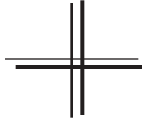


VOCATIONS HANDBOOK

A Handbook for Vocations Chairmen,
Vocations Committees,
All Brother Knights
VOCATIONS ARE EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
SUPREME COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS
1 COLUMBUS PLAZA
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06510-3326



Prayer For Vocations

Heavenly Father, bless your Church with an abundance of holy and zealous priests, deacons, brothers and sisters. Give those you have called to the married state and those you have chosen to live as single persons in the world, the special graces that their lives require. Form us all in the likeness of your Son so that in him, with him and through him we may love you more deeply and serve you more faithfully, always and everywhere. With Mary we ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Vocations Committee –

Supreme Council, Knights of Columbus

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ABOUT VOCATIONS

Every Catholic has a vocation. In fact, as a member of the Church, every Catholic participates in the reality of “vocation” in three distinct but related senses.

First, there is the common Christian vocation that comes in Baptism. This can be expressed in various ways, but in general terms it means loving and serving God and neighbor and helping to carry on the mission of the Church.

Vocation also refers to a “state in life” or a way of being Christian – priesthood, religious life, marriage, and so forth. States in life are the special, lifelong settings in which people live the baptismal vocation.

Finally, there is personal vocation. The personal vocation of each one of us takes shape in the unique combination of talents, personal characteristics, relationships and life circumstances – including both our common Christian vocation and our state in life – that point to the special role God wants us to play in his redemptive plan. Membership in the Knights of Columbus is part of the personal vocation of many Catholic men.

When people speak of “vocation,” they usually mean vocation in the second sense – state in life. Most Christians are called by God to the married state, and some are called to the state of single lay persons living in the world. But Jesus also chooses certain men to act in his Person through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and the other sacraments; they are called to be priests. Others are called to the clerical state as permanent deacons. And still others, both women and men, are called to what is known as consecrated life – a way of life marked by the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity,

and obedience – whose most familiar expression is religious life.

The Knights of Columbus cherishes and celebrates all forms of vocation as gifts of God. But because of the Church's urgent need for priests and consecrated religious women and men, the Order's vocations program gives special priority to promoting these vocations. Vocations of all kinds arise and are nurtured within families. Thus the K of C vocations program is related not only to the Church Activities program but also to the Family Activities program. This "family" dimension of vocations makes lay involvement particularly important.

Let's look briefly at the "state in life" vocations of priesthood and religious life on which the vocations program is focused.

Priesthood

Jesus called his first disciples at the Sea of Galilee (cf. Mk 1:16-20) and later said to them: "You did not choose me; no, I chose you and commissioned you to go out" (Jn 15:16). Christ, the Head of the Church and Lord of all creation, continues his salvific work in our own time. The ministerial priesthood is a privileged share in his work.

As the life of Christ was consecrated to the authentic proclamation of the loving will of his Father, so too the life of priests should be consecrated, in the name of Christ, to the same proclamation. The priest is called to assist the Bishop in his threefold responsibility of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling. The priest must be a teacher of the Word, a minister of the sacraments, and a pastor of his flock. Pope John Paul II reminds us: "Without priests the Church would not be able to live that fundamental obedience which is at the very heart of

her existence and her mission" (Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 1).

As faithful members of the laity, we have a duty to support priests and encourage vocations to the priesthood. Pope John Paul encourages this important work. "The Church... is called to safeguard this gift [the priesthood], to esteem it and love it," he says. "She is responsible for the birth and development of priestly vocations" (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 41).

Religious Life

Jesus also chooses certain men and women to be signs of his love while imitating his own way of living by embracing the consecrated life, whose most familiar expression is the religious life.

Consecrated life is a special Christian lifestyle – a special way of holiness – marked by formally professing the evangelical counsels (the "vows") of poverty, chastity and obedience and living them as a sign of God's kingdom.

