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*“Love is the innate vocation of every human being.”*

Pope Saint John Paul II



## 2019 NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK

Nov 3-9, 2019

### INSPIRATION FOR PARENTS

## Families: the Foundation for Vocations

An old Latin schoolmaster had the habit of entering the classroom and bowing to his pupils before the lesson. One day a boy asked why he showed such reverence to the young students. “Because I do not know who you may be one day,” answered the old teacher. “Some of you may grow up to be presidents or generals, perhaps even popes or saints. I do not bow to who you are today, but to who you may become.”

Who might your child or grandchild become? A leader who solves a political crisis? A researcher who discovers a life-saving cure? What about a priest who heals souls? Or a brother who serves the forgotten?

Your attitude toward your child’s vocation has a huge impact. Many priests and sisters say: “Growing up our family prayed together.... We served others as a family... My parents often had clergy and religious over for dinner.”

The influence of parents may actually be getting stronger. *Oprah Magazine* ran an article on new research showing that millennials feel closely connected with their parents, with 77% seeking their parents’ advice on a regular basis.

If your son or daughter should express interest in becoming a priest, sister, or brother, they’ll be watching closely for your reaction. It may be awkward to bow, but in your own way, express reverence for what they may become.



*Pope John Paul II speaks of ‘vocation’ more than 30 times in his famous encyclical on the family, Familiaris Consortio, calling family “the primary and most excellent seed-bed of vocations.”*

**‘Our Hearts Are Full’**

The family of Tom and Katie Krug beam with pride at the ordination of oldest son, Fr. Jerome Krug, in Oklahoma City. “I would be proud of him whatever he did,” said Tom. “But knowing he chose a higher calling, there are no words to express our joy... though I hear God telling me, “This happiness isn’t one tenth of the happiness of heaven!” Tom encourages reluctant parents: “If your son is thinking about seminary, tell him to go! It’s an ideal place to form strong young men.”

“I would like to speak into the ears of so many men and women: giving up one’s children to the service of God is not a sacrifice: it is an honor and a joy.” -St. Josemaria Escriva



Diocese of Superior



U.S. CHURCH STATS

## Our Parishes Need Priests

# 9,119

FEWER PRIESTS SINCE 2000.  
(5,353 FEWER DIOCESAN  
PRIESTS AND 3,766 FEWER  
RELIGIOUS PRIESTS) †

# 3,363

PARISHES IN 2018 WITHOUT  
A RESIDENT PASTOR (19% OF  
CURRENT 17,007 PARISHES) †

The growing clergy shortage means that priestly presence is waning in many Catholic institutions, especially high schools and colleges. Even Vocation Directors, whose job is to help young people discern God's call, often find themselves with one or two (or more!) additional assignments. More than ever, the Church needs lay people, especially families, to encourage the next generation of vocations.

# 477

AVG. ORDINATIONS  
PER YEAR THE LAST  
20 YEARS †

† Data from CARA: The Center for  
Applied Research in the Apostolate

# ONE

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
SEMINARIANS EACH PARISH  
WOULD NEED TO PRODUCE  
EVERY TEN YEARS TO REVERSE  
THE PRIEST SHORTAGE

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” ~3 John 4

## ‘I get to be the priest this time!’

Did you know that according to canon law, impersonating a priest disqualifies a man from ever being ordained?

But not if you're a little kid, of course. Moms and dads who have videos of toddlers elevating Ritz crackers as “hosts” can rest easy. (Have you seen the YouTube video of the four-year-old having a tantrum because his brother assigned him to be the deacon at a makeshift “Mass” in their living room? “But I can't even reeeead!” he wailed.)

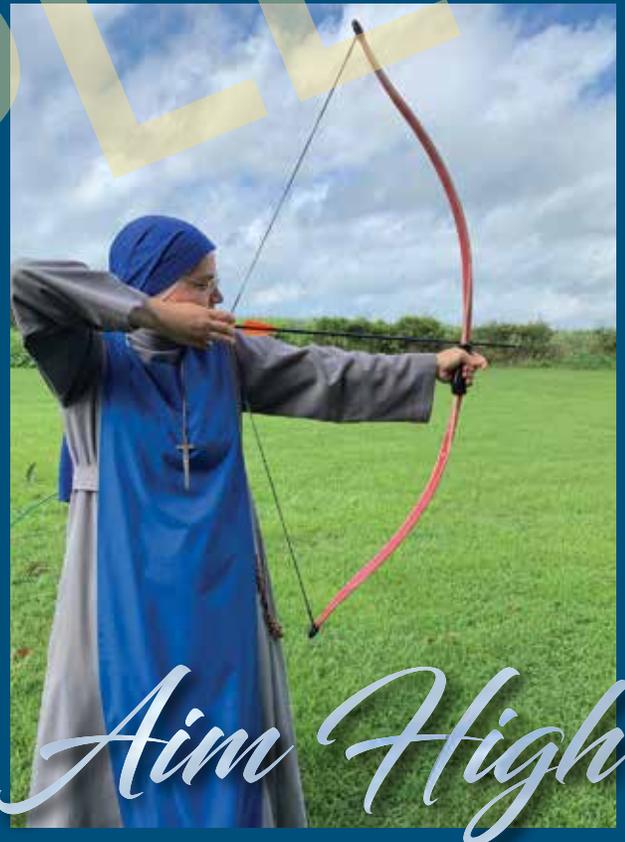
Children have pretended to celebrate Mass for literally centuries, and why not? It's a way of emulating one's heroes. Think



Kids playing Mass at home has an added benefit: they often pay more attention at church! A variety of children's Mass kits are available at sites like [www.agnusdei.us](http://www.agnusdei.us).

of the third-grader in a Tom Brady jersey throwing a football, or the son of a police officer driving a toy cruiser.

Play has a deeper meaning, of course. It's a way of preparing for the real world. And because our world needs God's mercy so much, why not nudge your kids (or grandkids) to get out the crackers and grape juice?



## Aim High

Sr. Divine Grace of the Servidores practices archery at a vocations-themed summer camp in Louisiana. As a young sister in a Washington DC-based convent, she helped nationwide with various youth events before returning to formation in the fall.