

# The Domestic Church

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## I Hear A Voice Calling

"Every Life is a Vocation" is the theme of the Pope's message to the Church this year for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. What a place the world would be if all baptized Christians were to live out their callings (Latin *vocatio*), their very particular spiritual "assignments" under the leadership of Our Lord Jesus Christ and, in turn if His call were to be heard by all people!

Our vocational assignments, once accepted are not to be undertaken on human strength alone. As the Pope stated to young people in the document *"The Meaning of Vocation"*: "Holiness does not stem so much from the effort of man's will, as from the effort to never restrict the action of grace in one's own soul, and to be, moreover, grace's humble partner". This is where the Christian view of "renewing the face of the earth" differs from the secular humanist endeavor, which has also made an effective appeal to the idealism of the young, expressed in a desire to "change the world". Finding a quiet place alone for time with Our Lord is one of the best ways to discern His voice among the many competing voices in our lives. Thus Our Lord will guide us in the actions that we take.

**In this issue:** Father Todd Molinari sets high objective standards for the domestic church, the seedbed for vocations to the priesthood. A complimentary article by the editor seeks to focus on the needs of our daughters and on what Edith Stein identified as the characteristics of feminine vocations. In "Honoring Our Vocations", Ruth Rost highlights the fact that all Christians are called, and at every stage in life to do what God desires at the moment. And last but certainly not least, the Holy Father's message on vocation, as printed in *O'sservatore Romano* leads and guides us in our understanding of this important topic. ■

Ruth Andreas

Editor

**The editor recommends** *Parents, Children and the Facts of Life* by Fr. Henry V. Sattler, C.S.S.R., Ph.D. (TAN Publishers) as a must-read for parents in the domestic church. Here is a very readable, principled and compassionate account of the process of sex education which is one of the primary responsibilities of parents towards their children. "Mere instruction on the 'facts of life' may take but a few minutes. Sex education takes the whole lifetime of the child from its earliest years up to maturity." (Sattler, p.5) The book covers religious, moral, emotional, psychological and physiological aspects of sex education. It also gives a "remote and proximate preparation for marriage" (p.56). Dedicated by Fr. Sattler to Saint Maria Goretti.





# Spiritual Fatherhood

## Nurturing Vocations in Young Children

Father Todd Molinari

Fr. Todd Molinari is pastor at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Roy, Oregon.

Has your son ever said to you, "Mom, I want to be a priest"? Perhaps it was after Sunday Mass on the drive home from church. The little hand grasping the back of your seat and pulling himself forward; you saw the top of his head. His simple statement was full of Divine hope, of expectancy, of possibility. The echo of our Lord's call could be faintly, faintly heard in his small voice. And what did you say, Mom?

Perhaps you and dad sat in a stoic manner in the front seat, staring out the window, not knowing, not daring to say anything. Perhaps you said that it is a nice idea, but that there are other things your son can do. Or perhaps you were somehow *not* surprised by this. Those hours, days, years of prayer, that openness to God's gift of life with dad made you quick to respond, as if this were part of being a family.

There has been much talk about a crisis in vocations to the priesthood in recent decades. Nevertheless, the current state of vocations and the projected statistical figures are not necessarily indicative of what our Lord really wants with regard to raising up vocations. In most cases, the calling to the priesthood begins at home with the family and is nurtured and sustained by the family. Consider how many priests there would be, even in our local area if all the boys and young men who expressed an interest in the priesthood and were encouraged or were asked if they ever thought about becoming a priest, was part of the normal life of every Catholic family. What can parents do to encourage and to respond favorably to a vocation to the priesthood in the life of their son? The age of your son, no matter how young is never too young to nurture a vocation to the priesthood.

Parents must first of all make their

homes the kingdom of God, the place where the domestic church can live its faith fully and in a natural way. This means that our Lord must be the Lord of the household, reigning in peace and in charity. The home must be dedicated to Jesus Christ. A child can only mature into an adult disciple with the example, regular prayer, sacramental practice and instruction from the parents. The home must also be a place of peace and harmony among the parents. Children are affected by the way their parents relate to each other, disagree with each other and handle suffering and difficulties. A virtuous attitude and approach to all the many challenges that face Catholic parents will set the stage for countless instructional moments, where the parents can show by example how Christians should treat each other and behave towards others.