Religious life is the form of consecrated life that is most familiar to most Catholics. In addition to the elements common to all consecrated life, religious life requires that those who have professed vows as members live a common life and that they take part in the common apostolic works of their religious community. The Church recognizes many institutes of religious life, commonly known as religious orders or religious communities or societies. A religious man may be a hermit, monk, friar or brother, and may or may not be ordained as a priest. A religious woman, living the special vocation of the bride of Christ, may be an anchoress, cloistered nun, or an active sister.

THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS AND VOCATIONS

The Knights of Columbus has always been a strong defender of the priesthood and religious life and a generous supporter of seminarians and of religious in formation. As the largest Catholic fraternal society in the world, the Order seeks to assist the Church by financial and moral aid for this purpose. In light of the needs of the Church in our day, the Order has intensified its promotional programs in recent years.

As Knights get more involved in vocations efforts, they find new meaning in their own vocations as Catholic laymen and members of the Order. They also learn more about the importance of teamwork, for the best vocations programs are those planned and carried out by a team.

The vocations chairman is a leader. His job is to call others together, inspire them to share prayers and ideas and make worthwhile plans, and then reach out beyond the group. The model is Jesus' work with the apostles. Successful groups need not be large, but they must be committed.

Just as priestly and religious vocations are vocations within the Church and at the service of the Church, so the Knights of Columbus vocations program operates within the Church and at her service. **Locally, programs should be integrated as much as possible with existing parish and diocesan efforts.** For instance, in an ideal situation a Knights of Columbus council will take an active part, or even play a leadership role, in a parish or interparochial vocations effort.

Objectives: Awareness, Climate, Motivation

In general, a vocations program will have three objectives: awareness, "climate," and motivation.

1. *Awareness:* The aim is to explain the meaning of different vocations, underline the Church's urgent need, and encourage people – young people in particular – to hear what God is asking of them.
2. *Climate:* This means being aware – and working to make others aware – of the social, cultural, and religious spirit of the times and how it impacts, for good and for ill, on people's readiness to heed and answer God's call.
3. *Motivation:* The intent is to move people to respond positively to God's call by entering seminaries and novitiates, if this is what God is asking of them, and to persevere in the program of formation for the priesthood or religious life after having done so.

Structure and Meetings

The chairman of either a state or local vocations committee should convene committee meetings at least four times a year. The chaplain should be present if possible. Meetings should follow a standard Knights of Columbus committee meeting format. While dates and times are up to the chairman and his committee members, it is important to schedule meetings so that work can begin early in the fraternal year.

Topics for meetings include at least the following:

State Meetings

1. Proper and complete implementation of the Refund Support Vocations Program (RSVP) (see p.13);
2. Possible financial aid to seminaries within the state's jurisdiction;

3. Possible aid to overseas seminarians or seminaries;
4. Organized prayer to promote vocations;
5. The annual observance of Vocations Awareness Week (usually during Easter week);
6. Promoting Knights of Columbus vocations efforts through the media; and
7. How to establish and maintain a good working relationship with local bishops.

Local Meetings

1. Proper and complete implementation of RSVP;
2. Vocations awareness days at Catholic elementary or secondary schools or colleges;
3. Sponsorship of poster or essay contests in Catholic elementary and secondary schools;
4. Organized prayer to promote vocations, especially Holy Hours;
5. Effective distribution of Knights of Columbus and Catholic Information Service vocations materials in parishes, Catholic schools, and retreat houses;
6. Promoting Knights of Columbus vocations efforts through local media;
7. Effective publicity to encourage attendance at vocations events; and
8. Establishing and maintaining a good working relationship with the local pastor and other priests.

In the case of both state and local meetings, keeping accurate minutes will be of great help to future chairmen and committee members.

Responsibilities of the State Vocations Chairman

The primary responsibility of the state vocations chairman is to ensure the proper and complete implementation of the RSVP. He should contact the vocation director or directors of the diocese or dioceses in his jurisdiction and develop a good working relationship. (To find out who they are, and their addresses and phone numbers, consult *The Official Catholic Directory*, also sometimes called the “Kenedy Directory.” Most parishes have a copy.) **In particular, the chairman should make sure that every diocesan seminarian in his jurisdiction is included in RSVP.**

Beyond that fundamental responsibility, the state chairman may also contact the vocations directors of religious communities or the rectors of seminaries and directors of houses of formation within his jurisdiction. (Again, consult *The Official Catholic Directory*.) Once RSVP is properly organized and functioning, the state chairman, in cooperation with the vocations committee and the state officers, should look into the possibility of helping dioceses or religious institutes with other programs to promote priestly or religious vocations.

