

Celebrating the journey to serve God's people

Our priests dedicate their lives in service to the Lord and to our Church, and we are blessed by their ministry.

We are called to support their ongoing formation, and to care for the needs of our priests throughout their retirement years.

Additionally, we are called to provide support for the missionary and international priests who serve our parishes, as well as our seminarians preparing for priesthood.

The *Vibrant Ministries -- Uniting our Church* appeal has set as a monetary goal a sum of \$3,940,500, which will go toward support of priestly vocations from seminary through retirement.

SEMINARIANS: We have six seminarians currently in formation at an annual cost of \$38,000 per seminarian per year.

RETIRED PRIESTS: There are currently 11 retired priest and two retired bishops supported through pensions, health coverage and long-term care coverage. With nine priests over age 60, estimates for future long-term care coverage is estimated at \$1.3 million.

MISSIONARY PRIESTS: There are currently 15 priests from nine diocese and religious orders receiving support and retirement benefits funding of approximately \$90,000 per year.

ONGOING FORMATION: Ongoing formation includes support for language studies, retreats, advanced education, and leadership programs.

... God calls every generation to respond to His invitation to share the Good News and to serve those in need. He assures us that we will be rewarded beyond our greatest imagination for our generosity and faithfulness. God blesses us for lovingly tending to one another. Thus, we go forward in our next step of fulfilling the vision of our Catholic Church in southwest Kansas through our Vibrant Ministries-Uniting our Church Appeal, confident that God will bless us for continuing to cultivate His love in our families and communities. Sowing bountifully, will reap bountifully. (2 Corinthians 9:6) As St. Paul Promises us, "You are being enriched in every way for all generosity, which through us produces thanksgiving to God." (2 Corinthians 9:11)

What was it that made you want to be a priest?

by Father Reggie Urban

The main thing that drew me to become a priest was the Liturgy. I loved the singing, the praying, and the liturgical actions that were part of my childhood. I remember driving home with my parents after Sunday Eucharist, sitting in the back seat of our '52 Chevy, having a deep sense of satisfaction and well-being as we drove back to our farm. It seemed like everything was right with the world because we had been "to Church". Once I started serving it was all over! I was "hooked" forever....

What do you like most about being a priest?

by Father Charles Mazouch

There are many things. I guess I could sum it up as being involved in a special way with so many people. It is through the sacraments of the church that I find enjoyment in my priesthood. I have been able to meet so many great people, and I know I would not have met all of these if it were not for my vocation.

Was there a particular individual who inspired you to become a priest?

by Father Jim Dieker

Father John Lavrih was a very seasoned and dedicated pastor who was my pastor in my early days of practicing the profession of Veterinary Medicine. As a refugee, his life story was impelling, but his charismatic faith was intoxicating. He prayed for vocations constantly. I went to him on a whim to learn German. We never got around to studying German, but discovered my real search was for faith and direction in my personal life.

What was it that made you want to be a priest?

by Father Warren Stecklein

When I was growing up, our family pretty much lived our lives centered around the Church. It was a place of prayer and worship, but also a place for education and socialization. Our schedules and activities hinged upon what was taking place at the Church. We also had wonderful pastors that served as an inspiration to me. When I was in my mid 20s, still living my life centered around the Church, I recognized there were too few priests to serve in parishes and began to seriously discern a vocation to the priesthood.

Who were people who encouraged you in your vocation?

by Father Ted Stoeckline

Mostly the girls that I dated... just kidding. Above all, my step-mother, Barbara. I once went to look at Conception Seminary just so she would leave me alone about being a priest. When I was working for Msgr. Norbert Tema at in Garden City, he probably would have killed me or at least fired me if he didn't think I was a good prospect for the seminary. I probably would not be in the Diocese of Dodge City without the encouragement of Scotty and Lea Ann Scott.

What has been one of the greatest challenges you face in your ministry?

by Father Wesley Schawe

People turn to a priest in the face of death, violence, anger, or despair, looking for some hope. I think my greatest challenge is wanting to help everyone in every moment of pain or sadness, but knowing that I can't.