

Prayer For Vocations

**A message from Luke Theobald
at the Venerable English College, Rome
Sunday 25th February**

What can families and parishes do to help foster vocations?

Let us pray:

O God, Who chose the Apostles to make
disciples of all nations
and Who by Baptism and Confirmation
has called us to build up Your Holy Church,
we implore You to choose among us,
Your children,
many priests and religious
who will love You with their whole heart
and will gladly spend their entire lives making
You known and loved by all.
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

May I offer three suggestions? The first, and I believe most important, are to be families of prayer. To find time as a family to pray daily. It doesn't need to be a long time, and a quick Google search will offer suggestions about praying with traditional prayers, the Bible and much more. By praying as a family it creates a time and space for God to become the centre of our busy lives, and more importantly makes relationship and time with God a normal part of life, as normal as eating together and going to school and work.

The second suggestion is to be parishes that encourage young people in their faith, making young people feel welcome and including them in parish life when possible (altar serving, music, reading, outreach to the poor etc). For myself when I was teenager, I am grateful that I had several young Catholic adult role models who I could imitate and look up to.

The final thought is for parents to be open to their sons being called to the priesthood and their daughters to religious life. Vocation is a gift from God for a person to live their life to the fullness that he wants for them. All vocations demand sacrifice; parents naturally give up so much out of love for their children. Similarly, the first disciples left their jobs and homes to follow Jesus because they were drawn by the love and call of Jesus.

The journey of responding to and discerning a call to the priesthood also requires sacrifice, and it is a long and at times a difficult path. The loving support and encouragement of parents and siblings makes a significant difference in the life of a discernor, to be able to respond to that call freely and without pressure.

This week concludes the month of prayer for vocations and I would like to thank you all for your prayers and support to all the men in formation. May I ask you to continue praying that the Lord will give courage to those men he is calling that they may respond to him generously. And also to continue praying that our diocese may receive many holy priests to help our communities share the Good News to a world in need of coming to know and respond to the love of God.

Luke Theobald