The state vocations chairman is responsible for conducting the committee meetings required to develop and carry out state-level vocations efforts. He should motivate his fellow officers, especially concerning implementation of RSVP. In this regard, the state deputy may choose to call upon his district deputies to assist the vocations chairman.

State vocations chairmen will find it helpful to read an apostolic exhortation of Pope John Paul II called *I Will Give You Shepherds (Pastores Dabo Vobis)*. In this document, published in 1992 and available at most Catholic bookstores, the Holy Father speaks of the significance of the priestly vocation and of how lay people can assist in promoting and supporting vocations to the priesthood.

Responsibilities of the Council/Assembly/Circle Vocations Chairman

The primary responsibility of the council, assembly, or circle vocations chairman is to ensure the proper and complete implementation of the RSVP program at the local level. He should work with the state vocations chairman to ensure that *every* diocesan seminarian sponsored by the diocese or dioceses in his jurisdiction is included in RSVP.

When it is certain that every diocesan seminarian is covered, the local chairman may also contact the vocations directors of religious orders or the rectors and directors of seminaries and houses of formation within his jurisdiction. (*The Official Catholic Directory* will tell you who they are: see above.) Once the RSVP program is properly organized and operating, the council, assembly, or circle vocations chairman, in cooperation with the vocations committee and the local officers, should look into ways of assisting parishes, seminaries, houses of formation, monasteries, and/or other religious institutes with programs to promote priestly and religious vocations.

The chairman is responsible for conducting the committee meetings needed to develop and carry out his council's, assembly's, or circle's vocations efforts. He must motivate his brother Knights to promote priestly and religious vocations, with particular emphasis on RSVP. In this regard, the chairman may seek the help of his district deputy. Upon completing his term, he should share what he has learned with the incoming vocations chairman. Like the state chairmen, the local chairmen also will benefit from reading Pope John Paul's document *I Will Give You Shepherds* (see above).

PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

Refund Support Vocations Program (RSVP)

Responding to Pope John Paul's appeal to all Catholics to celebrate the Third Millennium of Christianity in suitable ways, the Knights of Columbus has committed itself to provide financial and moral support to every seminarian in the United States and Canada, if possible. While the Order has a number of other programs of assistance to seminaries and seminarians (see below), RSVP is the primary program through which Knights of Columbus councils, assemblies and circles participate in an organized manner in the great enterprise. Every council, assembly and circle should take part.

Since the beginning of the program in 1981, the Knights of Columbus has given nearly \$30 million to the support of seminarians through RSVP, with the Supreme Council refunding nearly \$6 million to local units. Along with financial aid, the assistance through this program also involves prayer and moral support, including letters and visits (at least four letters and one personal contact per seminarian in every July-June fraternal year). In this way, besides providing financial assistance, RSVP creates bonds of friendship between Knights and future priests many of whom join the Order and become chaplains as a result.

Under this program, local K of C councils or assemblies agree to make an annual contribution of \$500 or more to an individual seminarian to help with his personal expenses. Councils and assemblies can sponsor more than one seminarian if their resources permit. In each case, the minimum annual contribution is \$500 to one seminarian.

United States and Canada

For every \$500 given to an individual, the Supreme Council will refund the council or assembly \$100. The maximum refund a council or assembly can receive is \$400 per individual supported.

Philippines

For every \$250 given to an individual, the Supreme Council will refund the council or assembly \$50. The maximum refund a council or assembly can receive is \$400 per individual supported.

For circles of Columbian Squires, the annual contribution per seminarian is a minimum of \$100, with each circle eligible to receive from the Supreme Council a refund of \$20 for each \$100 donated.

