



HIGH CALLING  
PROGRAM

**2026 Spring Report for the High Calling Program and  
the Initiative for Priestly Renewal  
Episcopal Advisory Board**

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May 21, 2026



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Purpose of Report: To provide an update on the scope and impact of the High Calling Program and its partnership with the Initiative for Priestly Renewal, including participant numbers and diocesan outreach.

The High Calling Program is structured around four key components: Vocational Development Outreach, Discernment Formation, Propaedeutic Formation, and Formator Formation.

### **1- Vocational Development Outreach**

- Since 2023, Instagram and broader social media outreach have become essential pathways for connecting men to the High Calling Program. In 2023, mentors initiated seven substantial conversations, leading to four men enrolling in the program, with two ultimately entering the seminary.
- In 2024, social media engagement generated 13 meaningful discussions. From those, six men joined the High Calling Program, and four have since moved forward into seminary formation.
- By 2025, our mentor team held 30 serious conversations, resulting in 15 new enrollments. As of today, five of those men have been accepted into the seminary, with several others still in the application process.
- In 2026, the High Calling mentor team is currently engaged in 36 active conversations, with an anticipated enrollment rate of approximately 50 percent (18-20 men).

### **2- Discernment Formation (Pre-Propaedeutic): High Calling Program**

- Number of New Dioceses Served in 2025-2026: 17
- Total Dioceses and Religious Communities Served Through April, 2026: 107
- Total Number of Discerners Served Through April, 2026: 670



### ***Events Upcoming:***

- *High Calling Program Orientation for upcoming academic year, September 21, 2026*
- *NCDVD: September 11-18, 2026 (Huntington, NY)*
- *SEEK: January 1-5, 2027 (San Antonio, TX)*

***Video Project:*** The High Calling Program is producing a marketing video that introduces discerning men, vocation directors, and donors to its mission of forming future priests through deep spiritual formation of the heart and rigorous intellectual preparation. The video highlights the program's distinctive guidance and real formation experiences, building confidence in its impact. For vocation directors, it presents a trustworthy path for candidates; for donors, it demonstrates a meaningful investment in the Church's future, ultimately inviting deeper engagement and support.

- *Marketing Video for Discerners scheduled for release by June 1, 2026*
- *Marketing Video for Vocation Directors scheduled for release by June 1, 2026*
- *Marketing Video for Donors scheduled for release by June 15, 2026*

### **3- Propaedeutic Formation (Past Year / Seminaries): High Calling Program**

- Mount St. Mary's Seminary and the Oblates of Saint Joseph
  - Propaedeutic men served in 2025-26: 31
  - Total number of Propaedeutic men served from 2023-2026: 101

### **4- Formator Formation: Initiative for Priestly Renewal**

#### **Spiritual Direction Program for Priests**

- New Dioceses Served in 2025-26: 8
- Total Dioceses and Religious Communities Served through April, 2026: 37
- Total Number of Priests Served Through April, 2026: 73



### **The Confessor's Institute**

- The Confessor's Institute is a formation initiative that helps priests deepen their understanding and practice of the Sacrament of Penance—its meaning, its pastoral demands, and its power to renew both the confessor and the penitent. It seeks to address two pressing needs in the Church today: the decline in confidence and skill among confessors, and the need for deeper, ongoing priestly conversation about Reconciliation and the pastoral issues that shape the spiritual growth and freedom of God's people.
  - Inaugural year: 24 priests from 15 dioceses and religious communities. Villa Maria Retreat Center, Santa Cruz, CA (June 25-29, 2025)

### **Pilgrimages and Retreats**

- 5 priests attended Pilgrimage to Medjugorje (May 4-11, 2025)
- 26 priests attended the pilgrimage to Italy (October 8-17, 2025)
- 5 priests attended the Priests Retreat for the Archdiocese of Port of Spain (March 12-14, 2025)
- 6 priests attended a Regional Retreat for the Oblates of the Virgin Mary (December 26-28, 2025)

### **Priestly Convocations and Priest Days of Recollection**

- 200 priests, Diocese of Arlington, VA (2025)
- 38 priests, Archdiocese of San Francisco, CA (2026)

### **One-On-One Consultations with Priests in Crisis or Seeking Spiritual Direction**

- 11 priests served in 2025



***Events Upcoming:***

- *Confessor's Institute:* July 6-10, 2026 (Santa Cruz, CA)
- *Denver Companions of Christ Annual Gathering,* August 2-8, 2026 (Aspen, Colorado)
- *Spiritual Direction Program for Priests Retreat:* October 5-9, 2026 (St. Augustine, FL)
- *Priestly Convocation:* January 25-29, 2027 (North Palmerston, New Zealand)
- *Priestly Convocation:* February 2-5, 2027 (Sydney, Australia)

**Upcoming Reports:**

- Fifth Report: September 25, 2026. Fall enrollment updates will be included
- Next online Board Meeting on Tuesday, February 9, 2027 at 2:30 PM EST