

FR. JOHN'S DIGITAL QUILL FOR SPIRITUAL MUSINGS AND PARISH NEWS

Vocation Awareness Week

Today marks the start of Vocational Awareness Week. From the recent All Things New listening sessions, we can see the need for such a week. Consider the following statistics:

- By 2026, we will have enough active priests to put just one priest at every parish in our Archdiocese.
- By 2035, we will be plateauing at roughly 135 priests for our entire Archdiocese.
- Since the 1970s, the number of Catholic marriages celebrated in our Church has declined.

Why are these statistics so important?

Our parish and school are here because of our Catholic faith. The source of our unity and reason for being is the Eucharist. Without priests, we cannot have the Eucharist. If young people and young adults do not see the priesthood and religious life as legitimate options for them to consider, we will see the numbers of priests continue to decline, thus weakening our church even more.

Our parish and school are not just for our priests and religious though. St. Raphael is here for families to choose to engage in through prayer, participation, and generous stewardship. Increasingly though, studies show that young adults are drifting away from organized religion. They may still have some sort of spiritual side to them, but the rate of young people getting married in the Church, or having their children baptized, is sadly declining.

Our parish and school are sound today from a community aspect and financially as well. But if we do not begin addressing this trend among our young people, will they choose a Catholic wedding or another kind of ceremony? If so, what will be the reality here and at other parishes when our children want to get married? Will they want to have their children baptized? Will they make the same sacrifices as so many of our families do to enroll their children in a Catholic school?

Promoting vocations, then is not a side issue right now. It is essential for our future as a Church.

This week, then, is a time for us to remember the importance of vocations and to take some time to speak to our children and grandchildren about a vocation to marriage, priesthood, religious, or generous

single life.

"Jesus has a specific task in life for each and every one of us. Each one of us is hand-picked, called by name by Jesus! There is no one among us who does not have a divine vocation! Some are called audibly by God, but the usual kind of call is internal, through the inner working of the Spirit." ~Homily by Pope Saint John Paul II

Rosary

Here's a reminder: after I return from retreat, we will regularly stream the Rosary twice per week. The first opportunity will be on Wednesdays at 6:30am and the other will be after the 7:00am Mass (starting at approximately 7:25) on Fridays. Both Rosaries will be streamed on our YouTube page each week. Please join us to pray the Rosary for our parish and for your intentions.

Veteran's Day Mass

All veterans are invited to join the school community for a Veteran's Day Mass at church on Friday, November 11, at 8:00am. Mass will be followed by a reception in the school cafeteria. Veterans interested in celebrating with us and attending the reception should RSVP at 314.352.9474 and leave name and number of people attending. Please respond by Wednesday, November 9. Participants are to gather in the back of the church for a procession. We are looking forward to seeing you on November 11.

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On the Road Again

I am still on retreat, but I will leave on Thursday and drive back to St. Louis. I will be back to celebrate Veteran's Day with our school on Friday.

I will work on Friday to return the phone calls and e-mails I may have missed while I was away. Please be patient if I do not get to your phone call or e-mail on Friday; I will try to return messages as speedily as possible.

Thank you again to Monsignor Stehly, Mrs. Hayes, Deacon Bob, and all of those on the parish and school staffs who helped make this time away possible for me.

I will pray for you while on retreat and see you soon online or in Church! - Fr. John #SRAstrong