RSVP is unique in that funds go directly to the seminarian. For this reason, checks must be made out to the individual seminarian, not to a seminary, diocese, or other institution. The same holds true for members or religious orders – the check should be made out to the individual. The donation made to the seminarian is not intended to cover the cost of education; rather these funds are for the seminarian to use for his personal needs. Seminaries and other institutions may qualify for and receive financial assistance from other programs of Knights of Columbus units, but they do not qualify for the RSVP refunds.

Eligibility for RSVP

The following persons are eligible to receive RSVP funds:

1. Seminarians attending college seminaries (sometimes called minor seminaries);
2. Seminarians who have been accepted by a diocese and are currently in their "spirituality" year;
3. Seminarians attending major seminaries (usually, four years) in preparation for priestly ordination;
4. Seminarians in their "pastoral" year (most often, when they are deacons);
5. Seminarians who belong to a religious institute and are currently in formation for the priesthood (religious seminarians often are called "Brother" even though they will eventually be ordained as priests); and

6. Men and women who are novices or postulants in religious orders or religious communities.

Those eligible for assistance do include foreign seminarians studying in the United States or Canada; U.S. or Canadian seminarians studying overseas; seminarians from your home diocese currently attending seminaries in another diocese, state, or country; and seminarians from other states or dioceses attending a seminary located in your jurisdiction.

Persons not eligible for RSVP funds are the following:

1. Priests or religious seeking assistance for continuing education;
2. Religious brothers not currently studying for the priesthood; and
3. Candidates for the permanent diaconate.

Councils, assemblies, and circles are encouraged to assist in other ways worthy individuals who do not qualify for RSVP assistance, but such aid should not come from funds intended for RSVP.

Forms

A single application form (#2863) must be filled out and returned to the Supreme Office to qualify for a refund and for an award plaque. Form #2863 is on page 20 of the Council Report Forms Booklet (#1463), page 5 of the Assembly Report Forms Booklet (#325), and page 12 of the Circle Report Forms Booklet (#401).

All applications should be submitted - with copies of the canceled checks or other documentary evidence - between April 1 and June 30 in order to qualify during that fraternal year.

Amount

For councils and assemblies to qualify for a refund, they must give at least \$500; circles must give at least \$100. The rule is that the sum must go to a single qualified person; it may not be divided or apportioned to more than one recipient.

Award Plaque

To qualify for the RSVP Award Plaque, the council, assembly, or circle must:

1. Donate at least \$500 (\$100 for circles) to a qualifying seminarian;
2. Funds must be drawn against the council account.
3. Write at least four letters to the adopted seminarian within the July-June fraternal year;
4. Make at least one personal contact with the individual, if possible, during the fraternal year; and
5. Demonstrate some form of involvement in parish and/or diocesan vocation efforts.

RSVP is central to Knights of Columbus vocations efforts, but councils and assemblies should also take part in other parish and/or diocesan vocations efforts. These other vocations efforts, however, also do not qualify for a refund from the Supreme Council.

Father Michael J. McGivney Vocations Scholarships

Father Michael J. McGivney Vocations Scholarships (formerly known as Knights of Columbus Vocations Scholarships) provide funds for tuition, room, and board for seminarians enrolled in major seminaries while preparing for ordination as priests. Each recipient receives an annual grant of \$2,500, based on financial need and renewable up to four years during the first four years of theology. Scholarships are not available during the philosophy year(s), the “spirituality” year, or the year devoted to pastoral internship (often carried out during the diaconate).

To be eligible for the scholarship, men must have been accepted, with appropriate ecclesiastical approval, at a major

seminary and must be preparing for the priesthood in a diocese or religious institute in the United States, its territories, or Canada. They must also establish financial need.

The seminary attended must be approved as eligible for participation in this program by the Supreme Council. Contact the scholarship department at the Supreme Office if you have questions.

To qualify, the applicant must complete the application form. The form must be signed by his parents (if applicable), by the vocations director of his diocese or the formation director of his religious institute, and by the seminary rector. Preference will be given to applicants who are members of the Knights of Columbus or whose fathers are members, but others are also eligible to apply. To establish need, an applicant and his parents (if applicable) must provide information from income tax returns.

