

NATIONAL VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK

HOUSTON VOCATIONS: A LOOK INTO THE PRIESTHOOD



In 2023, 12 young men joined the seminary for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Each man studies between 7-9 years before being ordained a transitional deacon and then, God willing, a priest. To the left is an image of St. Mary's Seminary, located on Memorial Drive.

Seminary is broken up into four stages: propaedeutic, discipleship, configuration, and vocational synthesis. The **propaedeutic** stage lasts about one year. The term comes from a Greek word meaning "before studies". Typically, a young man works at a parish while in this stage. The **discipleship** stage can last between 2-4 years. By the end of this stage, those who are sure of their calling from God to be a priest receive the installation as a candidate for Holy Orders. The **configuration** stage is about 3.5-4.5 years long. The focus of this stage is to live out their vocation to holiness during the last few years of seminary. At the end of this stage, seminarians graduate from seminary and are ordained transitional deacons. The last 6 months of formation is called the **vocational synthesis stage**. These men serve as deacons in parishes transitioning from seminary life to full-time ministry in the diocese.



Studies have shown that more than 70% of priests were former altar servers. This shows the importance of young men serving at the altar assisting the priest, being involved in one of the greatest moments on earth: the Mass.

What do you do at your parish and within your family to foster a culture of vocations? Have you ever considered asking a young person what mission God is calling them to rather than what they want to be when they grow up? Teaching the youth to listen and respond to God's voice will change the world. How do you do that? We suggest prayer and silence.

To the right are some of the men who entered seminary in June 2023. The Office of Vocations receives most applicants in the Spring, thoroughly reviews their application, set up interviews, then, pending the Cardinal's approval, are officially seminarians of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Did you know you can go to seminary right after high school? Some of the young men who have not yet attended college go to Holy Trinity in Dallas for their first few years of seminary to earn their undergraduate degree in philosophy.



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The Importance of Parental Reverence

“In 1959, in Houston, they had 100 seminarians (men studying to be priests). That's the most we've had since then even though the population of Catholics has increased by almost 500%. We now have 46 seminarians and 1.7 million Catholics.

There is no Eucharist without priests, so if you care at all about having the Eucharist in the future, something needs to change. I think the solution might be simpler than we think. I asked my dad once what he thought was the best thing parents could do to encourage vocations. He said parents should receive communion with reverence. He's right. If we receive communion like it's just a piece of bread, why would a young man give up his life for that? Why give up everything and be celibate for a piece of bread? But, if we receive the Eucharist with the reverence it deserves, as the True Body of Jesus, then a young man will see that too. I would especially challenge fathers. You will have the greatest spiritual influence on your children. Your sons need to see that the Eucharist is the most important thing in your life based on your example. Your sons need to know that the Eucharist will be worth giving their life for.”

-Fr. David Michael Moses, parochial vicar at Christ the Good Shepherd



Pictured above is the Ramirez family including Fr. Jacob Ramirez, Fr. Nicholas Ramirez, and Bishop Oscar Cantu, their Uncle, at Fr. Jacob's ordination in 2022.

“Let us not forget that Christian marriage is a vocation to holiness in the full sense of the word, and that the example of holy parents is the first condition favorable for the flowering of priestly and religious vocations.”

-Pope Benedict XV



Sister Catherine Thomas, a Dominican Sister of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist from St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, and her mom, Ann Timpe-Brennan

“I carried this separation pain during the early years of my daughter's formation days. Having grown up in the church pre-Vatican II with very strict German nuns as my teachers, I couldn't envision having that for my daughter. That was the only thing I could relate to. BUT 5 years later, I was able to experience through my daughter and what she was doing in religious life the beauty of the gift that she received. I could see her happiness, I could see how content she was, and how deep down she knew in her heart [that] this call is exactly what she was called to live. She is in community with such beautiful sisters that I would never want to take her away from that. What I tell parents is to pray, pray, pray for your child. Be a prayer warrior for your child. Get out of God's way. Let God work through your children.”

-Ann Timpe-Brennan (Sister Catherine Thomas' Mom) See the full “Answering the Call as a Family” video at: <https://houstonvocations.com/parents/>



Information on Events for
Highschoolers and Young Adults
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