

Pastor's note  
7th week of Easter

As we get ready to celebrate Pentecost and recall the coming of the Spirit among the church, it is a great time to also discuss vocations. As I mentioned this last week, even with the ordination of two more priests, overall we are going to be down three priests in parish ministry next year. As a result I wanted to offer some thoughts as to how we can foster a culture of vocations in our parishes. By this, I am naturally talking about priesthood and religious life, but also a new commitment to holy marriages.

In order for a proper understanding of vocations we need to remember that the root of *vocations* come from the Latin, *vocare*, which means, "to call". God is calling each one of us to something specific in the world, we need to be able to listen for His voice, so the first thing we must have is an attitude of prayer in our families.

Spending time in prayer as a family is crucial, without this it will be difficult for our children to hear the Master's voice. I know it may be awkward if this is not a common thing in your house, but please be willing to bear that awkwardness. I know when we began praying a weekly Rosary when I was in high school, I rebelled, but my parents persisted, and now I thank them for that. A great time to work on this is dinner, first it gets the family together, which is something our culture is losing, and it gives the family a chance to talk about life. The prayer can be whatever works for you. It can be as simple as someone reading the upcoming Sunday's Gospel, and eating in silence for a couple of minutes before you briefly discuss it or move on to the rest of your conversation. You could talk about your, "highs and lows" and use it as a way to prayers of thanksgiving and intercession. I would recommend some trial and error and go with what is most natural.

Another key piece is the parents being open to whatever God is calling His children to. Surprisingly, one of the greatest obstacles to vocations is parents. If a young man or woman is afraid that their family is going to oppose something, they are less likely to have conversations about the priesthood or religious life. Having had tough conversations with my mother, I know with a parent's love it can be tough on the idea of something different for their children, so parents, please let your kids know that whatever God wants for them is great and that even if its hard, you'll support them.

Lastly, give them encounters with all sorts of vocations. If parents live a holy marriage (holy not perfect) it gives children an example to follow. Encounters with priests, nuns and monks is a great way to help them get to know that they can be "normal people" too. Who would have thought a priest could have dogs, motorcycles and play softball? Any opportunity to meet these men and women can help a young person see the humanness that remains in these vocations. When Totus Tuus is here, it is a great time to introduce your children to young men and women who are discerning God's will in their life. Many former teachers end up as priests or religious, so please consider hosting them for a meal, or the men are still looking for housing. A relatively short encounter could make a huge difference.

Please continue to pray for vocations and God bless,  
Fr. Adam