For a scholarship to be awarded or renewed, notification must be received of the applicant's acceptance or continued enrollment in an eligible seminary. Scholarship funds will be sent directly to the seminary, semester by semester. The K of C council to which a recipient belongs, or which is nearest to his home, will be notified that the scholarship has been awarded.

Applications for Father Michael J. McGivney Vocations Scholarships may be obtained from seminary rectors, diocesan vocation directors, or from the Supreme Council's Department of Scholarships. To be eligible in the fraternal year ahead, completed applications must be received by June 1. Applications should be sent to:

Department of Scholarships
Knights of Columbus Supreme Council
1 Columbus Plaza
New Haven, CT 06510-3326

Some state councils also offer their own vocations scholarships to qualified seminarians. For information, consult the state council vocations committee chairman.

Bishop Thomas V. Daily Vocations Scholarships

Named for the supreme chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, the Bishop Thomas V. Daily Vocations Scholarship Fund was established by delegates to the Supreme Council convention in Montreal in 1997.

Bishop Thomas V. Daily Vocations Scholarships are grants of \$2,500 awarded on the basis of academic merit (the Father Michael J. McGivney Vocations Scholarships described above are based on need). To be eligible, men must be enrolled in a program at the level of major seminary and be preparing for priestly ordination for a diocese or religious institute in the United States, its territories, or Canada.

Applications for Bishop Thomas V. Daily Vocations Scholarships may be obtained from seminary rectors, diocesan vocation directors, or from the Supreme Council. To be eligible in the fraternal year ahead, completed applications must be received by June 1. Applications should be sent to:

Department of Scholarships
Knights of Columbus Supreme Council
1 Columbus Plaza
New Haven, CT 06510-3326

For a Bishop Thomas V. Daily Vocations Scholarship, an applicant must include a copy of his most recent transcript and two letters of recommendation from among his bishop, pastor, rector, or vocations director.

International and National Support for Seminaries and Vocations

In addition to providing scholarships to seminarians, the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council has established several funds for various pontifical colleges in Rome (North American College, Pontifical Canadian College, Pontifical Mexican College) and elsewhere (American College, Louvain). The annual earnings from these funds are disbursed to the seminaries for their general use. Special funds for advanced studies for priests from the Philippines and Puerto Rico also provide earnings annually.

Many state councils give generous support to seminaries in their jurisdictions. With the cost of room, board, and tuition for a seminarian now many thousands of dollars annually, bishops warmly appreciate this help, and the Supreme Council strongly encourages it. The state deputy or vocations chairman, or both, should meet with seminary rectors to discuss ways of being of assistance.

Support for Diocesan Vocations Offices and Programs

Every diocese has a vocations office to promote vocations awareness and recruit candidates for the priesthood and religious life. Bishops appreciate monetary and other assistance to these offices. At the national level, the Supreme Council has contributed to the secretariat for vocations and priestly formation of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to help support the U.S. bishops' national vocations promotion program. State and local vocations chairmen are encouraged to meet with directors of vocations offices in their dioceses to see how they can help.

Vocations Ads

The Order's magazine *Columbia* each month carries an advertisement on its back cover promoting priestly and religious vocations. These ads have generated great favorable response. Reading about a man or woman who has responded to the Lord's call can inspire someone else to do the same. The ads also help spread vocations awareness among K of C members and others.

State or local councils, assemblies, and circles are welcome to copy *Columbia* ads for nonprofit use in parish bulletins and flyers. For permission to reproduce an ad or ads in a professional advertising campaign (newspapers, billboards, etc.), write:

Director
Catholic Information Service
Knights of Columbus Supreme Council
1 Columbus Plaza
New Haven, CT 06510-3326

If there is a seminarian or member of a religious institute that you would like to recommend for inclusion in one of these advertisements, write to the Director, as above.

Vocations Materials

The Knights of Columbus offers attractive vocations posters suitable for use in schools, churches, retreat houses, and other places. One poster is directed to young men, another to young women. Their theme is, "They Answered the Call. Is There One For You?" (#2959 men; #2960 women).