Parents must be examples of prayer and participants in the sacramental life of the Church. From an early age, a vocation in a child can be encouraged by teaching the child how to pray. Learning to pray together as a family and as an individual can be internalized at an early age by the child if the parents make a commitment and practice that commitment to pray on a daily basis. Parents can teach their child the prayers of the Church: the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be in the Rosary; the Creed and the prayers of the Mass; the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity, and the Act of Contrition. Parents can instruct their child on how to make a simple examination of conscience. Fostering a devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints can also become a part of the daily life through reciting the prayers of the Church such as the Angelus at the appointed hours, and prayers to the Saints.

A brief pattern can be followed which the child can have as a basis

for his relationship with the Lord; Morning Offering, Rosary, Angelus, prayers to the saint of the day, Examen of conscience at the end of the day, grace before meals and encouragement to offer a brief prayer to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the child's own words before retiring. It is important to add that familiarity with Sacred Scripture within the family and in the life of the child will open the child's heart to the riches of the Word of God at home and in the Church. Parents can lead the child in reading brief selections from Scripture daily, taken from the Lectionary or in choosing to read and ponder on a few chosen verses of the day from the Liturgy of the Hours. Importantly, a spirit of prayer and of recollection can envelop the home in and through a lively promotion of prayer and faith. Young children, once exposed to prayer at an early age oftentimes will spontaneously ask questions about God and spiritual matters. They will often speak about God and want to talk about God.

Parents who may initially feel intimidated or unsure about how to respond can remain assured that God will assist them in responding to these wonderful movements of grace within the home. They are indications that the Lord is beginning to prompt and to prod the child in the direction of a more complete communion with Him. Parents do not have to feel that they have to give complete theological answers to all the questions, but rather should encourage the attitude of seeking the truth in God alone and of worshipping Christ in prayer and in the sacraments. They should keep answers direct, honest and practical. As part of teaching your child to read, write and draw you can introduce him to the lives of the saints, allowing him to develop a love for those saints that appeal to his personality and natural



talents. You can direct him from an early age to imitate those saints in a practical and simple way, which develops the natural and supernatural virtues in his interior life.

It is also true that instruction in the content of the Faith is central to the parents' task of encouraging a vocation in their child. Evangelization, pre-catechesis and catechesis should all begin in the home. Some time of personal study of the catechism, the Gospels and the teachings of the Church by the parents will be necessary here. If the parents feel that they are inadequate to this task because the last time they studied the catechism was in the eighth grade, then they can take heart in the fact that, as a family they can learn the Faith together. If a child asks a question to which the parents do not know the answer, instead of avoiding the answer or deflecting the question, parents can use this occasion as an opportunity to invite the child to learn together with them the truths of the Faith. A familiarity with the themes of Scripture and Tradition will give parents a context in which to teach the saving truths of the Faith, so that these truths do not appear to be disjointed or arbitrary. Also, a personal and warm rapport with the Person and life of Jesus Christ will help the child to see and to understand what Jesus did and taught for salvation. The link between Faith and life would be impossible without participation in the Liturgy of the Church. Sunday, and if possible, daily participation in the Mass is essential for the encouragement and development of any vocation in Christ. A child will not be able to hear his calling unless he participates in the Eucharist.

The way a child participates in the Mass is different from that of an adult. The tendency to consign child and parent to the "cry room" away from the main body of the church during Mass may actually be of disservice to the child in his growth as a Christian. The conventional wisdom seems to think that a child who is distracted in the pew is not really participating in the Mass and can become a distraction to others. Quite the opposite is true. A young child is taking in everything around him, and responds to Jesus in

faith as he is able, according to his age and development; this is true at Mass as well. As an example, I recall one occasion when I was offering Mass in a parish in Portland on Sunday. My brother, his wife and their oldest boy were in the congregation. The boy, a toddler at the time was engaged in reading a picture book and climbing up and down the pew throughout Mass. Then, at the Lamb of God, as I raised the broken Host over the paten, he looked up, pointed and said, "There's Jesus!" Then he went back to his reading.

