

**ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON
DEPARTMENT OF YOUNG ADULT AND CAMPUS MINISTRY**

PROMOTING VOCATIONS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

What keeps young adults from considering a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life?¹

Some of the issues identified by young adults:

- Secular values: Materialism, Consumerism, Secularism, Affluence, Individualism
- Lack of family and peer support
- Celibacy
- Fear of commitment to the unknown
- Debt/college costs

What gives young adults hope about vocations?

- Spirituality of young adults
- Generosity of young adults as shown in service
- Eucharist, prayer
- Priests and religious who:
 - Give a positive witness
 - Serve as role models
 - Are willing to talk about vocations
- Campus ministry and youth ministry
- World Youth Days

Strategies for promoting vocations among young adults²

A. Create a climate of vocational awareness

1. Pray for vocations (with weekly Holy Hour for vocations)
2. Priests and religious should show they are happy and excited about their vocation, and joyfully invite others to join them
3. Involve seminary professors, vocations directors, and men and women religious in the life of the community (e.g., celebrating mass, if priests; giving presentations; providing spiritual direction)
4. Invite seminarians and religious in formation to share their stories
5. Publicize young adults from parish or campus ministry who have vocations
6. Preach about vocations
7. Have a vocations committee and involve young adults

B. Model and cultivate a love for the Church and its mission

1. Develop love and respect for the archbishop and the local Church; campus ministries should involve him at the center as much as possible
2. Form young adults in evangelization and apologetics
3. Cultivate a global perspective (catechesis, Operation Rice Bowl, mission trips, etc.)

C. Cultivate a sense of meaningful sacrifice

1. Connect with young adult idealism
2. Speak of the sacrificial self-giving that is part of both marriage and celibacy
3. Catechize on stewardship
4. Promote short and long term volunteer opportunities

D. Retreats

1. Evangelizing retreats
 - a. Busy Persons Retreat, with involvement of vocations directors
 - b. Awakening retreats; includes leadership development and discernment
2. Vocations retreats
 - a. Publicize the vocations retreats of dioceses and religious communities
 - b. Life Awareness, for young adults seriously considering vocation

E. Make it personal

1. Identify young adults
2. Invite them personally
 - a. To serve in leadership in parish activities
 - b. To ordinations, chrism mass, profession masses
 - c. To visit convents, monasteries and seminaries (e.g., Texas A&M University's "Nun Run" and "Seminary Sprint")
 - d. To retreats, discernment groups, and to consider spiritual direction
3. Accompany them in the discernment process

F. Internet resources

1. Archdiocesan webpage: <http://www.archgh.org/vocations>
2. Vocations.com

¹Notes taken at the 2002 Continental Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life in Montreal.

²The remainder comes from notes taken of presentations by Fr. Mike Sis and Bishop Gerald Kicanas at the Texas Catholic Conference general assembly in 1999, and from practices in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Young Adult Statement

3rd Continental Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life

Montreal, April 18-22, 2002

In April 2002, 1200 delegates from across North America attended the 3rd Continental Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and the Consecrated Life in Montreal.

One of the surprises of the Congress was the energy and optimism of the 130+ young adult delegates, who met a number of times at their own initiative and drafted a statement responding to the themes laid out in the plenary sessions and in our discussions. Young adults from the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston participated in the drafting of the statement.

"At all times the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the time and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, if it is to carry out its task. In language intelligible to every generation, she should be able to answer the ever-recurring questions which people ask about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other. We must be aware of and understand the aspirations, the yearnings, and the often-dramatic features of the world in which we live." (Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, 4a)

We, 7 groups of young adult delegates in the Third Continental Congress on Vocations to the Ordained Ministry and Consecrated Life in North America, came together to ponder and consider questions concerning the meaning of "Vocation," the living out of our baptismal call in our church today. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we have articulated our desires as young adult leaders of the Catholic Church in North America, and we are honored to share the fruits of our discussions with you, our brothers and sisters in Christ, the Church.

- I. We desire a Covenant relationship with our Church. Everything we ask of the Church we will offer in return. We ask for prayer and will pray in return for the Church. We seek wisdom and knowledge and will use those gifts in return to enrich our Church. We will remain faithful to Christ and the Church by living out our vocations, promoting a culture of life and joy, while living in hope and love. We strive to be saints of today and come to cultivate saints of the next generation. Please give us the resources we need to be what God has called us to be! The resources we ask for we will also give. This is the covenant relationship we seek to live with God and all of God's people.
- II. As young people we seek answers to the many deep questions that dwell in the depths of our hearts. We seek to grow in understanding and knowledge of prayer, to discern our vocations in Christ, and to learn all aspects of our Faith. Please openly witness to your faith, by being available. Specifically, to you who live the consecrated life and serve as ordained ministers, offer us authentic joyful witnesses to your way of life, that we may experience the passion of your service. Invite us to share your excitement and deep love of Christ and the Church. Offer us opportunities to learn from one another. With the proper tools, together we can build a fire, a fire that is ignited by Jesus Christ, which can bring warmth and light to a world that is sometimes cold, and dark.
- III. We are one body in Christ: Inspire us with open dialogue, a dialogue where we will recognize our responsibility and accountability. Dialogue with us so that together we can work towards equality, healing the brokenness of sin and pain, and bring about authentic renewal. We are longing for honesty, respect and openness. Please recognize our gifts that we want to use in building with you, in consecrated life, a community of faith.
- IV. We acknowledge the leadership we have experienced during this congress, and are grateful for all those who have inspired our faith by their example and fidelity. We request continued nurturing of our personal vocations as baptized Christians, inclusive of all vocations to the married, single, or

religious life. Create discernment teams, in parishes and on college campuses, consisting of faith filled people who can support and nurture vocations. Introduce us to objective mentors who are truly open to God's will for us, and can serve as wisdom figures. We invite the religious to share personal authentic stories with us, including their struggles and joys. We are willing apprentices. We invite Spiritual Directors to share their skills, accept us unconditionally, offer us a safe place to seek answers and grow, and direct us towards a deeper spiritual life.

- V. As Catholic young adults, joined to the mission of Christ in baptism, we ask you to enrich our identity by providing us with opportunities for meaningful catechesis, ongoing formation and education. Deepen our understanding of our Catholic history as well as the present realities of our faith. Enable us to claim and live authentic Catholic identities by teaching and challenging us throughout our lives. We understand that in true community all are called to be leaders. We acknowledge that we are called to take risks. We ask that you support and train us to become leaders and risk-takers for the sake of God's Kingdom. Please listen with open hearts as we express our ideas and pose questions. Please invite us to honest dialogue that has the potential for bringing us all to a deeper understanding of God's will.
- VI. What we value as young Catholics is a celebration of the human aspects of our mission. We desire authentic and true witnesses to our faith who are not afraid to be vulnerable in sharing their story, including their strengths and weaknesses. We hope to experience in the Church the Freedom to share ourselves, our faith, and the desires that dwell in our hearts. We want to hear the voices of all those who make up the Body of Christ. We want to stand as Church on issues of justice, as together we work to return to humans their dignity!
- VII. We want the Church to focus on youth and young adults by providing opportunities for authentic faith encounters; specifically, special time that is set aside for spiritual growth with the assistance of a spiritual guide, such as a priest, deacon, a religious or a lay person, who will journey with a young adult on their path of discernment. We thirst for support in living our Catholic faith and desire to share that faith with a world that hungers for God.

"But the Lord said to me, Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you says the Lord." Jeremiah 1:7-8