

Parent Resources

Parents are "by word and example...the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation to which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocations." *Lumen Gentium 11*.

Parent to Parent

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

When a young man is discerning a vocational call to the priesthood, often it raises many questions and concerns for the parents and family. In an effort to allay any fears or concerns and provide experienced insights, the Vocation Office sent a questionnaire to parents of Winona seminarians and to parents of newly ordained priests. The questions asked and some of the responses have been posted to address many of these questions and concerns that any parent may face when a child considers entering the seminary. Please feel free to contact the Office of Vocations if you have any questions.

What do you think other parents would like to know if their son is considering the priesthood?

- If one's son is considering the priesthood it's wonderful to note that there is no prototype in terms of age, personality, occupation (former) or circumstances; rather that "openness to grace," so rejoice and encourage him to seek discernment in an atmosphere where he will be formed, amongst others seeking the same answer.
- Parents should become informed as to how and where a possible candidate could begin the process of actual investigation of a vocation.
- I think parents would like to know how to approach the situation, where to go for information and the order/seminary their son is considering entering. I believe parents would benefit from talking to other parents of men considering the priesthood or to parents of men who are already ordained.
- It is a tremendous job! He will not desert you but visit often. His parish becomes his extended family.
- Pray for them and take one day at a time. Realize the importance of spiritual direction and put "no" pressure on them. Let God draw them in through prayer.
- They must be tremendously supportive and always be there for him. Always encouraging (him) to follow God's call.

What was your reaction to your son telling you he wanted to study for the priesthood?

- Surprised, but happy due to the fact that when he was 2 yrs. old, he told the priest who was blessing our home and myself that he wants to be a priest when he grows up.
- Very happy. Kind of surprised. He hadn't mentioned anything.
- My reaction to my son's being open to study for the priesthood was a mixture of surprise and joy. (It was) a vocation he said he wasn't going to do, so I really didn't expect it despite praying as a family for an increase in priestly vocations.
- I was not surprised, as I had always thought he had a "call" to the priesthood. There were always "hints" that law would not be a lifelong vocation or occupation for him.
- My "whys" in regard to his personal relationships terminating, were answered.
- One of great joy, yet also one of concern for him that he will continue to have the courage to ward off the doubters.

Any other comments, concerns, or advice you may want to share with other parents?

- The formation and road to the priesthood is one the whole family travels. It is a fantastic opportunity to grow in your knowledge and your faith.
- Our children are not our clones. Their purpose in life is not to turn our dreams and goals into realities. Whether he chooses to be a fireman, a fisherman, a poet or a priest, the choice must finally rest with him. We need to show support, enthusiasm and faith in his decision.
- He will not desert you, but visit you often. His parish becomes his extended family. He will enjoy vacations, social life, and activities of his choice. Your love for him will erase any doubts you had.
- I believe that they should encourage your son to **try**-if it's not for him, he'll know and can leave if he chooses.
- If your son decides to be a priest, support him.
- Give your son support and love as parents. Pray for his success and pray harder everyday so the Holy Spirit will always be with him.
- His entire family should show they are behind his decision to answer his call to the priesthood.
- Just give them all the love support and prayer you have to give and be there for them.
- The harvest is ripe, the laborers are few. We need good and holy priests. We need good and holy people. Sure it would be wonderful to have grandchildren, another daughter-in-law, to carry on the family name, but in reality, it is vanity; all else is vanity.
- ...have faith and pray.