Perhaps the best way to introduce the child to the Mass is to bring him to Church on Sunday and initiate him into the discipline of recollection, worship, awe and reverence for Christ in the Eucharist. If you are still hesitant about having your child stay for the entire Mass, another way to initiate him into the mystery of the Eucharist is to sign up for a period of time in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament within a parish, and spend time with your child alone praying and introducing him to Jesus in the Eucharist. Last but not least, after your son has received First Holy Communion you can encourage him at home and at

the parish church to learn how to serve Mass as an altar boy. Many generations of priests, and saints first felt the calling to the priesthood as they served at the altar, assisting the priest at daily and Sunday Masses. Through the dignity, responsibility and holiness of this position at the Mass, the child can grow close to our Lord and grow in appreciation of the sacrament of Holy Orders. Many priests, if you ask them can recall which priest they served Mass for and how it made an impression on them.

As the Eucharist should be the source and summit of life in the domestic church, it goes without saying that frequenting the sacrament of Penance together as a family is and should be another cornerstone in the sacramental life of the family. When your child sees you and your spouse making use of the Lord's sacrament of forgiveness and mercy, the impression that this leaves will last a lifetime. In your participation in all the sacraments, remember to stir in your child a love and understanding of the priesthood as the sacrament *in persona Christi*.

As parents, you can also give a good example of servanthood to your son. Parents have countless opportunities throughout the week to serve each other as husband and wife in the daily duties of keeping the home. But it is also crucial to serve one's neighbors beyond the walls of the home, through engagement in service projects at the parish or parochial school. Service and generosity to the poor in the community, whether it is participation in food drives, Christmas giving or working at the local soup kitchen, all are apostolic activities that provide you with the avenues to show your child how Christ serves the poor.

It is also vitally important, especially in today's Church to maintain a Catholic and evangelistic outlook when dealing with difficulties within the life of the Church. At home, it is imperative to approach the discussion of parish and Church-related issues with charity and with the confidence with which our Lord directed his Apostles. The human dimension of the Church should always be approached in a realistic and bal-

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In loving memory of Father Joseph Michael Gebhardt, 1923-2000; Ordained as a priest in 1950.



# Gifts from the Magisterium

## Every Life is a Vocation

Pope John Paul II

**Pope John Paul II's Message for the 2001 World Day of Prayer for Vocations**, reprinted from O'sservatore Romano.

"...It is in (the) dialogue of love with God that we find the basis of each person's possibility to grow along his or her own lines and according to his or her own characteristics, which have been received as a gift and are able to 'give meaning' to his or her daily existence, as he or she walks along the path that leads to the fullness of life.

To consider life as a vocation encourages interior freedom, stirring within the person a desire for the future, as well as the rejection of a notion of existence that is passive, boring, and banal. In this way, life takes on the value of a 'gift' received which, by its nature tends to become a good given" (Document, *New Vocations for a New Europe*, 1997, 16,b). Man shows that he has been reborn in the Spirit (cf. Jn 3:3-5) when he learns to follow the way of the New Commandment: "that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). One could say that, in a certain sense, love is the DNA of the children of God; it is the 'holy vocation' by which we have been called 'in virtue of His own purpose and the grace which He gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearance of our Saviour Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 1:9-10).

At the root of every vocational journey there is the Emmanuel, the God-with-us. He shows us that we are not alone in fashioning our lives, because God walks with us, in the midst of our ups and downs; and, if we want him to, he weaves with each of us a marvelous tale of love, unique and irreproducible, and, at the same time, in harmony with all humanity and the entire cosmos. To discover the presence of God in our individual stories, not to feel orphans any

longer, but rather to know that we have a Father in whom we can trust completely---this is the great turning-point that transforms our merely human outlook and leads man to understand, as *Gaudium et Spes* affirms, that he 'cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself' (n.24). These words of the Second Vatican Council contain the secret of Christian existence and of all authentic human self-realization...."

