRAYER FOR MY VOCATION**

Heavenly Father, You have a great and loving plan for our world and for me. I want to do my part in your plan. Help me to see the signs that You give me. Open my heart to respond to You. Grant me the courage to follow your call. Give me the strength to serve You and your people with generosity and love. Amen.

**WE EACH HAVE A VOCATION** – the thing to do is answer the call. We each have something to give. *Dorothy Day*

**ST. THOMAS MERTON** prayed: “My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going, I do not see the road ahead of me...But I believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.”

**IF YOU ARE MARRIED** or soon to be married, you need to realize that your marriage is your vocation! Your marriage must come before all things except God!

### **WHAT IS A DEACON?**

A permanent deacon is a man ordained—like bishop or priest—to serve as Christ Jesus who “came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). The word deacon comes from the Greek word for service: diakonia.

**WHAT QUALIFIES a man to be a Deacon?** Prayer. Humility. Service. Grace. Suffering. Love. A willingness to be changed and to offer his life in unpaid sacrificial service to God, to the Church, to any and all in need of God’s mercy.

### **HOW DOES a man become a Deacon?**

Through a process of discernment and formation that takes about four or five years. If a man is married, his wife and family must also come to embrace the joys and demands of having a husband and father who is a deacon.

**LIFE** is not merely summarized by “what are you willing to die for”, ask yourself “what am I willing to LIVE for?”

**"IT IS REALLY GOD HIMSELF**, the 'LORD of the harvest', who chooses his laborers. His call is always undeserved and unexpected. We are called to cooperate with his providence, and to use the powerful tool which he has placed in our hands: prayer. Jesus said 'Pray the LORD of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest!'"

**ALL THE MEMBERS** of the church are responsible for looking after priestly vocations. "The duty of fostering vocations falls on the whole Christian community, and they should discharge it principally by living full Christian lives." (*Vat II*) **TO HAVE A FULL CHRISTIAN LIFE**, listen to the Word of God, participate in the Eucharist, exercise charity and pray!

**WHATEVER STATE OF LIFE** God calls us to, we bring with us an assortment of experiences, interests and gifts – however small they seem to us. We are called to put our lives at the service of the LORD and our neighbor, wherever we find ourselves.

Where and how is God calling you to spread His Good News – His Love?

**MISSIONS** - You can learn more about the Pontifical Mission Societies, including the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, at [onefamilyinmission.org](http://onefamilyinmission.org).

**VOCATION DIRECTORS**, whether of a diocese or religious order, are the interface between the congregations and the world. They also need your prayers and perhaps your help. Feel free to suggest a name to your pastor of someone you believe may be interested in pursuing a religious vocation.

**THE CHURCH INVITES** all of us to make a generous gift of our life through married life, intentional single life, priesthood or religious life. In what state can we flourish?

**THE VOCATION OF MARRIAGE** - When the Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a Christian vocation it is saying that the couple's relationship is more than simply their choice to enter a union which is a social and legal institution. A great internet resource is [foryourmarriage.org](http://foryourmarriage.org) – an initiative of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

**WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD?** The answer is the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist! Through it the priest offers the most sublime of sacrifices, that of God the Son to God the Father, applying the merits of Calvary to our lives today.

**HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE MELCHIZEDEK PROJECT?**

In it, Catholic men meet to pray about their lives, listen for God's voice, and get serious about answering His call. The Project's handbook, "*To Save a Thousand Souls*" by Father Brett Brannen, is the ultimate guidebook for discerning a vocation to the Catholic priesthood.

# FIVE STAR PROGRAM



## TO ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF VOCATIONS IN YOUR PARISH

How do you build this culture? Serra Clubs have organized five steps for you to follow!

We know marriage, single life, priestly and religious vocations are all paths to holiness.

Our focus is on religious and priestly vocations as the priest and religious are instrumental in helping the other states of life.

**"VOCATIONS ARE EVERYONE'S BUSINESS!"**

Blessed John Paul II



## STAR ONE

### THE TRAVELING CHALICE

Directly involves people in the parish! Parishioners take the chalice home and pray for vocations. It may be the first time they pray and think about religious vocations.

Note: A crucifix can be substituted for a chalice but we will use the chalice in our example.

The basics:

- Priest presents Chalice to group or individual at Mass
- Take home, display and pray each day
- Record the family's or person's thoughts in a journal

To implement:

- Obtain support of pastor
- Select key person to run the program
- Secure traveling chalice, case and journal
- Encourage, publicize, schedule and remind

The program should continue at least 26 weeks to develop a rhythm



## STAR TWO:

### BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advantages:

- Increase awareness about vocations
- Stimulate thoughts about life's journey
- Encourage a fulfilling holy life

These thoughtful announcements address priestly and religious vocations, as well as marriage and the single life.

Announcements of varying size educate and encourage the parish to explore and pray for priestly and religious vocations!

### RESOURCE LIST

**Serraus.org website** has information regarding:

- Obtaining Chalice or Crucifix, Journal and Case.
- Vocation Prayers
- Bulletin Announcements (sizes vary, copy or cut and paste)
- "31 Club" Calendar Poster
- Publicity and suggestions for celebrating the 4 National Vocation Events.
- Script for Holy Hour
- Many suggestions and ideas!





### STAR THREE:

#### THE "31 CLUB"

Addresses the need to help parishioners be aware that everyone has an important role to pray for vocations

This "**no dues, no meetings**" club is a great way to foster a "culture of vocations".

To implement:

- Parishioners sign up to attend Mass or pray especially for vocations one day each month
- Secure or make a large poster calendar - mount on foam board.
- Publicize for participants
- Have participants put their name on the large calendar
- Repeat each year
- Display calendar



### STAR FOUR

#### CELEBRATE PRIESTLY AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

National Vocation Events:

- Priesthood Sunday
- World Day of Prayer for Vocations (on Good Shepherd Sunday- Third Sunday after Easter)
- World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life (February)
- National Vocation Awareness Week (November)
- Priesthood Sunday might be a good start
  - Great time to show appreciation for our clergy
  - Pray for and highlight priestly vocations



### STAR FIVE

#### HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS

- Schedule a convenient time
- Publicize
- Gather and pray
- Some parishes even do this weekly or monthly

Thank you for working to answer the question...

#### WHO WILL SERVE ON YOUR ALTAR IN THE FUTURE?

##### PLAN TO CELEBRATE VOCATION EFFORT AFTER ONE YEAR

- Celebrate with a social time for participants.
- Honor key person and pastor.
- Use names gathered to form a parish vocation committee.

Pray hard...  
Work Diligently...  
Create a Culture of  
Vocations in your parish!

