

## Vocations Awareness Update

June 2002

**Vision:** To have effective, enthusiastic and involved ministers serving the current Church of Rochester while fostering future vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, religious life and lay ministry, who are willing to serve the people of God with a full and generous heart.

**Mission:** The Mission of the Vocation Office is to serve the people of the local church (priests, sisters, brothers, deacons and lay persons) in the area of vocation awareness. This responsibility belongs to all members of the local church. It is the aim of the office to empower these individuals to foster and nourish all church related vocations (ordained and lay) and to give them the tools necessary to call forth competent leadership to serve our Diocese. This mission calls us to give encouragement and support to individual men and women who manifest particular interest in priesthood, religious life and lay ministry. We strive to help them in their discernment process through personal contact and written communication.

### **Vocation Partners:**

Director of Pre-theology and Rector of Becket Hall, Director of Seminarians, The Committee for Priestly Vocations, Area Religious Vocation Directors, Office of Evangelization and Catechesis (specifically Youth and Young Adult Ministry) Campus Ministry, and Parishes/Faith Communities.

### **Vocation Personnel:**

Patricia Finnerty, Director, Vocations Awareness. Effective June 28, 2002: Fr. Bill Donnelly, Director of Pre-theology and Rector of Becket Hall; Fr. Jim Schwartz, Director of Seminarians.

### **Vocation Activities/What's Been Done:**

*Parish Vocation Teams have been established with Brighton Planning Group; all parishes in Auburn, St. Rita's and Northern Greece. For Fall 2002, groups will begin in Tioga and Northern Cayuga regions. The purpose of these teams is for parishes to actively promote and encourage vocations at the parish level. The goal is to eventually have each region form a Parish Vocation Team.*

**"24 Hours with the Lord" retreat** held every June. This is our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of doing the retreat for men ages 16 and up who are interested and open to finding out more about the priesthood. To date, over 50 men have attended. The day includes an overnight retreat at Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua, presentations by priests, attending the priesthood ordination and lunch with Bishop Clark. Priests, administrators and staff personally invite men to attend. A longer two-day retreat was also offered in December for men who want a more in-depth look at priesthood.

**Religious Vocation Awareness promotion** includes attending parish coffee hours and setting up display tables with information about each particular order. Each order bakes bread indicative of their community (i.e. Sisters of Mercy bake Irish soda bread) to share with parishioners and spread the news about their community.

**Busy Person Retreat** held at University of Rochester, Ithaca College and parishes in Monroe County. Retreat staff includes vocation personnel and religious vocation directors.

**Young Boys Vocation Club.** Boys ages 12-15 from Northwest Planning Group met with Bishop Clark to discuss priesthood. Other parishes/regions are interested in having a similar type program.

**Auburn Vocation Fair** for all religious education students in grades 6-8. Over 75 students heard from members on vocation panel, (priest, sister, deacon, married and single people) completed a vocation activity and spoke with area priests and sisters.

**Vocation Web Site** is up and running and can be accessed through the DOR website ([www.dor.org/vocations](http://www.dor.org/vocations)). Site includes information on priesthood, diaconate and religious life. Website is creative and designed pro-bono by local advertising agency Dixon Schwabl.

**Youth convention features vocation speakers** as part of the annual diocesan youth convention. Workshop: "Where is God calling you" and other vocation topics are a part of each convention. National youth convention, held this past December in Indianapolis with 25,000 youth from around the country, held a "mini congress" on vocations. Pat Finnerty and Fr. John DeSocio were table facilitators at congress.

**Promotional CD** called "The Joys of Priesthood" created. CD given to men inquiring about priesthood. This 15-minute audio CD features testimonials from local priests.

**Posters, Brochures, Prayer Cards** created to promote vocations. Each parish was sent a supply of Becket Hall brochures, prayer cards and vocation posters to display and hand out in church and/or school.

**Parents for Vocations program** being developed by New York State Vocation Directors. This one-hour program provides parents with information about how to talk to their children about a church vocation. Program will be completed and used by Fall, 2002.

**How to promote vocations at your school or parish** is a presentation given at Ministry Days, faculty workshops and parish council meetings. Classroom visits by a priest and sister are also done on a consistent basis.

**Intercollegiate Retreat** is offered on a yearly basis with a vocation component "Where is God calling you" to area college students.

**Becket Hall open house and gathering** held every December on the feast of St. Thomas Becket, for people who would like to learn more about Becket Hall and meet the residents.

**Boy Scout Day of Reflection** for boys working on their religious medal (Ad Altare Dei) held at Becket Hall. Vocation component part of day of reflection.

**Taize Prayer services** held for college aged students and young adults. This prayer service has been popular with students.

**Vocation Awareness Week** celebrated every January and World Day of Prayer for Vocations in May. Each parish is sent vocation prayers, intentions, hymns and prayer services along with vocation related homily suggestions. Each parish was sent weekly vocation messages to run in their bulletin as well.

**Statewide marketing campaign** (billboards/radio) being investigated to run throughout New York State. Campaign would promote priesthood and religious life and run during National Vocations Awareness Week in January throughout all dioceses across the state.

**Book promoting positive aspects of priesthood** due for publication this Fall. This “chicken soup” type book will feature stories from our priests about the many facets of priesthood. Book will be sold via parishes.

**Future Plans:**

1. Expand parish vocation teams throughout diocese. Have a vocation contact person at each parish/faith community within the next two years. Host regional training sessions at which each contact person would attend. Commission people for their role in promoting vocations at parish level.
2. Increase awareness of Becket Hall. Host an open house. Use media to promote Becket Hall and its residents.
3. Target students in grades 5 and 11. This “11/11” program is aimed at students in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade (age 11) and students in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade in high school. According to research, this is the age when students are more apt to be open to hearing about vocations.
4. Continue to work collaboratively with religious communities and office of youth and young adult ministry to plan events aimed at young adults and late teens. (i.e. Hands of Christ recipient winners, Theology on Tap, Taize Prayer services, discernment days, etc.)

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