### ... *An Appeal to Parents*

"Now I address you, dear Christian parents, to exhort you to be close to your children. Do not leave them alone when they are faced with the weighty decisions of adolescence and youth. Help them to prevent themselves from being overwhelmed by an anxious searching after material well-being, and guide them towards that genuine happiness which belongs to the spirit. Make the liberating joy of the faith resound in their hearts, which are at times seized by fears for the future. Teach them, as wrote my venerated predecessor, the Servant of God Paul VI, 'how to savor in a simple way the many human joys that the Creator places in our path: the elating joy of existence and of life; the joy of chaste and sanctified love; the peaceful joy of nature and silence; the sometimes austere joy of work well done; the joy and satisfaction of duty performed; the transparent joy of purity, service and sharing; the demanding joy of sacrifice' (*Gaudele in Domino*, I).

The activity of the family must be supported by that of catechists and Christian teachers, called in a special way to encourage in young people a sense of vocation. Their task is to guide the young generations towards discovering the plan of God for each of them, cultivating in them a readiness, when God calls them, to turn their lives into a gift for that mission.

This will happen by means of continual decisions that prepare for the total 'yes', by which one's whole existence is placed at the service of the Gospel. Dear catechists and teachers, in order to reach this goal, help the young people entrusted to your care to look upwards, to overcome the constant temptation to compromise. Teach them to trust in the God who is Father, and show them the extraordinary greatness of his love which entrusts to each one a personal task at the service of the great missions of 'renewing the face of the earth.'

We read in the book of the Acts of the Apostles that the first Christians 'devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers' (2:42). Every encounter with the Word of God is a propitious moment for mentioning vocation. Frequent contact with Sacred Scriptures helps us to grasp the manner and the actions that God uses when choosing, teaching and making us sharers in his love.

The celebration of the Eucharist and prayer make us understand better the works of Jesus: 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest' (Mt.9:37-38; cf. Lk.10:2). When one prays for vocations, one learns to look with the wisdom of the Gospel at the world and at the needs of life and the salvation of every human being. Moreover, one lives the charity and compassion of Christ towards humanity, and one has the grace to be able to say, following the example of Our Lady: 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word' (Lk.1:38).

I invite everyone to join me in imploring the Lord, so that there will never be a lack of laborers in His harvest." ■



# A Woman's Place

## Edith Stein and the Education of Girls

Ruth Andreas

Saint Edith Stein, a twentieth century German philosopher, Carmelite and martyr dedicated a great deal of her work to pedagogy (the art or method of teaching) and specifically to the education of women. What can parents glean from the teachings of Edith Stein? What can we learn specifically about the education and formation of our daughters? The source material for this article, which will serve as an early foray into Stein's work is *Essays on Woman* by Edith Stein, translated from the German language by Freda Mary Oben. This is Volume Two of the Collected Works of Edith Stein by ICS Publications, 1987.

First, some operating assumptions. Edith Stein is clear that the goals of education can never be separated from religion, because her very concept of education is rooted in the development of the soul, which in turn manifests itself in the whole human being. It is also assumed that the educators themselves have a living faith and further, that in their role as teacher they are under the authority of God. "The teacher and the student serve and obey God. The teacher does not command arbitrarily but rather follows orders from above." (p.7)

In her philosophy of education, Stein takes as a guiding star this concept from St. Thomas Aquinas' *analogia entis*: "God's image is like a seed planted in the human soul. In order to bring this inner form to development, the human creature needs formative help of two sorts: the supernatural aid of grace and the natural help of the human educational process. If students receive this help they can by an inner dedication become more similar to the inborn ideal image." (p.6)

The involvement of the student in this process is highly significant. First, there is her nature and the very unique seed, just referred to which is

planted in the individual soul, i.e. certain qualities are endowed by nature. (p.99) Second, there is the freedom of will of the student. "Cognitive work and achievements of the will are *free actions*...the human being...can yield himself to or reject [exterior] formative influences." (pp.98-99) Of course, beyond the student's limits of nature and of will, there is always the reality of grace at work in the educational process. "Hè (God) can bring the will's *interior* inclination toward a decision to execute that which is presented to it." (p.99) The teacher's prayers can make a difference.

