



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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Survey aids mission priority on promoting vocations

On 27 May we will ordain 5 men to the priesthood. Thanks be to God! I hope God doesn't think us greedy, but we need even more, which is why we are welcoming 3 priests from other countries to partner with us for ministry here.

There is therefore reason for our mission priority of promoting vocations in general, and priesthood in particular.

Pope Francis has it appears taken inspiration from us on this matter, and will convoke a Synod in October 2018 on "Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment."

The Synod will identify solutions related to young people discerning their vocation to a state in life, that is, to marriage or dedicated single life, priesthood or religious life.

With regard to needing more men to answer God's call to priesthood, the Pope recently commented that optional celibacy can be studied, but it is not the solution.

This is because the bigger issue is the reluctance of some to make choices that as a consequence exclude other choices, preferring instead to keep one's options open.

However, the commitment to a particular state in life involves making an enduring commitment to live a shared life of self-gift in service to others in imitation of Jesus.

The Pope comments that no one can remain indefinitely in an undetermined state, eventually we have to make a choice, or risk ending up living an unfulfilled life.

Moreover, spiritually speaking, unless we say "yes" to God's call to a state in life, we can't make progress in responding to God's calls to mission, holiness, and heaven.

How then can the Church help people to know, understand, embrace, and live God's call to a state in life? To find the answer is the purpose of this Synod.

The Vatican has sent out a preparatory document for the Synod, which invites broad consultation via a list of questions at the end of the document.

Each bishop decides how the consultation is conducted in his diocese. At the conclusion, he writes an executive summary of the responses, and sends it to the episcopal conference of his country.

Then each episcopal conference will send to the Vatican an executive summary of all executive summaries from the bishops in their respective countries.

Finally, the Vatican Office of the Synod of Bishops will use the executive summaries to prepare the working document for the Synod.

To make it easier for people to respond to the questions, and for us to write an executive summary, we have rewritten the questions in a “Survey Monkey” format.

Young people have already been invited to respond to questions that are directed specifically to them.

We are now ready with “survey monkey” questions for those whom the document calls “people of reference,” such as parents, teachers, parish ministers, parishioners and the like.

The questions are not just related to vocation, or the call to a state in life, but also to evangelizing, passing the faith on to others.

This is because generally speaking people discern a vocation to a state in life within the context of discipleship, that is, being an intentional follower of Jesus as a member of his Catholic Church.

The survey can be completed using the print version in *The Witness*. Or you can visit the Archdiocesan home page at DBQArch.org and click on the survey button. Please take the time to respond.

By the way, the preparatory document is also accessible at the same address.

This is an important topic for the future. We need to be effective in evangelizing, helping people to know, love and serve Jesus.

These efforts should produce a greater potential that people will know and say “yes” to God’s call to a state in life, which prepares them to respond to God’s calls to holiness or imitation of Christ, which may inspire them to be partners to continue the mission of Jesus in the ministry of the Church, and thereby make the world a different, better place.

Oh, please God!

Michael O. Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque

