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Recently, I read an article about the status of priestly vocations in the Diocese of Wichita. In the past two years that Diocese ordained a staggering number of 20 priests! The numerical statistics of the Diocese of Wichita are comparable to our own Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. So, that begs the question: what do they have that we do not?

One thing that they have that we do not have here are numerous Perpetual Adoration Chapels. I have had the privilege of being the Pastor of a parish that does have one: St. Patrick’s in Johnstown. Now that I am the Diocesan Vocation Director I can say with certainty that it bears fruit in inspiring young men to discern a possible calling to the priesthood. I have two young men with whom I am discussing the possibility of a priestly vocation. They prayed in that Adoration Chapel regularly. Silent prayer is very powerful in helping one to listen to the will of God.

Now the tough reality is figuring out how to provide these opportunities within our Diocese. Security of the Blessed Sacrament is of the utmost importance. Security and safety of the people who would frequent these Chapels, especially overnight, would need to be addressed. Yes, we can make a list of possible concerns that we should consider, but at some point we must trust in Divine Providence and not obsess about all the human errors that could occur.

One thing the article that I read stated very well is that the work of seeking vocations to the priesthood should not risk the possibility of becoming “gimmicky.” Rather, we should stick with those practices that have proven to bring about spiritual growth and spiritual fruits, like Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – especially for the intention of increasing vocations to the priesthood. Maybe we can follow Wichita’s example and establish some Adoration Chapels throughout the Diocese specifically for the intention of praying for more Diocesan priestly vocations. It certainly can never hurt to pray more!

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