In addition, the Supreme Council office makes available vocations prayer cards, bookmarks, mailing seals, and booklets on several topics. Consult the Church Activity Supplies section of the *Supply Catalog* (#1264) for a complete listing of materials and item numbers. All vocations materials

are available at no charge (in reasonable quantities) from the Supreme Council Supply Department. Please use Requisition Form #1 when placing orders.

Supply Department
Knights of Columbus Supreme Council
1 Columbus Plaza
New Haven, CT 06510-3326

Holy Hour for Vocations

Many state and local councils sponsor Holy Hours to pray for vocations. Their format can vary from parish to parish, but they usually include adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, recitation of the Rosary, Scripture readings, and other prayers.

Vocations chairmen are encouraged to contact pastors to see if they would like to conduct Holy Hours in their parishes. The vocations committee should cooperate as requested in helping to organize the event. In particular, the committee can generate publicity to stimulate attendance.

If it is not feasible to have a Holy Hour in a parish, perhaps Mass could be celebrated monthly for the intention of more priestly and religious vocations. The Order's Family Hours of Prayer also are opportunities to pray for this intention.

Vocations Awareness Days

An excellent way to heighten vocations awareness is by sponsoring Vocations Awareness Days at Catholic elementary and secondary schools and colleges. Some state and local councils have had tremendous success with these events.

Usually they feature displays for student viewing in an auditorium, gym, or student union, with people from the diocesan vocations office and religious institutes on hand to

answer questions. The event can be an all-day affair or can be held during hours of student free time. Refreshments offered in a congenial setting can help attract students, especially collegians. Publicity is essential.

State and local vocations chairmen are encouraged to contact school officials about holding such events. Diocesan and religious institute vocations directors should be invited to participate, and the local bishop should be informed.

Poster and Essay Contests

Some councils have successfully sponsored essay and/or poster contests for students in Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Contestants prepare an original essay or original poster encouraging awareness of priestly and religious vocations. In doing so, their own vocations awareness increases. The judging should be carried out and the prizes awarded according to criteria established by the council, assembly, or circle.

Other Programs

Many state and local councils and individual Knights work for vocations in other, non-official ways. For instance, some members of the Order take a young priest out to dinner every month in order to give him fraternal support. Others pay for vocations-related public advertising such as billboards.

Councils, assemblies, and circles should be creative and take the initiative in promoting vocations. The use of media can be very helpful in this area. Naturally, whatever is done in the name of the Order must observe ecclesiastical norms and the policies of the Knights of Columbus.

DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

In working for vocations, you may find yourself using certain unfamiliar terms. Here is a quick rundown.

Diocesan seminarian. A diocesan seminarian is a man who has been accepted by a diocese to study for the priesthood. The studies usually include four years in a college seminary (unless the candidate has already graduated from college), a "spirituality" year of spiritual formation, at least four years of study at a major seminary (also called a theologate), and a year of pastoral internship (pastoral work in the field prior to ordination). Anywhere from six months to 18 months before priestly ordination, the seminarian is ordained a deacon, and is then called "Rev. Mr." Seminarians' garb differs from diocese to diocese. Some wear secular clothing until the diaconate, while others wear clerical suits and cassocks from the start. All eligible diocesan seminarians can participate in all Knights of Columbus vocations programs.

Candidate. This term refers to a man who has been formally accepted for admission into a seminary formation program. A candidate may receive RSVP funds whether he is in a college seminary or a major seminary.

College seminarian. A college seminarian (sometimes called "minor seminarian") is a diocesan seminarian attending a four-year college or university under the auspices of his diocese. He may or may not live with other seminarians. He participates in a special program of studies to prepare him for theological studies at a major seminary. Some dioceses operate their own four-year college seminaries, while others send candidates to a local college or university. In some cases, men who are college graduates and have had philosophical training bypass this stage and start their seminary training at

the major seminary level. All college seminarians are eligible for RSVP funds.

