



Girls celebrate at a Catholic summer camp with Sr. Marie Therese of the Sister Servants of the Eternal Word.



# NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK

NOVEMBER 7-13, 2021

## WORLDWIDE CHANGE VATICAN TO REQUIRE NEW 'PRE-SEMINARY' PERIOD

A seismic change is coming that will affect every diocese in the world. Men who feel called to the priesthood—even those who have been fully vetted by their bishops—will not be starting seminary right away. Rather, the Vatican will soon require a “propaedeutic phase” that lasts one to two years before seminary.

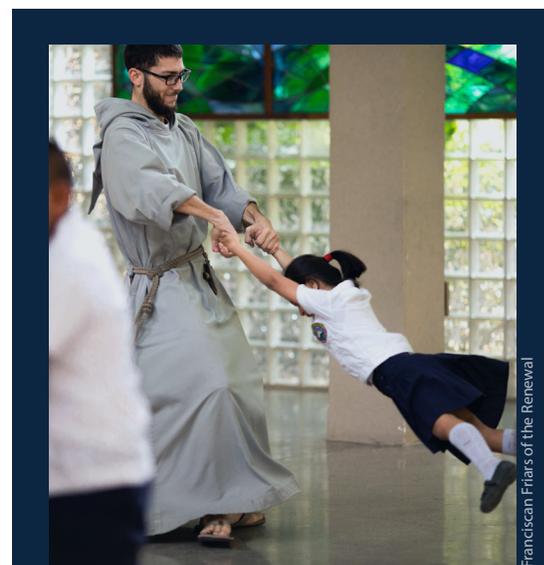
Why the change? According to Bishop Thomas Daly of Spokane, who served for years on the U.S. Bishops’ committee for vocations, it’s because the cultural climate has shifted: “Many men aren’t coming from intact families or Catholic environments as they did in the past,” said Bishop Daly. “As a result, these well-intentioned men are often lacking in basic Christian values and knowledge. Before they start studying for the priesthood, we need to fill in the gaps.”

The new propaedeutic phase, which is envisioned as separate and distinct from seminary proper, will focus on forming mature Christian men who have a firm grasp on prayer, scripture, and Church teaching.

While some observers have worried about further lengthening the 6-9 years of formation, others view it as necessary. “Simply put: my guys need it,” said one vocation director. “I want to ensure they have solid foundation before jumping into the intensity of seminary life.”



Bishop White Seminary



Franciscan Friars of the Renewal

## TRANSFORMATIVE JOY

“Each of you has a personal vocation which He has given you for your own joy and sanctity. When a person is conquered by the fire of His gaze, no sacrifice seems too great to follow Him and give Him the best of ourselves. This is what the saints have always done, spreading the light of the Lord... and transforming the world into a welcoming home for everyone.”

~Pope Benedict XVI





Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia (Nashville Dominicans)

## LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME HOW YOUNG IS TOO YOUNG?



How young is too young to think about priesthood or religious life? It depends on the person, of course, but most teenagers are constantly thinking about what they're going to do with their lives: "Who am I going to marry?" "What college will I attend?" "What kind of career will I have?"

The numbers prove the point: by age 17, sixty-one percent of diocesan priests and forty-nine percent of religious sisters first considered their vocations. There are historical precedents, too. St. Therese entered Carmel when she was 15. Mother Teresa entered religious life at age 18. St. Maximilian Kolbe took final vows when he was just 20, which means he was just 16 when he entered.

*Left: Boys imagine what it would be like to baptize a baby. Teaching the class is a sister from the Nashville Dominicans, one of the fastest-growing religious communities in the U.S. Their average age of entry to the convent is 23.*

But is "choosing young" a relic of a different era? Perhaps not. Consider that today, even middle schoolers are expected to be thinking about their college major, so they can take the right high school classes and thus enter a good university. Given this reality, encouraging young Catholics to think about the path to priesthood or religious life makes a lot of sense.



## PRAYER LEADING TO ACTION

Mother Teresa famously said, "I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do... Prayer changes us and we change things." The same applies to praying for vocations. Many of us are also called to *work* for vocations: to talk to kids, reach out to youth, and guide our own children. What work is on your heart to do?

## THE NEXT GENERATION BY FR. GARRETT MCINTRYE

After graduating high school in 2003, I entered college seminary to discern a call to the priesthood. When I left, my pastor held a reception and presented me with this San Damiano crucifix. He said he had it hanging in his office and promised to give it to the first man to enter the seminary from a parish where he was pastor. He was celebrating his tenth anniversary as a priest that year. He told me that if I became a priest, I had to do the same.

"I'm happy to say that this year, during my own tenth year of priestly service, I was able to give the cross to Nico Broussard, who was born the year I received it, and who will be entering seminary this fall. I pray that it will be a source of inspiration for him as it was for me. And ultimately I pray that he will be able to give it away to some future seminarian at his own parish."



*Fr. McIntyre (right) presents a cross to a new seminarian from his parish.*



## 2021: THE BRIGHT SIDE

Despite pandemic disruptions, several religious communities experienced very large classes of new novices, such as the Dominican Province of Saint Joseph, which welcomed 14 young men into formation in Washington, D.C.

