



Diocese of Madison

Office of Vocations

VOCATION CATECHESIS SHEET

What is a Priest?

- ❖ Priests make a public commitment to use their whole lives for the sake of the Gospel. They respond to God's call, in a public way, to a life of holiness and service to the Church. It is a life of sacrifice because it is the life of our Lord.
- ❖ They make a vow of celibacy, choosing not to marry. In this, they imitate the example of Jesus Christ and they give their lives completely to the Church (again, imitating Christ by taking the "Church" as their bride). In this way, they are a father to the entire family of God and have no obligations that compete with their service to the Church.
- ❖ They commit themselves to daily prayer, not only for themselves but for the needs of the Church and of all God's people. They pray everyday for each one of us.
- ❖ In a single week a priest can experience what other people only experience across a lifetime: in the baptism of a newborn child, in overseeing the exchange of marital vows, in the forgiveness of decades of sin, and in the anointing of the dying. At those critical moments in people's lives, the priest is a central part BECAUSE he is a priest.
- ❖ The Church teaches that the priest stands "in persona Christi" which means, "in the person of Christ." He serves in the roles Christ served as prophet (preaching), priest (presiding over the sacraments) and king (leading a parish flock).
- ❖ The lifestyle of a priest (simplicity, service, celibacy) is countercultural. It points to eternity, which is more important than money, power or fleeting pleasures which are often emphasized in the outside world.

What is a Consecrated Religious Brother or Sister?

- ❖ They take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.
- ❖ They choose to live a community life, gathering for prayer, meals and often common work.
- ❖ They make a radical commitment to the Gospel. Many religious communities are among the strongest advocates for pro-life causes and for peace and justice.
- ❖ They choose not to get their own paycheck but put all their resources together to share among the entire community.
- ❖ Women and men in consecrated life (sisters and brothers) live their whole life as witness to the Gospel. They draw strength from their religious community, from saying the Daily Office and from frequent reception of the sacraments. This allows them to serve as missionaries, teachers, helpers to the poor or even in a life given entirely to prayer, as with cloistered orders.
- ❖ There are different ways on the path of religious life such as Active Religious who minister in the world, Contemplative Religious who spend their days in solitude and silence while praying, studying and doing penance, and Missionaries who evangelize in other countries (or sometimes in their own country).

What is a Deacon?

- ❖ Most deacons are married men with a family who are either employed at a full-time job or retired. They respond to God's call to be a bold and radical witness of the Gospel in the marketplace (their jobs and neighborhoods).
- ❖ They have been called to be a public witness of the Gospel, living in the normal places of the world.
- ❖ As they are out in the public sphere, people notice and watch what they do and how they do it. Their lives are a testimony of the importance that heaven should take in every person's life, no matter what they do.