

Vocations plan might work in Arkansas

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It is utterly miraculous what God can do if we simply let him. We often hear of the advantages of perpetual adoration, the charismatic renewal, having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and preaching orthodoxy, but we rarely have an opportunity to actually see the results when all of these exist simultaneously.

Their combined power harnesses enormous spiritual energy in one place, capable of being drawn upon to give life.

Christ the King Parish in Ann Arbor, Mich., is obviously a spiritual nuclear power plant that provides energy to light up the spiritual lives of its parishioners and the rest of the diocese through vibrant vocations to the priesthood, religious life and diaconate. Would you believe that this one parish of 830 families has 15 young men studying for the priesthood, six young women joining the religious life and three candidates for the diaconate?

Additionally, since the parish's inception only 25 years ago, 15 to 20 parishioners have become priests. Wow! Look at what God is doing among his people! We need to franchise what they're doing in every Catholic parish.

Father Ed Fride, the pastor of Christ the King, notes that all the 11 seminarians heard their call during the five years that perpetual exposition of the Blessed Sacrament has existed. He goes on to state, "When you preach orthodoxy, the Eucharist and the centrality of Jesus, vocations result." While I think that Father Fride has given us a great game plan for fostering vocations, both the quality and the attitude of the preaching is critical in bringing the message home.

When young men and women see priests and nuns who are exuberant and joyful in the manner in which they live out their vocations, they will be attracted to that kind of life. For some strange reason, the glum, depressed, angry and unhappy seem to fail to attract many to the religious life.

"Preaching orthodoxy" should lead to a joyful, hopeful, Spirit-filled community. Scripture and Tradition, our two-fold font of revelation, unfold God's plan for our salvation. Authentically proclaimed, that plan should lead to a realization that Jesus is the center of our lives.

Once that is truly assimilated, we work toward establishing a personal relationship with our Lord. That relationship reaches its zenith in the Eucharist. If all of this truly jells in the heart and soul of a young man, why would he not yearn to be a priest, as the most important thing he

could do with his life?

I am grateful to God who has seen the holiness and answered the prayers of his people at the Christ the King in Ann Arbor. I am grateful to their Spirit-filled parishioners who have heard the Word and responded generously. I am grateful to Father Fride who joyfully preached orthodoxy and led the boys and girls of his parish to enthusiastically answer the call of Our Lord. God can and wishes to do wondrous things for those who live their lives according to his holy will. What could he do in your parish?