

Strategic Plan

Nurturing, growing and supporting God's call to love and care for each other within the Archdiocese of Perth and wider WA community.

*Developed by:
The Archdiocese of Perth Vocations Office
21 Victoria Square, Perth WA 6000
perthvocations.org.au*

May 2023





Vocations Office
STRATEGIC PLAN

“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, in the experience of fraternal love.”

POPE FRANCIS ON THE 51ST WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

A warm welcome

Archbishop Tim Costelloe, SDB

The Christian vocation to which we are all called through our baptism - the invitation from Jesus to follow him as a faithful disciple - is at the same time a very beautiful and a very demanding way to live our lives.

In calling us into his Church, of course, the Lord does not expect us to struggle on alone as we try to be faithful to him. By belonging to his Church we are part of a community of brothers and sisters who understand and accept gladly that it is together, and through our mutual support, encouragement and prayer, that we do our best to walk in the way of Jesus, to commit ourselves to his truth, and to live with the life he gives us.

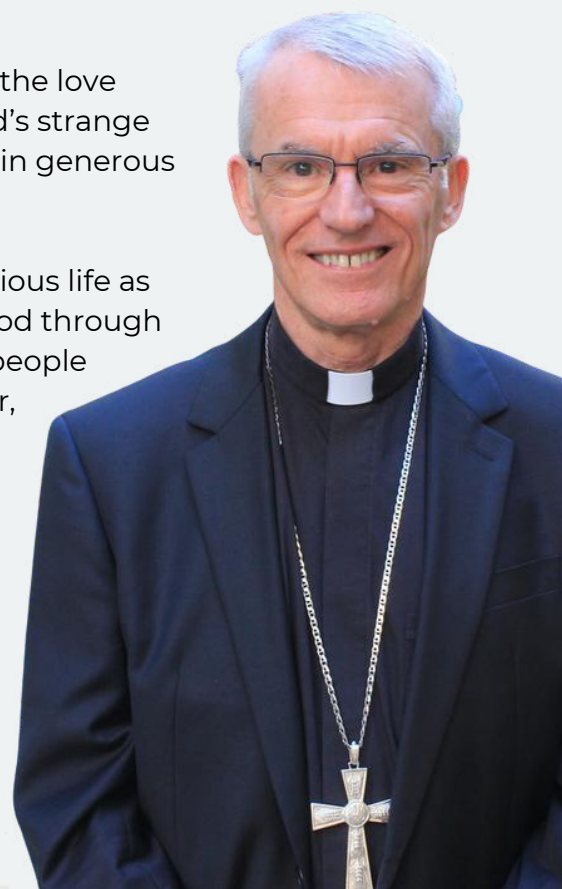
Most importantly of all, it is through our belonging to the Church that we are constantly being drawn into an always deepening relationship of love with the Lord himself. He is with us always, strengthening us in our weakness, supporting us in our struggles and in our sorrow, forgiving us when we fail, and assuring us that he will never desert us.

As his disciples we want to follow him where ever he may lead us. For most of us this will mean that we will travel a path that leads to marriage and family.

This is a beautiful vocation: it is a powerful sign and symbol of the love which exists between Christ and his Church. For others, in God's strange ways, there may be a call to remain single and to live our lives in generous service of others.

Some will hear the call within them to follow Jesus in the religious life as religious sisters, brothers or priests. By their consecration to God through the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, these generous people become living signs of the values which, in one way or another, are meant to mark the life of every Christian.

Because the Church is the body of Christ and depends on the head of this body, Christ himself, for its life, God calls some men to the ordained ministry as deacons, priests or bishops.



Life
TO THE FULL

These men are called to dedicate their lives, totally and exclusively, to God's holy people by becoming, through their ordination, living signs that Jesus is still among his people as their Good Shepherd and as their Servant Leader.

In a special and formal way, deacons will be called to be living images of Jesus, who gets down on his hands and knees to wash the feet of his disciples. Deacons are called to service, in imitation of the one who said that he had come not to be served but to serve.

Those who are called to the ministerial priesthood, as priests or bishops, accept the responsibility and privilege of being living images of Jesus as the Good Shepherd who leads his flock with gentleness, with kindness, and with love, ensuring that his flock, his community of disciples, is kept safe from the dangers that threaten them.

