

Reflections

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Attitude with vocations

1. The longing and the positive attitude with that gift from God. Father Kentenich, the Founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, is convinced that vocations normally come from healthy and religious families, from families who give witness to their religious convictions and have control of the superficial environment which surrounds them. They are parents with a profound desire that vocations come from their families. It is a desire which they keep hidden in their hearts and do not discuss with their children.

In former times, it was a high honor for a Catholic family to produce vocations. Today, that attitude is not so evident. What could be the cause? I think that today's man is more materialistic and less religious. That is the fruit not only from the society of consumption but also from the example and education in our families.

2. Prayer for vocations. The petition that God would call one of our children would have to be a daily concern for us as we raise our hands to God asking Him to open the hearts of our children and the hearts of other children for such a beautiful mission.

An example from my own family: My parents, who always prayed the Rosary, added to each mystery and eleventh Hail Mary, asking for religious vocations from among their children. God heard their prayer and blessed them with a religious sister and a priest.

Father Kentenich narrates an example from Italy. From a small town of 5,500 inhabitants, in the last decades, 500 vocations came forth. What is the secret of that unheard of fruitfulness? In this town, the mothers gathered every Sunday and said a simple prayer. They prayed to God that each family would be blessed with a religious vocation. At the same time, they made a commitment to live with their families a Christian life and to educate their children in this spirit. There we see the result of this simple act. The desire must be accompanied with a current of prayer.

3. The sacrifice for vocations. It is another contribution which we offer concretely for vocations from among our children. Another example from Father Kentenich:

From a very Christian Irish family, two priestly vocations came forth. In the seminary, they became very ill with tuberculosis, placing their priesthood in danger. When they were healed, they received the news that their mother had died. Before they were ordained, they received the news that their sister had died. Later it was discovered that both had offered themselves to God so that they would receive the illness in order that both sons could become good priests.

One of them is a well known preacher and an apostle of the Rosary. He is convinced that he owes his vocation to three women: the Virgin, his mother, and his sister.

It is not only a current of prayer, but also a marked current of sacrifices.

4. Marian spirit. The Marian atmosphere in a family is the best foundation. Father Kentenich helps us to see that the Blessed Virgin is interested in especially mediating certain graces: one of them is the grace of the priesthood and a religious vocation. Without this, the Church can not fulfill its mission. Mary gave to the Church its first priest: Jesus Christ. Mary is the temple where the Supreme and Eternal Priest was consecrated. Mary's family gave to Christ the physical space for his priestly vocation. In addition, offered was the spiritual atmosphere from which His Priesthood came forth. Therefore, if we want religious vocations to come from our families, we must cultivate that Marian spirit in our homes.

That reminds me of an episode in my own life: when I was born, my mother immediately offered me and consecrated me to the Virgin so that She could take care of me on my life's journey and, if it was in her plans, that I would become a priest. Thus I believe that I owe my priesthood especially to Mary and to my mother.

Questions for reflection

1. Do we pray to God for the grace of a vocation from our family?
2. Do we really hope that one of our children would choose the priesthood or a religious vocation?
3. What sacrifice do we offer God so that He would grant the grace of calling one of our children?

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