

Come and See

Have you ever witnessed the ordination of a priest? If you have not, you will get a chance to this summer. On Thursday, June 29, at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Bend I will impose hands on Deacon Victor Mena and make him a priest forever.

Victor is no stranger to many of you. In the last four years he has touched down in parishes north, south, east, and central. But most of that time he has spent at Mount Angel Seminary, preparing himself to labor in the vineyard of the Diocese of Baker and serve you as a priest of Jesus Christ.

Like many of our priests today Victor comes from beyond our borders, and we are most grateful that God has called him (and seminarian Marco Serna) to cross over. But the call to set out on the path to the priesthood comes to men within our borders as well. Steve Garza heard the call in Hermiston and is living out his response at St. John XXIII Seminary in Boston. Caleb Cunningham from Jordan Valley listened hard at Franciscan University in Ohio, and followed his call to Mount Angel Seminary. The Lord called Jose Luis Melendez in Madras and led him to the seminary in Mexico City. What can we do to encourage other men hereabouts to listen as Steve and

Caleb and Jose Luis did and to follow in their footsteps?

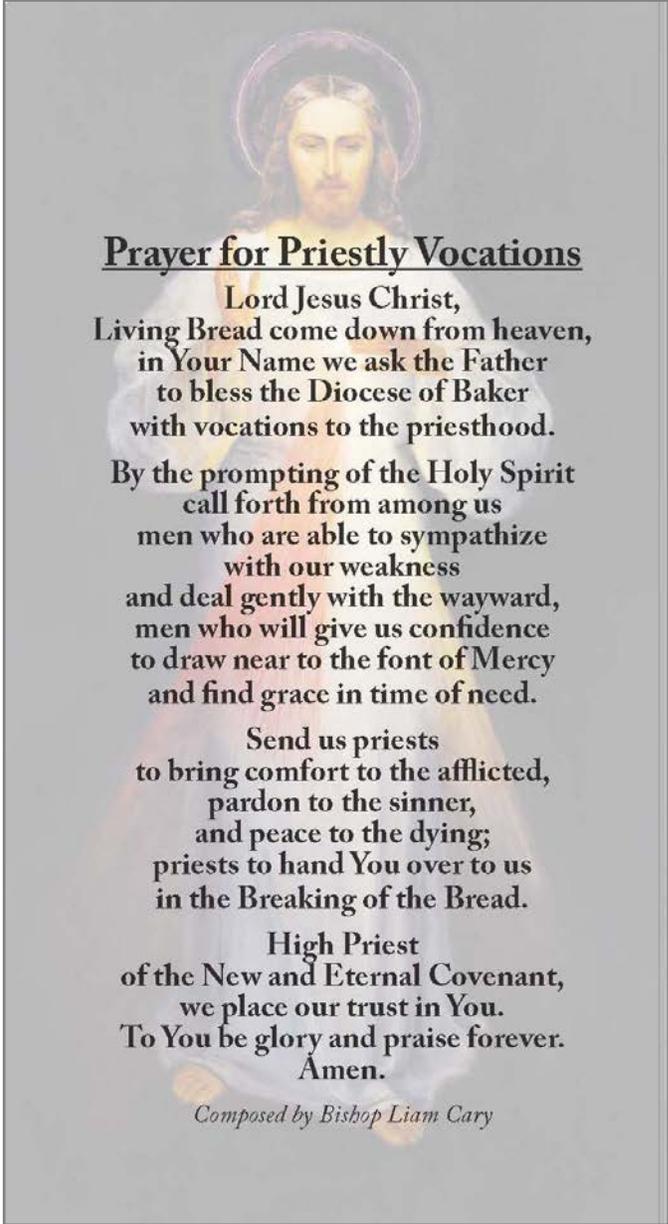
In the short term the most helpful encouragement we can offer is this: get them to come to Victor's ordination in June. The sight of a man being ordained promotes serious consideration of the priestly vocation as nothing else can. For the power and beauty of the ordination ceremony impresses itself on the soul of a young man with unsurpassable impact and sets him to imagining himself kneeling before the bishop one day and rising a priest forever. Well do I remember how that attractive image burrows deep into the memory and seems to "speak" right to the heart: "It could be you. It could be you." (Some of you may have "heard" something similar when you watched a couple pronounce their wedding vows.)

Such a great opportunity does not happen every year, so we must take full advantage of it when it does. Therefore, I urge each pastor and parish council in the diocese to take note of all your grade-school and high-school boys, repeatedly encourage all of them to come to Bend in June, and help those who are willing with the expenses to get there. It will be good for them to know early on that those they worship with support them.

I also urge you to couple this specific, short-term effort with foundational, long-term encouragement: unceasing prayer to the Lord of the Harvest. Inspired by the tireless

vocations promoters of Central Oregon, I have composed a prayer for priestly vocations which appears in this issue of the Chronicle and which I ask priests to make widely available in every parish. From now and until Victor's ordination, I would like it to be prayed together publicly 15 minutes before Sunday Mass. I ask each family to pray it at home once a week and each parish group (Knights of Columbus, Altar Society, youth group, prayer groups) to include it at the beginning of each meeting. In this way we can all accompany Victor Mena to the altar of the Lord June 29 and sow the seeds of priestly desire in the hearts of others like him.

Of this we can be sure: if we do our part, the Lord of the Harvest will do the rest.



Prayer for Priestly Vocations

**Lord Jesus Christ,
Living Bread come down from heaven,
in Your Name we ask the Father
to bless the Diocese of Baker
with vocations to the priesthood.**

**By the prompting of the Holy Spirit
call forth from among us
men who are able to sympathize
with our weakness
and deal gently with the wayward,
men who will give us confidence
to draw near to the font of Mercy
and find grace in time of need.**

**Send us priests
to bring comfort to the afflicted,
pardon to the sinner,
and peace to the dying;
priests to hand You over to us
in the Breaking of the Bread.**

**High Priest
of the New and Eternal Covenant,
we place our trust in You.
To You be glory and praise forever.
Amen.**

Composed by Bishop Liam Cary