We simply cannot be the holy people of God, the Church God wants us to be, unless we know that we must look beyond ourselves to Christ, who is our hope and our strength.

Those who hear the call of God to the ordained ministry, and who have the generosity and courage to respond, are strengthened by Christ through the Sacrament of Orders, to be his living instruments so that the Church is never deprived of the presence of its Good Shepherd and its Servant Leader. As we in the Archdiocese of Perth re-launch our vocations ministry I invite all of you who read these few words of mine to search your hearts and ask yourself just what it might be that God is asking of you.

Whatever it is, and however unworthy you might think yourself to be, remember that the God who calls us will always give us the grace and strength we need to respond.

And as we all reflect on how best we can respond to God's call, we might all pray that God, who has begun the good work in us, will bring it to fulfilment.

+ Timothy Costelloe SDB

+ Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth



Vision

To promote vocations within the Archdiocese of Perth in collaboration with Parishes, Catholic Schools, Universities, Catholic agencies, and various multicultural communities.

The Vocations Committee envision the “Body of Christ” – the Church or the people of God – as the principal promoter of a culture of vocation within families and communities.

Mission

Our mission is to nurture a culture of vocation within families and communities in the Archdiocese of Perth.

In the next three years we aim to build an awareness of vocation as a call to holiness from God. In particular we aim to encourage people to explore God’s unique call to them in the ordained ministry, religious life, single life, married life or in any other life endeavour.



Rationale

- Our commitment to cultivate a culture of vocation is based on Jesus' mandate to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19) and "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19; cf. 1 Cor 11:24).

While this commitment is, in part, motivated by a serious shortage of priests, at a deeper level it flows from the understanding that the call to holiness is fundamental to all Christians.

Only persons seeking a mature relationship with Christ and who are rooted in the good soil of the faithful will become suitable for the priesthood/ordained ministry or religious life, and able to make their particular contribution to the wider community

- An important aim of raising the awareness of vocation in the Archdiocese of Perth is to give people who are searching for something more in their lives, the opportunity to listen to, explore and respond to their call to holiness.

From this initial initiative of exploration, we hope that it can open the way to discovering God's plan for them. This exploration is also aided by prayer, spiritual nourishment, vocations promotion activities, and the generous support of the youth ministries, local parishes, and the surrounding Catholic schools and universities.

- A universal Call to holiness invites all the people of God to be holy. It is a lifelong process of seeking God through the person of Jesus Christ. This call is rooted in the sacrament of baptism.

Pope Saint John Paul II states in his Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, that holiness is not only a state but a task whereby Christians strive for a full Christian life imitating Christ. (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, #30) Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, expresses that holiness is visible in the everyday lives of God's people; in parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in the elderly religious who never lose their smile. (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, #6,7) Holiness is not meant for a chosen few; it is for all.

In line with the vision of the Australian fifth Plenary Council document *Instrumentum Laboris* on holiness, the document highlights that while holiness is a journey, it is not to be taken alone. Rather, it is a journey shared with God and others. (*Instrumentum Laboris*, # 85 – 88).

What is a Vocation?

The term “vocation” comes from the Latin verb, vocare, meaning “to call”. Following Jesus’ teachings, the Church, in her wisdom, proclaims that all members of Christ’s body; all the followers of Christ, are called to holiness. As the Second Vatican Council states and promulgated by pope St. Paul VI saying:

“Therefore in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostles: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification.”

This call to holiness, or sanctification, or more simply faithfulness, is a call to love: to love God and to love our neighbour. The particular pathway where we live out this call to love is our vocation – in single life, marriage, priesthood/ordained ministry, religious life, or other life endeavours. Ultimately, our call to holiness comes from God. It is an invitation to the state where we can best live out this call to love

We often hear across many communities, societies and cultures a saying of "being called" or "having a calling." Fundamentally, that translates to a sense that there is something you were meant to or become, a mission or a destiny that is unique to you.

Our life's calling is what makes us feel that life is meaningful because it allows us to exercise and act on our passion, leading us to live a purposeful life.

In our Catholic community, such callings are referred to as a Vocation, and they look different for every person. For example, there is the calling to priesthood or the religious life and then there is a calling for a couple to choose to create a family based on Christ's teachings.

At the core of our Vocation is an invitation to experience God's deep love for us and to go forth and share that love generously through our service to others.

