



DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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November 2, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

From November 3-9, the Church celebrates Vocations Awareness Week. Pope Francis has said that "no vocation is born of itself or lives for itself. A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people." The Holy Father continued saying that while every vocation comes from the Lord, we are called to be the "good soil" that helps them blossom into something magnificent and beautiful.

At our annual priest convocation in early October, we received an analysis of the state of vocations in the Diocese of Harrisburg. While God has blessed us with relatively good numbers of seminarians and recently ordained priests, we still need more. To maintain our current number of priests in 15 years, we will need roughly 35-40 seminarians. This year, we have 10 men in formation for the priesthood. Therefore, I ask you to "pray to the Master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."

As a diocese, we will be more intentional in our prayer for an increase in vocations at Mass and during Eucharistic adoration. There will also be a traveling statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary that will visit every parish in the diocese so that we can petition our Blessed Mother to intercede for us that more men and women will answer that call that God has for them. Please join me in asking the Lord to send us more men and women to answer the call to serve His Church in this way.

Regardless of the vocation to which God has called us, whether to the priesthood, consecrated life, or marriage, we are all called to "follow Him" and create that rich soil in which vocations can grow. It is in the domestic church of the family that first and foremost we foster and nurture vocations. Our families, parishes, schools, and groups need to be environments that foster a love for Christ and encourage and support those who place Him first in their lives.

This effort requires all of us. Our clergy and you, the lay faithful, are essential to this mission. Please pray for an increase in holy vocations in our diocese and for an open heart to respond to God's will in your own life, wherever He may lead you. Saint Alphonsus Liguori, patron of vocations, pray for us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior  
Bishop of Harrisburg