



CALIFORNIA STATE COUNCIL 2016-2017 SERVICE PROGRAM HANDBOOK



REFUND SUPPORT VOCATION PROGRAM (RSVP) – *Supreme Featured Church Activities* ***John Bertrand*** ***Program***

California has a goal this Columbian Year to increase the support given to seminarians and especially postulants. Those women in formation who are going to give their lives to the Church need your support both financially and morally as well as our seminarians.

Through the Knights of Columbus Refund Support Vocations Program (RSVP), councils and assemblies are encouraged to “adopt” one or more **seminarians or postulants** and provide them with financial assistance and moral support. RSVP money is used by seminarians and those in religious formation for Tuition and books, Car Insurance, Travel Expenses, Emergency expenditures and other living expenses.

Moral support is accomplished by keeping in contact with the seminarian or postulate you have adopted. Invite them to your meeting or other functions when possible. Encourage seminarians to join the Order most importantly, pray for vocations.



Who is eligible to receive RSVP funds?

- Seminarians attending college seminaries (sometimes called minor seminaries).
- Seminarians who have been accepted by a diocese and are in their “spirituality” year.
- Seminarians attending major seminaries (four years) in preparation for priestly ordination.
- Seminarians in their “pastoral’ year (most often when they are deacons).
- Seminarians who belong to a religious institute and are currently in formation for the priesthood (religious seminarians often are called “Brother” even though they will eventually be ordained as priests).
- Men and women who are novices or postulants in religious orders or religious communities.
- Foreign seminarians studying in the United States.
- Canadian seminarians studying overseas.
- Seminarians from your diocese attending seminaries in another diocese, state, or country.
- Seminarians from other states or dioceses attending a seminary located in your jurisdiction.

The following persons are ineligible for RSVP funds:

- Priests or religious seeking assistance for continuing education.
- Religious brothers not currently studying for the priesthood.
- Candidates for the permanent diaconate.



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Where can we find a Seminarian or Postulant to Support?

- Go to the California Vocation Website and click on California Seminarists
www.vocationawareness.com
- Contact the Vocation Office in your diocese for seminarists
- Contact the Religious Women Office in your diocese to find Religious Orders ministering in your diocese who have postulants or novices.
- Get referrals from your pastor.
- Utilize the Catholic Bishops Website for resources: www.usccb.org

RSVP Action Steps

- Locate a candidate to support.
- After a candidate's name and address is secured, prepare and send a letter of introduction from your council, assembly or circle.
- Make your check payable directly to the recipient, not a parish, diocese or seminary. Funds made out to these entities do not qualify for RSVP reimbursement.
- Notify the diocesan vocations director. In some dioceses they may want you to send the check to them for recording and distribution to the seminarian.
- Take photos and send them to your local and diocesan newspapers, and Columbia magazine. Be sure caption information is complete and accurate.

RSVP assistance also involves prayer and moral support

- Make at least one personal visit to and send four letters – i.e.: birthday, Christmas, Easter, and welcome back to school greetings – each fraternal year.
- Encourage members and their families to keep seminarian or postulant in their prayers; make personal visits to them; and send communications throughout the year – i.e. birthday, Christmas, Easter greetings.
- Invite seminarian or postulant to council activities and include in mailing of newsletter or other communications.
- Arrange for seminarian or postulant to host a group of young people from the council or parish at their seminary to meet other seminarists and get a feeling of preparing for priesthood or religious life.
- Make sure to offer congratulations and support to your seminarian or postulant on their ordination.

Raising Funds to Support a Seminarian or Postulant

- Use the **RSVP Matching Funds Parish Program** by getting your parish involved.
- Involving the parish not only helps fund the candidate but it also brings awareness of vocations to everyone in the parish.

Apply for a refund from Supreme Council Office

- Qualifying councils and assemblies receive a \$100 refund for every \$500 donated, up to a limit of \$2,000 donated to an individual

To be eligible for refund, monies must

- Be given directly to an individual (not an institution or fund)
- Money must be paid with a check drawn from the council or assembly account.
 - Copies of check or other documentation must accompany application for refund.
 - Refer to the RSVP Refund Application (#2863) for exact details and procedures.
- Request an RSVP Award Plaque.
- You must provide financial assistance as well as moral support throughout the fraternal year.



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RSVP MATCHING FUNDS

The goal of this program is to assist council's that **have been** unable to participate in RSVP by reaching the minimum requirement of \$500, and also to assist council's that are already participating in the program to sponsor additional seminarians, postulants, or novices, by directly appealing to parishioners and local Catholic Businesses.