I invite you to embrace your Vocations and generously share Christ's call for us to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

– Fr Minh Thuy, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy



Identifying challenges

- For the past few years, there have been challenges in promoting the culture of vocations within the Archdiocese of Perth. In part, this may be because society has become increasingly secular.

A culture of materialism, scientism (the uncritical belief in the power of scientific knowledge), and the primacy of money and fashion have overtaken and diminished our fundamental understanding that we are all sons and daughters of God.

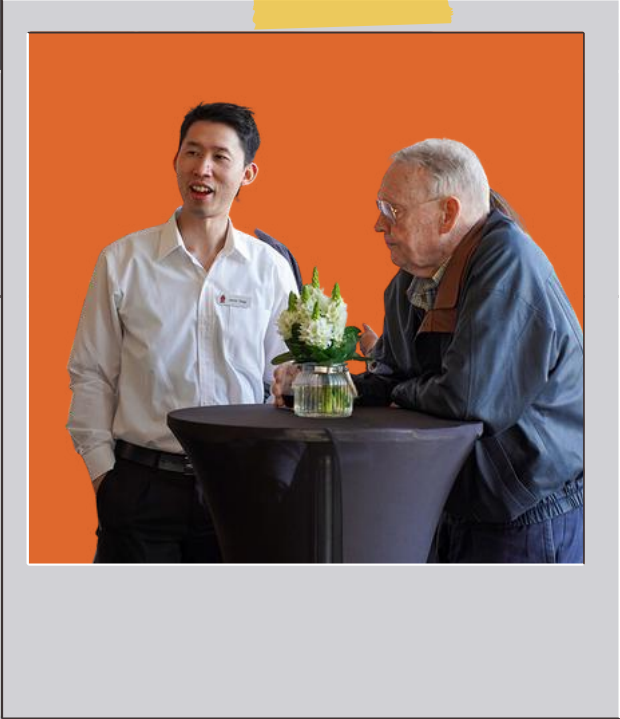
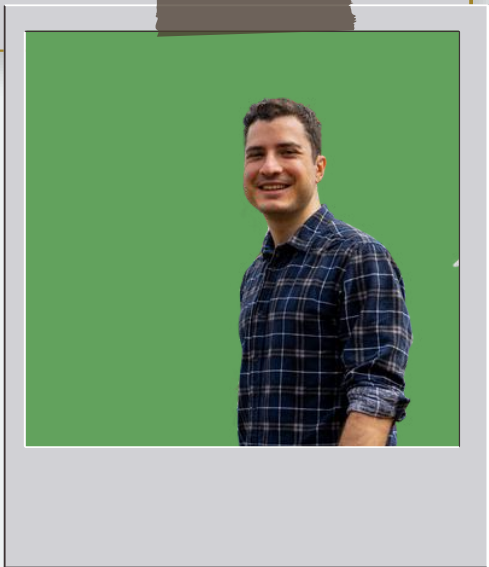
“Postmodern individualism and globalisation, as well as the reality of ethical relativism and religious indifference” have also been forceful influences

