



## Society of St Pius X District of Canada

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### Pray the Lord of the harvest...

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

During this month of St Joseph, which always falls during the great season of Lent, I would like to relay to you some information given to me by a zealous confrere recently on the topic of vocations. This topic, by the way, fits very well with the month of St Joseph who is the patron of virgins and the great promoter of vocations.

Just before the Council, an article was written for a periodical destined for priests. It was about a survey among 2,000 students in eight minor seminaries. They were given a questionnaire about their vocation to the priesthood. It is very interesting to study the chief reasons these young men gave for their entrance in the seminary: "I wanted to say Mass": 1326 out of 2000 gave this as their main attraction. "I wanted to help others" came in on a close second with 1306 checks. "I like the life of the priest" got 1186 checks. "I wanted to be like a certain priest" was fourth with 828 checks.

This data indicates a good direction for our efforts to promote vocations. Vocations are promoted by parents, grand-parents and teachers, not just priests. We should help young men to become involved in the Mass, the charitable works of the Church, and the influence of good priests, so that, with the help of God's grace, they will make the final decision to give themselves to God. Here are some very wise suggestions to promote vocations.

- We should explain the *ceremonies of the Mass* to children (and especially to the altar boys). In Summer Camps or Catechism Sessions, lessons about the Vestments, the Sacred Vessels and the Linens etc. are always appreciated. Children enjoy learning about the great Mystery of our Faith. It is in doing this that we will plant in their hearts a love for the Mass and in some boys a desire to be priests at the altar.
- We should also develop the *missionary spirit* in our teenagers, e.g. have them visit old people in hospitals with an apostolic purpose. Quite a number of SSPX priests were once part of a Boys' Scout troop in their youth. This certainly helped them because of the formation of character they received there and the spirit of "service" which was instilled in them (cf. the scout promise, etc.). The Eucharistic Crusade is also very good, since it gives zeal for souls (Apostolate of Prayer).

- It seems important to organize *contacts between the priests and teenagers*. We need to cultivate the attraction towards the priesthood in the better ones, i.e. the elite. “To sow the seeds of perfect purity and to arouse a desire for virginity has always been a function of the priesthood.” (St. Ambrose). Spiritual direction is important of course, the best situation is found in traditional schools where the priest can follow-up the same boy during several years and thus nurture the little seed. As the Popes always said, good schools are one of the main sources for vocations. “It is necessary that the Catholic spirit of our schools, from which priestly vocations are expected, be improved” (Pius XII). (Note: three quarters of French seminarians in our SSPX seminaries have gone through SSPX schools.) In places where we have no SSPX schools, we can promote home-schooling in order to withdraw the children from the public school system. We should also have recollection days, picnics, outings, camps, and week-ends where young men can meet the priest, talk to him and confide in him. Visits to the seminary should also be organized when possible, especially at the time of the ordinations.

- In the same study quoted earlier, one question was about the influence received. 669 young men said that their *mothers* influenced them very much in making the choice to go to the seminary. Only 407 stated having not been influenced at all by them. The rest admitted various degrees of influence. It means therefore that in 1593 cases out of 2000, the mother was one of the determining factors in the shaping of vocations. Mothers need to receive spiritual direction on how to be good mothers. A truly Catholic mother with a strong interior life has more chance to receive the grace of vocations in her family than worldly ones.

Recent SSPX statistics (Jan. 2016) given by Fr. Troadec, rector of our French seminary in Flavigny, add the following data on the role of the mothers especially in the SSPX vocations: between 1996 and 2015, there is one vocation per family of 5.8 children (between 1986 and 1995 it was one vocation in four), and 80% of the seminarians have their mother staying at home, i.e., not working outside the home.

- This brings up the topic of *instruction*. Pope Pius XI said that “the *first* and most natural garden” where vocations should blossom is the family. He even adds that: “Exceptions to the rule are rare and do nothing but confirm the rule itself”. This is why the same Pope was imploring priests to use every means, by words and writings, to instruct parents about their obligations. Good books on the family should be put in the hands of parents. When it is possible to arrange them, conferences on the education of children etc., are extremely helpful. (The Dominican Sisters in Post Falls give talks to the parents and they are appreciated.) When the spirit of sacrifice reigns in a family, souls are more generous and therefore more disposed to receive the divine calling.

- There is a list of the various traditional seminaries, monasteries and convents, for men and women, at this site: [http://sspexasia.com/Documents/Society\\_of\\_Saint\\_Pius\\_X/Vocations/index.htm](http://sspexasia.com/Documents/Society_of_Saint_Pius_X/Vocations/index.htm) It is important to inform young people about these religious communities.

- To finish, (and this is may be *the most important suggestion*) since vocations are gifts from God, we should have the parents pray. “Rogate Dominum messis ut mittet operarios in

vineam suam – Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest” (Mt 9:38). Fr. Mateo, the great apostle of the Sacred Heart, promoted “*Night Adoration in the home*” as a means to obtain vocations. (There was a Mrs. Vaughan who, thanks to her daily holy hour, obtained six priests and five nuns among her thirteen children!) We do promote the Enthronement in the Home but perhaps we do not explain enough to the people its interior spirit. Fr. Mateo wanted the monthly holy hour of reparation to be the means of *living* the enthronement in the home, i.e. of honoring Jesus as the King of the family.

A good example of this prayer of parents is the famous prayer of the Mothers of Lu, in Northern Italy:

“O God, grant that one of my sons may become a priest!  
I myself want to live as a good Christian  
and want to guide my children always to do what is right,  
so that I may receive the grace, O God,  
to be allowed to give you a holy priest! Amen.”

*District News*: For our readers who have known Fr. Yves Normandin, the famous “Pastor out in the cold” (Note: we hope to republish his book in English this year on the occasion of its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary), he turned 91 years old last Feb. 18. Father is now in a wheel chair and can no longer offer the Holy Mass. He lives in the Precious Blood Residence in Lévis, Québec. In gratitude for all he did for Canada, let us keep him in our prayers.

Yours truly in Jesus, Mary Immaculate and St Joseph.

Fr. Daniel Couture  
District Superior