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Pray for every child, young adult to commit to vocation from God

Father Kurtis Gunwall

What goes into a vocation? Like anything related to God and faith, it is too deep to cover in one short article, yet it is also very simple. I want to share with you just the simple side of a vocation; actually, let me clarify the meaning of "vocation" as we refer to it here. Your vocation is God's invitation to a lifelong, committed relationship in one of these groups: ordained, consecrated or married. This leaves one growing group in our nation — singles not specifically committed to another state of life. What is shared here applies to all states of life.

The first foundation of a vocation is the desire of the heart, placed by God, for relationship with him and with others. This desire exists in each of us yet it needs nurturing and support. When the family, parish, community or culture attacks or simply ignores this need, the desire weakens and fails to produce a fruitful life. Many people drift through life unsatisfied by what they do because they realize that they are made for more.

The next layers of support are those just mentioned: family, parish, community and culture. Family is most important, as it is the "Domestic Church," the church in the home. Parents, grandparents and all other family members need to encourage youth and young adults to seek and know their vocation from God. We can say the same for the parish family. I propose that not praying for all vocations weakens the very call of God. If the only prayers offered are for priests, then not every person is praying for every other person to hear God's call.

While praying for priests, a boy might think about the possibility of priesthood during his grade school or middle school years, but many push the thought away once they enter high school and college. A girl could think about religious life, but may not, as the prayer is for priests. Parents might be open to their son becoming a priest, but they might also dismiss that possibility because of his behavior, lack of interest in the faith, wanting grandchildren, or numerous other reasons.

Therefore, many people are simply praying for some unknown young man, out there somewhere, whom God is calling to be a priest. Contrast this to a family and parish praying for every child and single young adult to seek and make a commitment to their vocation from God. When they pray, they are thinking and praying for their children, brother, sister, neighbor or self to know God's loving plan. Everyone can pray for someone close to them, and how much more heartfelt the prayers may be.

How have you been supporting vocations? If you are single, how have you been praying to know your vocation clearly? I invite you to pray for all vocations and trust God to guide each person to deep joy in the one for which God made them.

If you have a question about your vocation, please contact us in any of these ways: (701) 356-7957, www.fargovocations.org, vocations@fargodiocese.org, Facebook group: FargoVocations; and you can check out this simple survey at www.testyourcalling.org and enter coupon code VPS123 (case sensitive) for a free report.

Father Kurtis Gunwall is vocation director for the Diocese of Fargo.