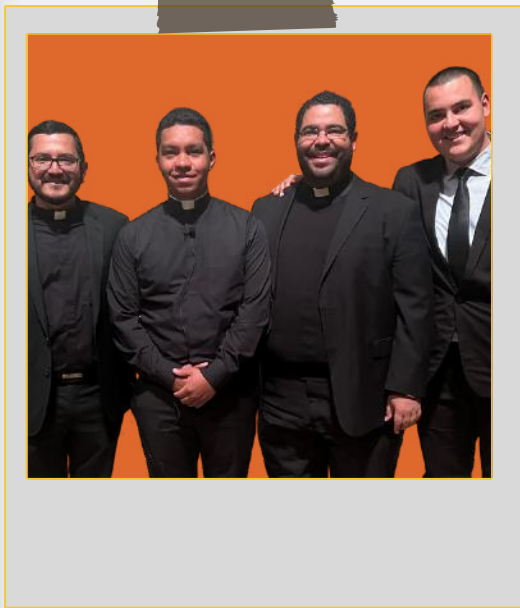
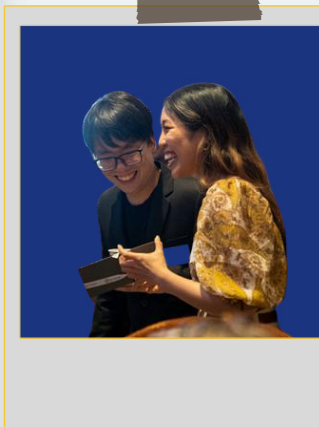
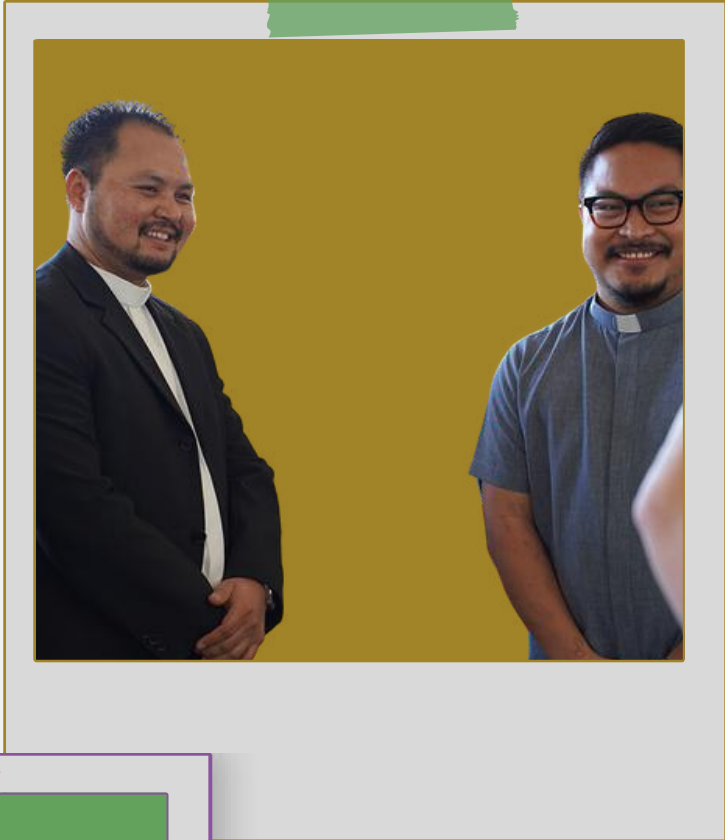
- The strength and pervasiveness of secular culture together with the Church’s struggle to publicly live up to its ideals and values have contributed to the decline in the awareness of vocation.

While conscious of these formidable factors, the Vocations Committee, motivated by faith and hope in Christ puts forward the following initiatives for promoting a culture of vocation in the Archdiocese of Perth.



Vocations at the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth





Strategic Initiatives & Priorities (2023 - 2026)

01 Vocations Promotion at the Parochial Level

At the heart of the Archdiocese of Perth is the complex of parishes spread across the city and extending into country areas. Our plan for promoting a culture of vocation will therefore begin with a focus on the parishes. Our aim will be to engage with all parishioners but especially with the youth who are seeking to discern their future way of life.

We propose the following strategies:

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY VOCATION AWARENESS:

Good Shepherd Sunday will become a major focus in the raising of vocation awareness in the parishes. All parishes will be encouraged to have a vocation promotion officer in the parish. In addition, all priests should foster vocations and on vocation Sunday be encouraged to promote the understanding that all are called to be shepherds, each in their own way.

Some pray, others encourage and others again journey with people who are seeking to discover their vocation. The Archbishop will celebrate a special mass at St. Mary's Cathedral dedicated to the idea of vocation followed by an extended talk.

All Clergy in the Archdiocese will be provided with materials to promote vocations in their parishes and mission areas both electronically and via mail.

Once a year, the Vocations Committee or the Director will address all Clergy during an annual Clergy event organised by the Archdiocese to provide an update on the work of the Vocations Office.



01 Vocations Promotion at the Parochial Level

PARISH OUTREACH:

We aim to reach out to as many parishes as possible by collaboration with seminarians at St. Charles' Seminary in Guildford, we hope this initiative will evoke vocations through priests or seminarians' sharing of their vocation's stories. By maintaining this parochial outreach programme, we aim to build a strong connection between the Seminary and the parishes over the three year period.

EMPOWERING YOUR MINISTRY:

Young people in the parishes will be a special focus. In collaboration with the ministry programme, we aim to inspire them with the courage to contribute to the society in which they live. Through this engagement, we are confident our youth will discover they have the necessary means for discovering their vocation – in the religious life, married life, priesthood/ordained ministry, or single life.