With these assumptions in mind as to education in general we turn our attention to the education of girls. These questions might be asked: "What is our goal?" "What are we raising and educating our daughters for?"

Stein sought to answer these questions within the context of woman's vocations. (The singular "woman" ["Die Frau" in German] is used here to represent women collectively.) In doing so, she took neither the position of the German feminists of her day nor that of their opponents. She wrote: "Are we able to speak of vocations which are specifically feminine? In the beginning of the feminist movement, the radical leaders denied this, claiming all professions were suitable for woman. Their opponents were unwilling to admit to this concept, recognizing only *one* feminine vocation, woman's natural vocation" (motherhood). (pp.42-43)

Stein took a different approach. She sought, in her philosophical work to go to the core of the matter, not only of woman's nature but also of the nature of woman's soul. She "inferred from a formulated truth of St. Thomas, *anima forma corporis* (p.19) the following: Inasmuch as the feminine body is a feminine body, this

feminine body must also correspond to a feminine soul just as the masculine body must correspond to a masculine soul." (p.19) It follows that, to elucidate the nature of this feminine soul would be to locate the basis for a distinctly feminine educational method.

It must be said that the raising of children would always be an absolutely *primary* woman's vocation in Edith Stein's understanding, due to the nature of a woman's body *and her soul*! And yet for practical reasons and because of the unique gifts of each woman, Stein gave attention to other possibilities as well. For example, she recognized in the industrialized society of Germany the need for a girl's education to encompass more than preparation for solely domestic functions. Obviously, women living in this society were already beginning to engage in a diversity of professional tasks. At the same time, Stein observed in her day a decline in the role of agrarian life, as well as in that of cloistered life. But wherever found, the work of women, according to Stein would enhance and ideally flow from her nature, body and soul.

Noteworthy is Stein's appeal to husbands and fathers. She writes, "He will aid in the development of the talents and energies of his wife and children whenever he can and whenever need be." (p.76) Because of the individual nature of each soul, it would be important for woman to find outlets for her particular gifts inside and/or outside of the home as permitted, through professional or non-professional volunteerism.

Now back to our questions. It can be stated that, according to Stein we are preparing our daughters for motherhood and/or for those vocations suited to the woman's soul. Just exactly what is the content of women's vocations that makes them

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uniquely feminine? In one place Stein calls woman's most exalted mission "human development". (p.11) She describes how, "woman naturally seeks to embrace that which is living, personal and whole. To cherish, guard, protect, nourish and advance growth is her natural, maternal yearning...The living and personal to which her care extends is part of a concrete whole and is protected and nourished as a totality". (p.43)

Another way to put it is that women, whether married or single and in any feminine vocation will live out a type of spiritual motherhood. Stein writes, "[Woman's] body and soul are fashioned less to fight and to conquer than to cherish, guard and preserve...she seems more capable than man of feeling a more reverent joy in creatures; moreover, such joy requires a particular kind of perception of the good, different from rational perception in being an inherent spiritual function and a singularly feminine one. Evidently, this quality is related to woman's mission as a mother which involves an understanding of the total being and of specific values. It enables her to understand and foster organic development, the special, individual destiny of every living being. This awareness of the needs of the living being benefits not only her posterity but all creatures as well." (p.73)

Did Stein name any specific professions within the context of feminine vocations? Yes, she often referred to the medical professions, and she named teaching and social work as feminine professions. Beyond these, however, any vocation involving service to others could be considered feminine, and in the university setting in particular: "editor, translator, adviser in scientific work and..university teaching", as well as certain fields of scholarship. (p.20) Also, women can adapt, according to Stein to what are considered masculine professions. (p.20) .