- 1) Get your Pastor's approval before you begin
- 2) Involve other ministries in your parish to partner with you.
- 3) Announce in your parish bulletin that your council will be sponsoring a seminarian's, postulant, or novice and that your council will match the donation.
 - a. *Example: The Knights of Columbus (council name & number) will match any donation up to \$250 to financially assist 1 or more Seminarian or Postulant. Donations will be used for books, car insurance, travel and living expenses.*
- 4) Arrange to have this announcement or similar read at all of the weekend Masses.
- 5) Have council members distribute flyers with a short bio of the seminarian or postulant you **want** to sponsor, and attach a prayer card for vocations.
- 6) Send out a Post Card to local Catholic businesses with your intentions. You can locate a Catholic Business in your area by looking at the ads on the back of your Parish Bulletin.
- 7) Have the seminarian or postulant you wish to sponsor assist at the weekend masses, and have them thank parishioners for all their spiritual support.
- 8) Hold a second collection the weekend after bulletin and pulpit announcement.
- 9) Use your Council's Newsletter or website if you have one to collect donations with a personal bio of the seminarian or postulant you want to sponsor
- 10) Send out personal thank you cards and prayer cards to all the parishioners and businesses who participated.



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VOCATIONS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES



PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY PROGRAM – *New State Program*

Nicholas Vilicich

What is "Priesthood Sunday"?

Priesthood Sunday, the last Sunday of October, is a special day set aside to honor the priesthood in the United States. It is a day to reflect upon and affirm the role of the priesthood in the life of the Church as a central one. For this Columbian Year, Priesthood Sunday will be held on **October 30, 2016**.

In the wake of the clergy sex abuse scandal, there has been concern that the image of all priests has been tainted by the actions of a few. Priesthood Sunday sends a message to all that the sins of a few do not reflect the innocent majority, and that the parish priest, as the instrument of Christ's ministry on earth, is loved and respected by those in the parish community.

What happens on Priesthood Sunday?

The lay faithful of all parishes in the country develop their own special way of marking the day and honoring their parish priests both at Mass and other parish events, such as social celebrations and school activities. Priesthood Sunday was designed to be an event led by the laity, but your parish priest can participate by talking about how he experienced and answered his own calling, the need for vocations to keep the priesthood vital, and about priests who have inspired him.

Priesthood Sunday will also offer an opportunity for priests and their parishioners to build a stronger working relationship for the future. Together, they can dialogue to take an honest look at the challenges of the future and how they can collaborate to meet those challenges as a united force.

What are some of the Priesthood Sunday Celebration Ideas?

There are many ways to celebrate Priesthood Sunday with the whole parish. Here are some ideas:

- Parish pot luck dinner to celebrate "Father's Day"
- Place an Ad in local diocesan paper along with short story about priest(s)
- Photo on cover of parish bulletin along with biography
- Publicity in your diocesan and local community newspaper about your parish celebration of "Priesthood Sunday."
- Put posters announcing your parish celebration on parish bulletin boards.

Celebration planning includes the following:

- Form a celebration committee
- Select dates for the committee to meet
- Identify other parish groups that would like to participate
- Select a date for the celebration



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WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS PROGRAM

Anthony Despart

Show your support to people discerning the call to priesthood and religious life by standing with the entire Church in observing the World Day of Prayer for Vocations on Sunday, May 7, 2017.

Supporting religious vocations has always been a priority for the Order. By providing support to those discerning a call to consecrated poverty, chastity and obedience through the priesthood or religious life, we help enable them to realize their vocations.



As Knights, your councils can contribute to this important cause by doing any of the following throughout the year:

- Praying at the beginning and end of your council and assembly meetings for an increase in priestly or religious vocations, especially among young people.
 - Working with local pastors to organize holy hours for vocations at local parishes.
 - Promoting “Vocations Day” events such as vocations fairs (with presentations by various seminarians, postulants and/or young religious).
 - Holding fundraising drives for a needy seminarian or religious.
 - Offering to cover travel expenses for men and women attending personal vocation retreats, or sponsoring group visits to nearby seminaries or religious communities.
 - Making the Order’s RSVP scholarship and student loan information available to seminarians and postulants.
 - Showing support for local religious by sponsoring an ad for their communities in your parish bulletin or local newspaper, or by hosting receptions celebrating religious professions or ordinations.
- For information on further actively supporting vocations, please review the [RSVP guidelines and eligibility requirements](#).

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