ARCHDIOCESAN INTER SEMINARY – PARISH SPORTS AND COLLEGIALITY:

This initiative will develop a collegial spirit among seminaries/religious communities, parishes, multicultural groups, etc. through sports and entertainment. In addition to encouraging their vocation journey, we will also promote their physical and social wellbeing. As the Latin says: “mens sana in corpore sano” or “a healthy mind in a healthy body.” In order to discern God's call to a particular vocation, one needs to have a healthy mind and a healthy body.

PARISH VOCATION RETREATS AND CONFERENCES:

Retreats and conferences will increase the opportunities for individuals who are discerning a vocation, to consider God's call in a more focused and guided way. Depending on the content this programme will aid participants in the process of discovery, such retreats and conferences plan will be open to all men and women in the parishes who are in the process of vocation discernment. This initiative will involve married couples, singles living a faithful committed Christian life, priests and religious sisters and brothers sharing their stories and witnesses to their different vocations.

02

Vocations Promotion in Catholic Schools and Universities

Promoting a culture of vocation in Catholic schools requires its own individual approach. We will focus on year 10, 11 and 12 students as they are already considering their careers and lifestyle. By working through the appropriate channels (including a vocation promoter in the school) in the schools, we aim to integrate the idea of God's call and His invitation to listen and discern their particular vocation. Similarly at the tertiary level, the Vocations Committee will liaise with chaplains to identify the most effective strategies to promote vocations.

A VOCATIONS' DAY PROGRAMME:

This initiative aims to integrate discernment with sports and entertainment. These more informal activities will provide students with the opportunity to talk about vocation in a more relaxed atmosphere. It would be most desirable to integrate this initiative into existing religious education programmes.

VOCATIONS' RETREAT PROGRAMME:

This initiative is best suited to tertiary students and apprentices. It will provide them with the opportunity to discern God's will for them in an atmosphere promoting more focused reflection.

SEMINARIANS' VOCATION STORY SHARING:

This initiative is best suited to tertiary students and apprentices. It will provide them with the opportunity to discern God's will for them in an atmosphere promoting more focused reflection.



03

Vocations Promotion via Online Platform

To take advantage of the strong influence of social media on young people, the Vocations Committee will ensure that the website and social media accounts are comprehensive and up to date. The promotional strategies would be:

WEBSITE:

