

# REACHING OUT WEDNESDAYS

## Topic: Vocation Teams

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**Diocese of New Ulm:** I am a new vocation director, so I don't know very well how it works, but we do have a vocations team that meets regularly, and I am interested in "beefing up" the group with enthusiastic and faithful (and perhaps younger) priests from around the diocese. What I know is that the Vocations Director, the Assistant (a young priest from the diocese), the head of Youth Ministry (a consecrated virgin) and the Bishop get together once a month to talk about possible candidates and to share ideas. I don't know how this works in practice. We are talking about having three other priests serve on this team together with the Vocations Director and Bishop.

**Archdiocese of Newark:** is tweaking this model this coming year.

This previous year (2013-14) I was assigned as Director while continuing on as Director/Chaplain of a Campus Ministry program at one of the University's in the Archdiocese. We had 8 other priests who were assigned as Part-time Assistant directors with the expectation of contributing about 12 hours per month to Vocations work - primarily in parish/school visits. This proved to be pretty unsuccessful, since most of the priests found the everyday routines and demands of the parish hard to break away from to even schedule these visits. On my end, it was difficult to keep track or current on what (if anything) was happening with the assistant directors along with doing the interviews, paperwork, follow-ups for potential seminarians

**Diocese of Albany** (from their website): The Vicars for Vocations will assist the Vocations Director in the area of recruitment and discernment. The Vocations Director will meet with the Priests on a regular basis to plan out recruitment strategies for vocations, develop programs for discernment and support for those contemplating a priestly vocation. They will run the individual regional vocations discernment groups, meeting on a regular basis with those who are discerning. They will communicate with the Vocations Director on the progress of the discerners. The Vicars will attend monthly Vocations Board meetings as non-voting members and their role and responsibility on the board will be as advocates for those discerning a call to Priesthood. The Vicar will act as an advocate at the time when an application is being considered and the advocate is asked to make every effort attend the board meeting at which the decision is being made. The Vicar will act as advocate for those discerners who are in his particular discernment groups. If the Vicar is also the Spiritual Director for an applicant, then another Vicar will be designated as their advocate. The Vocations Director will periodically attend the regional discernment group meetings. The Vicars for Vocations will also network with the priests in their regional areas, encouraging them to support and participate in ongoing recruitment and discernment programs

**Diocese of Bridgeport:** Here in the Diocese of Bridgeport, our vocation team consists of the Director of Vocations and an assistant director. This was not always the case. When the Director was also named Rector of our minor seminary, I was brought in as an

assistant. In the past we have also had priests assigned as assistants, mainly responsible for some recruiting or interviewing candidates. We will likely transition to a new system in the future, where the Rector of the seminary serves as Director of Seminarians and another priest serves as Director of Vocations. Informally, we have a group of priests that we frequently call on to promote vocations - especially our high school chaplains. It is very helpful to have priests who personally know the young men who may have a vocation also be the first to invite them to discernment.

**Diocese of Chicago:** We do have 9 Asst Vocation Directors appointed by the bishop to help serve the vocation office. They are in various regions throughout the 11 counties of our diocese. It is a work in progress as we are trying to focus our energies for the coming year. We have identified meeting with the priests as a first priority and they also will be trying to set up regional discernment groups since our diocese is so large geographically.