



MOST REVEREND JOSEPH R. KOPACZ, D.D., PH.D.
CATHOLIC DIOCESE *of* JACKSON

October 10, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

I write to you today to reflect on a matter of profound importance in the life of our Church — the call to priesthood. The priest is called to be a shepherd, a servant, and a visible sign of Christ's presence among us. Without the priesthood, we would not have the Eucharist, and without the Eucharist, we would not have the Church.

In the Diocese of Jackson we've been seeking to 'reimagine' our parishes and make sure that we are staying close to the four marks of the Church as One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. That effort of reimagining has also been undertaken in the Chancery Office, including the Office of Vocations.

God continues to call men to the priesthood, but they need our support to hear and respond to His call. We, as a community of faith, must pray fervently for an increase in vocations. I also urge every family to create an environment where the idea of the priesthood is cherished and respected. Parents, speak openly with your sons about the possibility of a vocation to the priesthood. Encourage them to seek God's will in their lives, and help them discern how they may be called to serve the Church.

To aid these efforts, today I am announcing the Called by Name Campaign, an initiative in our diocese to identify faithful young men who are open to discerning the priesthood. The campaign will take place on November 9-10, 2024.

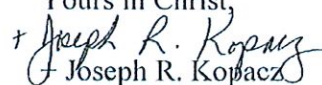
Often, the voice of God is heard through the encouragement of others, and this campaign provides a structured way for parishioners to prayerfully nominate individuals who exhibit qualities of faith, leadership, and a heart for service. As we prepare for this campaign, I have a message for young men and for all the faithful:

For Young Men: If you are still discerning God's plan for your life, I invite you to pray about the priesthood. I can tell you firsthand, this vocation is one of fulfillment and joy. Be not afraid! Listen for his call - He loves you and has a great plan of purpose for your life, no matter what you are called to!

For All Parishioners: Prayerfully consider which young men, ages 15 through 30, you would like to honor by nominating them for Called By Name. Your nomination will also show him that his community sees his potential to do great things for the Lord. At Mass next weekend, you will receive more detailed instructions about how to nominate young men in this campaign. You can also visit www.jackonvocations.com/called to submit a nomination today.

Let us all renew our commitment to pray for and promote priestly vocations. Through the grace of God and our collective efforts, may we see a new generation of priests arise who will continue to serve the Church with love, faith, and dedication.

May the Lord bless you and keep you always in His love.

Yours in Christ,

Joseph R. Kopacz
Bishop of Jackson