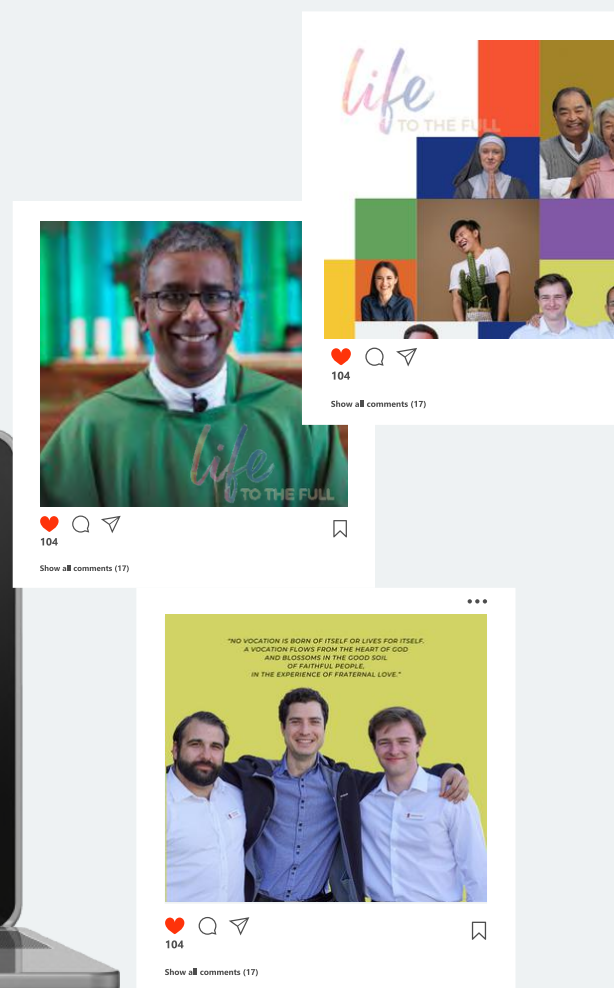
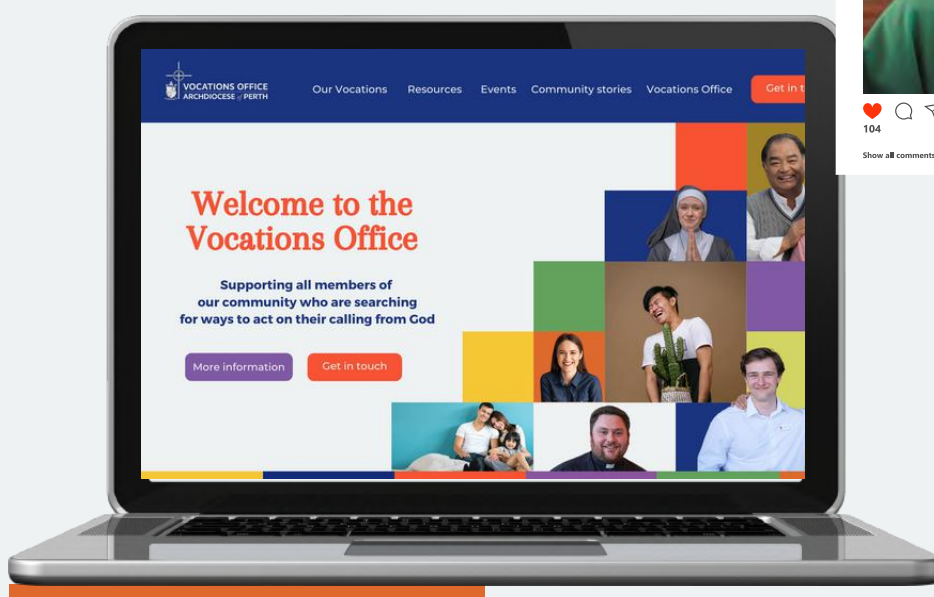
The website is the main online platform for accessing the activities of the Vocations Office. It will be a source of information on vocations with accompanying online resources, especially for individuals who are seriously discerning their future.

FACEBOOK:

The Vocation Office will use Facebook to share initiatives that have occurred in parishes, schools and tertiary institutions. This platform will report and amplify these initiatives and reach out to the wider on-line community to cultivate a culture of vocation.

INSTAGRAM:

The Office will also use Instagram, an additional on-line platform, to share vocation snippets, including photo stories from retreats, conferences and events with the wider community.



4 Sustaining Those Discerning Vocations

The priority for the Vocation Office will be to follow-up on individuals who have shown interest in the priesthood or ordained ministry. However it will also assist those interested in religious life, marriage and committed singlehood by directing them to the appropriate personnel and resources. Possible initiatives include:

ARCHBISHOP'S DINNER FOR VOCATIONS:

This initiative involves the Archbishop hosting an annual dinner for potential candidates for the priesthood and religious life along with serious seekers who may not yet be sure of the shape of their vocation. In an after-dinner talk the Archbishop will encourage the men and women present in their discernment. The dinner has the potential to bring at least some of those attending to a decision to test their vocation.

ARCDIOCESAN VOCATIONS CONFERENCE:

Once the various initiatives have been acted on, an Archdiocesan vocations conference will be held. This conference will call together representations from parishes, schools and colleges, tertiary institutions and religious communities and Church organisations to discuss ways in which a culture of vocations can be developed.

ST. CHARLES' SEMINARY OPEN DAY PROGRAMME (OPEN OR ORIENTATION DAY):

With this initiative potential candidates will be invited to come, see and experience the Seminary at Guildford. Seminarians will guide invitees to a tour of Padbury House, the Seminary accommodation and the grounds, including the water tank built in 1918. Potential candidates will join the Seminary community for Mass, lunch, and an afternoon input session concluded with a Holy Hour.



4

Sustaining Those Discerning Vocations

THREE MONTHS DISCERNMENT PERIOD FOR THE PROSPECTIVE SEMINARIANS:

This initiative is specifically designed for prospective seminarians who are able to reside at the Seminary for three months. Critical in this arrangement is the understanding that vocational discernment is a process shared by a candidate with an accompanier and not something undertaken alone.