Major seminarian. A major seminarian is a candidate engaged in formal theological studies for the priesthood. These studies come after the college level and usually are done at a "major seminary" or theologate. Some dioceses operate their own major seminaries while others send candidates to seminaries in other dioceses or abroad. All major seminarians are eligible for RSVP.

Religious seminarian. Religious seminarians are men accepted into institutes of consecrated life, commonly called religious orders or societies, to study for the priesthood. Especially in long-established orders, they often are called brothers or student-brothers. These should not be confused with religious brothers who do not become priests (e.g., Christian Brothers). The program of preparation includes a postulancy and novitiate. After completion of the novitiate, the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience are taken for a period of at least three years, followed by profession of solemn or perpetual vows. Ordination as deacon comes anywhere from six to 18 months before priestly ordination. Brother-seminarians are then called "Rev. Brother." How religious seminarians dress depends on the traditions of their institutes. Some wear the habit of their order while others wear clerical dress as diocesan seminarians do. Some institutes operate their own seminaries while others send men to seminaries of another order or a diocese. Religious order seminaries are sometimes called houses of study. All eligible religious seminarians can participate in all K of C vocations programs.

Eastern rite seminarians. Eastern rite (or Eastern Church) seminarians are those belonging to the Ukrainian, Byzantine (Greek), Armenian, Melkite, Maronite, Syrian, Romanian, Chaldean, and other Eastern Churches in union with the Holy See. They are Catholic seminarians just as much as those

studying for the Latin (Roman) rite. Outside the United States, Eastern rite seminarians can marry before priestly ordination. Seminarians of the Eastern rites are eligible for membership in the Knights of Columbus and participation in its vocations programs. Women who are postulants or novices in an Eastern rite religious community are eligible for RSVP, as are those of the Roman rite. But seminarians of *Orthodox* churches – Greek, Russian, Coptic, etc. – are not eligible for K of C vocations programs because their churches are not in communion with Rome.

Nuns. Although this term is used popularly to apply to all religious women, in a strict sense it signifies a woman who belongs to a cloistered (monastic and contemplative) community. Nuns begin religious life with a year of postulancy, followed by one or more years of novitiate. They take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and normally do not leave their cloister. Nuns are eligible for RSVP funds during postulancy and novitiate.

Religious Sisters. Sisters are women who have entered institutes of consecrated life, commonly called religious orders or religious communities or societies. They usually begin religious life with a year of postulancy, followed by one or two years of novitiate. They take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and engage in various apostolates. They are eligible for RSVP funds during postulancy and novitiate.

Postulant. A postulant is a man or woman in the final stage of preparing to enter the novitiate of a religious institute. He or she lives with a religious community without taking vows and may or may not wear special garb. Depending on the institute involved, postulancy can last a few weeks or up to two years. Postulants are eligible for RSVP funds.

Novice. A novice is a man or woman at the stage of formal initiation into religious life, following postulancy. According to the law of the religious institute, the novitiate lasts one year or

two. Novices very often adopt the garb of the religious institute and begin informal studies. They live according to the vows but do not profess vows until the novitiate is completed. Novices are eligible for RSVP. (The eligibility of women religious ends when the novitiate does, but male religious who are studying for the priesthood remain eligible.)

Permanent deacon candidates. The Knights of Columbus recognizes the invaluable services performed by permanent deacons and encourages Catholic men to consider the diaconate as a vocation. However, candidates for the permanent diaconate are not eligible for RSVP or for Father Michael J. McGivney Vocations Scholarships or for Bishop Thomas V. Daily Vocations Scholarships.

POLICY STATEMENT

As the largest Catholic fraternal society in the world, the Knights of Columbus is happy to join in promoting priestly and religious vocations in the Church. In carrying forward this work, a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities is essential. The Supreme Council is responsible only for national and/or international vocations programs of the Order. Vocations programs conducted by Knights of Columbus on the state or local levels are the responsibility of the state or local councils, assemblies, and circles. The Knights of Columbus does not accept responsibility for the vocations programs of dioceses or institutes of consecrated life. Its activities do not supplant or conflict with such programs but assist them. The Order evaluates requests for vocations-related funding in light of the Order's norms and procedures.