

Role of Families in Promoting Vocations By Cardinal Sean O'Malley, O.F.M., Cap.

Traditionally, Catholic homes have been a privileged place for a vocation to grow and be nurtured by parents who understood the importance of priesthood and religious life. My own family was a great source of encouragement for my vocation. Today we need to appeal to parents and teachers to instill a sense of vocation in our young Catholics. They should not confine themselves to asking their children, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" They must also ask, "And what do you think God wants you to be?" We must help young people look beyond careers and professions and answer a call from God to be holy. For most young Catholics the call is going to be to married life. We must do all we can to help prepare them for that vocation. We can also be certain that some of our young people are being called by God to lives of special service in the Church, to priesthood, permanent diaconate and religious life. It is particularly challenging to present the commitment of consecrated life and priestly ministry in the context of contemporary culture. Without support, these vocations will go unheeded. Parents can do so much by praying with their children and teaching them to seek God's will in their lives through vocational discernment. Parents need to have a sense of vocation and mission themselves to pass on to their children. Parents receive their children from God and must be willing to give them back to God for service of his people. In faith, parents need to understand that their children's true happiness depends on a generous response to God's call and that God is never outdone in generosity and love.

- *Cardinal Sean O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap.*