Should he wish to commence studying for the priesthood, the candidate will be asked to complete an application form at the end of the three months. A panel will then interview the candidate and, based on its findings the Vocations Director will advise the Archbishop of his suitability.

Life
TO THE FULL



End of Year Review

The Vocations Committee's strategic plan will be reviewed annually. Review questions will include:

- What are the practical challenges in implementing these initiatives?
- How can these initiatives be made more effective and efficient?
- Are there other desirable initiatives that could be undertaken without duplicating activities that are already in operation?
- Survey parishes, schools and colleges, tertiary institutions and Church organisations to ascertain the effectiveness of the strategic plan.



From our Vocations Director

We look forward to supporting every person's Vocations.

On behalf of Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB and the Vocations Committee, it is with great pleasure that I share with you our work in supporting our brothers, sisters, families, and communities on nurturing, strengthening, and enriching every person's Vocations. As Pope Francis says: "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, in the experience of fraternal love." (Pope Francis on the 51st World Day of Prayer for Vocations)

Our commitment to cultivate a culture of vocation is based on Jesus' mandate to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19) and "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19; cf. 1 Cor 11:24). However, to fulfill Jesus' mandate, we need all the faithful to nurture God's call through their prayers and encouragement; so that every person may have the courage to say Yes to wherever God is calling them to be – married life, single blessedness, religious life, or the ordained ministry.

Through this commitment, our Vocations Office and Committee are here to support anyone seeking a mature relationship with Christ, particularly those who are suitable for the priesthood/ordained ministry or religious life, and to be able to make their particular contribution to the wider community.

We have subtly given importance to all types of vocations, hoping to cast the net of God's vineyard as wide as possible and to encourage all people to take part of the nurturing and in cultivating the culture of vocations in every family and parish community. This important shift in orientation, I hope and pray, that it will lead to a journey, not taken alone, but a journey taken together as the People of God.

Therefore, we look forward to meeting you and supporting you in your Vocation's journey.

Fr Israel Quirit
Vocations Director,
Archdiocese of Perth
Vocations Office

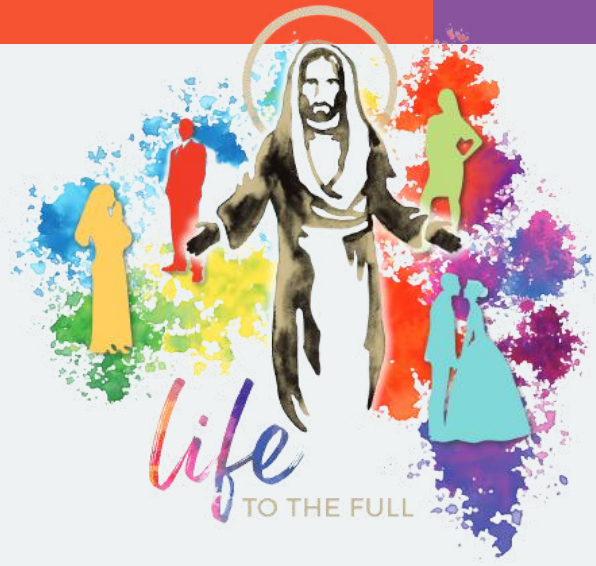


References

- Australian Catholic Bishop Conference. Instrumentum Laboris, Fifth Plenary Council of Australia. Plenary Council website. January 2021. <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/IL-documentspreads.pdf>.
- Congregation For The Clergy. Ratio Fundamentalibus Institutionis Sacerdotalis. L'Osservatore Romano: Vatican City, 8th December 2016.
- Francis. Gaudete Et Exsultate. Apostolic exhortation. Vatican website. March 19, 2018. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html.
- Francis. Message of Pope Francis For The 51st World Day Of Prayer For Vocations. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014.
- John Paul II. Novo Millennio Ineunte, apostolic letter. Vatican website. January 6, 2001, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte.html.
- Paul VI. Lumen Gentium. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Vatican Website. November 21, 1964. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

Image credits

- Catholic Youth Ministry
- The Record: The best in Catholic news from across the Archdiocese of Perth
- St Charles Seminary



For more information & to contact us:

 21 Victoria Square, Perth 6000

 GP Box 1217, East Perth WA 6892

 08 9220 5901

 vocations@perthcatholic.org.au

 @perthvocations

 @perthvocationsoffice

 perthvocations.org.au

