

LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION:

For Our Children and the Future

NEW VOCATIONS DIRECTOR CHOSEN TO LEAD SEMINARIANS

The call to the priesthood is becoming clearer for a number of men, and Father Eric Johnson is helping them hear and understand it.

Ordained to the priesthood in the summer of 2002, Father Johnson served as the chaplain of Bishop Chatard High School, associate pastor of St. Pius X Parish and as a sacramental minister at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. In the summer of 2005, Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein recognized Father Johnson's gift and asked him to become the director of vocations for the archdiocese.

According to Father Johnson, the role of the archdiocesan vocations director is assisting those who are discerning the possibility of a call to the priesthood or religious life, overseeing seminarian recruitment and application, and working with seminary faculties in directing the formation and education of the archdiocesan seminarians. Currently the archdiocese uses seven seminaries in the United States, Mexico and Rome. Father Johnson visits each one in order to meet with those men under his vocational direction who study for the archdiocese.

In carrying out his mission, Father Johnson offers presentations to schools, parish groups and organizations. At these times he encourages others to be faithful to their baptismal vocation to love and serve God and others. Fostering priestly and religious vocations involves developing a culture that encourages listening and self-giving, and a deeper awareness of the meaning of one's own vocation, whatever that might be. Father Johnson wants others to think deeply about what God is asking them to do.



Father Eric Johnson (middle) with seminarians at St. Paul Parish in New Alsace.

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"It is a privilege; my whole ministry is helping to embrace our call and also helping members of the Christian community embrace their call," Father Johnson said.

With steady growth in the number of vocations to the priesthood, as well as the increased costs of education, the campaign directly impacts what the archdiocese can accomplish. The average cost to educate one seminarian each year is \$27,500. Seminarian education will be funded by *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign proceeds and supplemented by the United Catholic Appeal.

Father Johnson is pleased to note that the beginning of this school year is off to a good start. With more than 30 seminarians this year, he is positive about the future and grateful to the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign for supporting this continuing growth.

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He truly believes that increasing vocations to the priesthood falls on the shoulders of more than one person. Father Johnson feels that the entire Catholic community must help by inviting men to consider a religious vocation. "We need good, well-formed, healthy, holy priests," he said.

Another priest of the archdiocese, Father Scott Nobbe, agrees that helping others in the discernment process is the job of every priest. He remembers how vital the director of vocations is for seminarians. "It was nice to feel the continuing support from the director during discernment," Father Nobbe said.

Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocesan capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and addresses the local and changing needs of archdiocesan ministries such as seminarian education. By contributing to the Legacy for Our Mission campaign, a portion of your gift will be allocated to future ministry needs and distributed to efforts such as seminarian education.

Please visit the new online home for the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign. Our campaign Web site is <http://www.archindy.org/legacy>.