

Dinner/Meal with the Pastor

Personal connection with one's priest is invaluable in the promotion of a vocation to the Priesthood. Consistently, young men who enter the seminary and Priesthood point to the example *and invitation* of their parish priests as the contributing factor to their consideration of the call to Holy Orders. While the Vocations Office offers many opportunities to explore a vocation, it is vital that there be a familiar and local voice of encouragement for a young man to follow Christ's call.

A helpful way to encourage men, as well as to raise awareness, is to share some time informally with them. Inviting potential candidates to dinner (or lunch or breakfast after a Mass) offers a friendly environment where men can talk with their pastor, get to know him, and become comfortable discussing the Priesthood. This is also a good way to follow up a man's participation in a diocesan-sponsored awareness event, such as the "Highways and Byways" dinners. Follow-up is a large part of the encouragement, and pastors and parish priests are in the best position to accomplish this task.



It is also helpful to invite the pastor or a parish priest to a youth ministry event in the parish. This allows the young people to encounter their pastor and hear his story – seeing him as a regular guy whom they can approach.