Building on this look into Stein's essays on woman, and if we are seeking a strong Christian development of the potential in our daughters, we might consider the following general outline of an educational method fit for them. **Number One**, emotional formation is central, for the woman's concern for the totality of the human being is largely an emotional one. Stein writes: "It is only the person who is deeply involved with life whose emotions are stirred. Whoever is aiming to arouse emotion must bring it into contact with something which will hasten this involvement...It is beauty in all of its ramifications and the rest of the aesthetic categories. It is truth which prompts the searching human spirit into endless pursuit. It is everything which works in this world with the mysterious force and pull of

another world. The subjects which are especially effective in emotional training are religion, history and literature..." A caveat: unchecked emotion can lead to frivolous preoccupation or to a situation in which she, woman is led by her moods at all times. (p.103) **Number two**, intellectual formation for girls is important, albeit secondary because perception alone of goodness and beauty are not sufficient. (p.103) "Intellect and emotion must cooperate in a particular way in order to transmute the purely emotional attitudes into ones of cognizant values." (p.104) Subjects designed to train the mind include: mathematics, natural sciences, linguistics and grammar. (p.107) **Number three**, the education of girls should be oriented toward practical competence. Flexibility will allow all to cultivate (individual) technical and artistic talents. (p.107) **Finally**, what begins with God ends with God. Supernatural values placed above all earthly ones "complies with an objective hierarchy of values" that all of our daughters should have the good fortune to live by and to conform to.

In conclusion, with a newfound sensitivity to the specific needs of our daughters, inspired by the work of Edith Stein, parents can evaluate and encourage certain areas of emphasis in their daughters' educational experience. May God bless our efforts! ■

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(Fr. Molinari continued from page3)

anced way. As parents, you have the responsibility to inculcate in your son an attitude of never being satisfied with spiritual mediocrity in the Church, of seeking reform in the Church first by reforming one's own life through conversion from sin and then of promoting the kingdom of God in our culture through positive initiatives of spiritual and material projects. But it must be emphasized that the spiritual and supernatural must be the basis for any and all apostolic projects in which you are engaged as a family. Never lose sight of the common good of the Domestic Church, nor of the Local Church in addressing the needs of our times.

Your son may be called to be the founder of a religious order, a theologian, a pastor of souls, a gifted confessor, a monk or a missionary. You can spark his imagination and fill his heart with a desire for seeking holiness and serving as a priest if you show him that, in the Lord all things are possible.

Nurturing and sustaining vocations to the priesthood can be a challenging task in modern culture. But God gives to parents this great responsibility of eliciting and encouraging such vocations. Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II calls you to promote the culture of life and to build the civilization of love. As you prepare, instruct and gently affirm

your son in his vocation, no matter what it might be, from the first whispers from his lips to the first day in college, you can show him that the home is the first school of Christian discipleship. Perhaps the Lord may bless you with several, even many vocations to the priesthood and the religious life within your family. If your son ever says, "Mom, I want to be a priest", consider it a grace from our Lord and an opportunity for you to direct him to live out that grace. ■



# Sacred Dwellings

## Honoring Our Vocations

Ruth Rost

One morning, as our young son was leaving for school, he confidently turned to me and said, "Let's pray for me, Mom. I'm our class line-leader today." Ah-h. How such a moment remains a cherished memory, a "keeper" to nourish the spirit to these many years later! Surely, its staying power is in its hinting at a deeper inner truth, for his simple words seem to hold layers of meaning for our current vocational reflections.

The initial sentences in the Prologue of the Catechism of the Catholic Church guide us to the solemn blessing in God's plan: our being created for a sharing in God's own life, in Christ our Lord. The teaching continues that, in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit one is called to welcome and to freely respond to this divine blessing. Further, urged on by His love, we are to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel "everywhere in the world" (pp3). This reciprocal covenant between God and us is intended to become the essential, inmost substance of the initial vocation of one's very humanity.

Each person is created and called to seek, to know and to love God wholly. Each life is intended to experience and to reflect this divinely-initiated vocation of intimacy. It follows that, at any any given stage in one's life each vocational summons heard in the heart is meant to honor the divine intent by one's "working through the call". Each sacred summons is the means for the heart to know even more of Christ's ultimate full life, as the Good News of John 10:10 proffers.

