



# *PRIESTS FOR THE FUTURE*

## *ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN VOCATION APPEAL*

Bishop Bartchak is encouraging you to support our diocese's Vocation Appeal. Your gift will fund the diocese's renewed efforts to promote vocations to priesthood, an especially urgent need as the number of seminarians for our diocese has been very low (in fact **ZERO** for the last two years) in recent years. To inspire more young men to consider the priesthood, the Vocation Office has developed a robust plan, which includes:

- A newly formed Vocation Team with 5 priests in different regions of the diocese who are committed to offering mentorship to young men as they discern their vocations.
- Our recent Called By Name campaign, which has already connected the Vocation Team with many incredible young men.
- Discernment Retreats & In-Person Events; Regional Priesthood Discernment Groups in which several young men are already participating.
- Fr. Brian Norris's (St. Therese Parish, Altoona) appointment as Vocation Recruiter, expanding the outreach of Fr. Peter Crowe (St. Andrew Parish, Johnstown, Vocations Director) and the Vocation Team.
- Revamping communications and marketing to reach more young men.
- Creating a new website with discernment resources: [ajvocations.org](http://ajvocations.org).
- Personally, accompanying men as they discern their vocations.

Our Vocation Team's overall strategy is to identify and accompany young men as they discern God's call. Bishop Bartchak is asking all parishioners to be especially generous to ensure dedicated priests for the future of our diocese. Please be aware that it costs the diocese \$85,000 per year to educate just **ONE** seminarian. To learn more and make a gift, visit [ajvocations.org/give](http://ajvocations.org/give). **ALSO**, prior to prayerfully considering a gift to the "Priests for the Future" fund, please read the attached flyer in today's bulletin. There you will also find an envelope for charitable giving to this fund.

## ***From the Pastor's Desk***

*As always I hope and pray with you that you are well, and that your pastoral and spiritual needs are being met here at our parish. As always, I encourage you to reach out to me with any needs that you have or observe any needs that you believe need to be addressed (e.g. parishioners who may not be so forward who need prayer, financial assistance, the sacraments, etc.). I am more than willing to meet with anyone to discuss these needs or to any spiritual or other counseling (that I am qualified to offer) that you might require. Always remember that as leader of our faith community my primary ministry is to serve you.*

*I also ask that you continue to prayerfully review your support of our parish family of which each of you is a valued member. As such, I ask that you each consider your contributions in terms of your **regular attendance and active participation in the Eucharist**, stepping forward for liturgical ministries (as our numbers seem to continue to thin our every year), attending the social activities provided by the Church for community building (for **Christ is Community**, not just fulfilling a Sunday Mass obligation), volunteering for fundraising activities and other events, and necessarily, charitable giving, just to name some of the more important elements of active participation. Being active in as many of these ways as possible demonstrates that you are concerned for the ongoing life and vitality of Visitation as time rages on and new membership is at a premium. In that regard, if you know someone who is looking to find a new spiritual home, invite them to pray with us. You never know, they might just join our community and increase our diversity.*

## ***Collection for Retired Religious***

*Next weekend is the national collection for retired religious men and women that assists religious and their communities in providing loving care especially for their aging and informed members. Rising health care costs, an increase in the number of retired religious, a decreasing number of income for many communities due to smaller number of vocations, and other factors are causing a stressful financial struggle to adequately provide for the aging members of religious communities throughout the United States. Again, the collection for retired religious (asked for by the diocese) will occur next weekend (December 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>). Your assistance helps to change the lives of this aging population that served the Church so well over the course of many decades, especially in the areas of healthcare and education. Thank you for acknowledging their service.*