

2023

WORLD DAY of PRAYER for VOCATIONS



Amy Mortensen

“JOY IS THE NET OF LOVE BY WHICH WE CAPTURE SOULS.” ~ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA



Amy Mortensen

WILL YOU LAY DOWN YOUR LIFE?

CLARITY AFTER TRAGEDY LEADS TO PRIESTHOOD

Thirteen years ago, Catholic school teacher David Roman was huddled together with students in Danbury, Connecticut. Just a few miles away, at Sandy Hook Elementary, there was an active shooter and all area schools were on lockdown. In those tragic hours, all he knew to do was pray the rosary.

“I asked the kids to pray for people who were hurting, and for people who hurt others,” Fr. Roman recalled. “Later, I was reflecting on all of it and I realized how much I loved those kids. I realized that I would die for them.”

As he re-lived that awful day in prayer, David felt the Lord asking, “You would die for those children. What will you do for the rest of my people?”

The truth was, he had spent a lot of time telling his students about the priesthood, but he’d never thought about it for himself. Thus began a long journey of discernment, and eventually seminary. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Bridgeport in 2019.

Fr. Roman has since learned that the priesthood really is about sacrificing everything. Like Jesus, priests are called to lay down their lives to be present to people, certainly through the sacraments, but also in the most painful moments of life.

Fr. David Roman first heard God's call to the priesthood shortly after the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary, which was a few miles away from the Catholic school where he taught.



SITE RE-LAUNCH



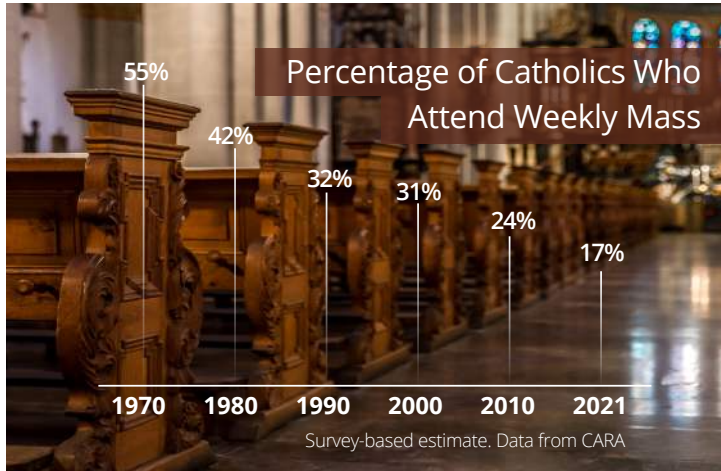
Pledge to pray for vocations at invisiblemonastery.com and receive monthly vocation prayers & updates.





U.S. CHURCH STATS

EVANGELIZATION NEEDED



“It is not surprising that where people pray fervently, vocations flourish.”

Pope Benedict XVI
1927-2022



CHANGES IN SEMINARY

Seminaries are adapting to new requirements. The Church’s *Program for Priestly Formation* was significantly updated in 2022, and two changes (among many) stand out. First, at the beginning of seminary formation, new men will enter a “propaedeutic phase” intensely focused on maturity and spiritual growth. Secondly, toward the end of formation, transitional deacons will no longer remain at seminary full-time in their final year before being ordained priests. Instead, deacons will be stationed in parishes for at least six months, working alongside seasoned pastors, as an apprenticeship to learn parish ministry. Overall, the idea is to build a firm spiritual foundation at the beginning of formation, and have a smoother transition to parish life at the end.



IS CELIBACY AN OUTDATED PRACTICE?

Many have wondered why the Church steadfastly honors the tradition of celibacy. Wouldn’t we solve the vocation shortage if priests were allowed to marry?

The first thing to remember is that the Church did not “make up” the idea of celibacy, but rather, takes it from scripture. St. Paul famously said that “it is good to stay unmarried, as I am” (1 Cor 7). And Jesus himself said, “Some have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it” (Mt 19:12).

It’s important to keep in mind that even if the Church were to change the discipline of celibacy for *diocesan* priests (which is unlikely), we would still have religious brothers and sisters who take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Finally, when we look to the Eastern Catholic Churches, who have long allowed married clergy, it is not true that they have solved the vocation shortage. Rather, as Eastern-rite bishops would attest, there are significant challenges managing a married presbyterate, especially with the difficulty (and high cost) of seminary formation and supporting a priest with a family.

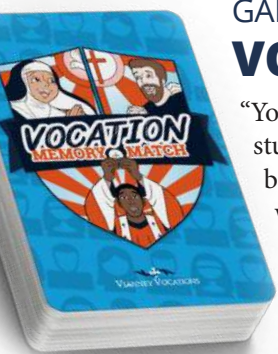
So while the Church truly cherishes its married clergy, there is good reason for celibacy, found in scripture, long tradition, and practical experience. Priests who can be single-hearted in their devotion to the Lord and their parish are a blessing to the Church.



GAME FOR KIDS

VOCATION MATCH

“You can’t want to be what you never see.” Catholic students so rarely encounter religious sisters or brothers, it’s hard for them to envision themselves wearing a habit or living in a monastery. As one bishop said, “We have to help kids get these vocations on the menu.” This clever memory card game includes 12 different characters in various stages of their vocations, including marriage, diaconate, and more.



vianneyvocations.com