Within this divinely extended plan for reciprocal communion is the understanding that, at every age and circumstance one's vocational activity is lived out naturally and fundamentally through everyday living.

Within the particular, often chosen, sometimes delegated duties of a given work the faithful hearer answers the call out of the heart. It is in the "everyday" that our vocations become incarnate.

Thankfully, reliable vocational guidance is ever open to us in sacred Scripture's light. "I have called you by name and you are mine." (Isaiah 43:1) and "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you". (John 15:16) These clearly define the Source of our vocational integrity.

Reflect, too on others of our spiritual ancestors, such as Abraham, who responded with "Ready!" when called in Genesis 22; and Joseph, the shepherd and merciful brother-ruler in Genesis 45. We feel awe at Ruth's filial piety, shown in her compassionate response to Naomi (Ruth 1). Many others light our way to vocational commitment: Moses, David, Esther, Peter, Paul. Surely, acquiescent Mary. Certainly, incomparable Jesus, Son of God. We hear each one submitting to the Father's heart-call at an appointed time, willing their response and trusting in divine empowerment within the reply.

The natural analogy of the blessed tree of Psalm 1 necessarily drawing life from its stream-source, who in turn allows the tree to reciprocate with its fruit "in due season" exemplifies the divine intent to offer vocation to every child of God. Such fidelity of the stream insures the promised support, allowing the heart-listener to rest convinced that one's call will be a walk in grace.

The words of Pope John Paul II surely bring home our vocational reflections in his saying: "The future of humanity passes by way of the family." (*On the Family*, p.86) Who could count the vocations which have been generated in sacred dwellings?

These few thoughtful hints may

help guide discussion in times of such heart-calls within the family: *Holy Listening...*to the leading of the Spirit in dialogue and prayerful openness.

*Helpful seeking...*of resources to support the divine call of one's natural gifts, abilities, talents and interests.

*Humble surrender...*in reverent reflection of the divine call as leading one to fullness of life in Christ and the building up of His kingdom of love.

Today, we see the incredible number of life-choices making invitations to our young people. It remains all the more critical that our sacred dwellings radiate Faith-values which counter-point the enticing stimulation of solely worldly gains and which help one to be aware of the still, small voice of God heard in the heart. Thus the sincere seeker's heart will intuit within the vocational summons some *authentic life* to be lived out. Whether its term is brief or lengthy, whether the call is single-layered or, as it often is, multi-tasked, its validity will rest in the desired good that it will extend in love.

In such inner harmony the child of God can abide in grace while stepping forward in response. And, there-in did our young line-leader leave for his classroom duty: called, confidently empowered and ready to answer with a full and surrendering heart. ■

### St. Joseph's Board Members:

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St. Joseph's Center sponsored its first married couples' retreat last November at Our Lady of Peace Retreat House in Beaverton. Fr. Pius X Harding from Mt. Angel Abbey was the retreat master. The theme: "Marriage is not for the faint hearted" focused on the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony and the family as "Domestic Church". Following are comments from some of our brothers and sisters who attended the weekend retreat:

*"It was a very good retreat. We both are very grateful!!"*

*"God bless you and thank you so much! Words cannot express our gratitude!"*

*"It was a very encouraging and spiritually reviving retreat. Thank you! God Bless!"*

Another married couples' retreat is planned for Nov. 9th to the 11th, 2001 at Our Lady of Peace Retreat House in Beaverton, OR. The retreat master will be Fr. Brian Mullady, OP. Fr. Mullady was Professor of Moral Theology for six years at the Angelicum in Rome, and is currently Professor of Theology at Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, CT. Fr. Brian has also appeared on EWTN, and has numerous audio cassettes available for sale. Please contact the Center for details at 503-864-4929.



St. Joseph's President Mark Andreas with one attending couple, Leo and Nancy Rosca of Salem, OR.

**Mission Statement**  
Founded in January 1993, St. Joseph's Center for the Domestic Church is a Catholic apostolate dedicated to serving the family. Our mission is to help families recognize their role as the "domestic church," the Church at home, and to re-establish the home as a sacred refuge.

Saint Joseph's Center for the Domestic Church  
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