News
Religious Life



Filles de Marie Immaculée Srs. Mary Elizabeth Tran Thi Bich Diep (first from right) and Mary Vu Thi Thuy Anh (third from right) spark young women's interests in religious vocations by playing outdoor games with them at Xuan Thien Parish in Hue, Vietnam, April 23. Diep said that last year 80 women entered their congregation, but in previous years some 130 people joined it every year. The 103-year-old congregation has 236 sisters working in the Hue Archdiocese. Diep said young entrants to religious life are college students at church-run hostels and choir members, and they take active part in religious activities and have good relationships with the nuns. (Joachim Pham)

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To mark the 60th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, religious congregations in Vietnam's Hue Archdiocese and parishes in the Ho Chi Minh City Archdiocese hosted weeklong activities to attract young candidates for religious vocations.

As vocations experience a decline in interest and membership, the events leading up to April 30 intended to draw hundreds of young people with recreational activities, cultural performances, religious habit shows, services, and prayers at local churches and convents.



Young women play a game on April 23 in the compound of the motherhouse of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Visitation in Hue, Vietnam. They regularly gather to

study the Bible, attend Eucharist adoration, play games, and have meals as a way to find joy and solidarity in consecrated life. (Joachim Pham)



Mary Nguyen Thu Hieu (in dark blue) and another catechist help children put on various habits to introduce 10 orders at Nam Hoa Church in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, April 30. Hieu, 82, who works as a catechist, said, "The show aims at sowing seeds of religious vocations to local young people. The parish produces many religious and priests who wore habits to introduce religious life when they were children." (Joachim Pham)



Srs. Mary Truong Thi Sen, left, and Anna Nguyen Thi Nhung pose for a photo before a banner, welcoming vocation candidates to the Daughters of Our Lady of the Visitation's headquarters in Hue, Vietnam, April 23. They plan to hold another vocation gathering on May 7. Nhung said the number of newcomers to the congregation have reduced from 100 to 45 in recent years. She believes one reason for that is because many local families ignore faith practice and send their children to look for jobs in other places to make a living. (Joachim Pham)



Lovers of the Holy Cross of Hue Sr. Goretti Le Ngoc Suong talks about their pastoral services to youth at the motherhouse in Hue, Vietnam, April 28. "The gathering is an opportunity for them to sow seeds of vocations among youths," Sung said, adding that 25 people entered the congregation last year, a decline by two-thirds compared with previous years. (Joachim Pham)

Sr. Lucia Ho Thi Thuy, member of the vocation promotion committee of the Women Orders Association based in Hue, said she thinks the fact that many local families have one or two children, and encourage them to further their careers rather than follow religious vocations, contributes to a decline in those entering religious vocations.

Other families who live in poverty have to send their children to work in other places to support the families, said Thuy, a Sister of St. Paul de Chartres.



Lovers of the Holy Cross of Hue sisters play various musical instruments to welcome female students aged 13-15 to the World Day of Prayer for Vocations celebrations at their motherhouse in Hue, Vietnam, April 28. The gathering was themed "Making Friends With Jesus." The sisters also shared their experiences in religious vocation with participants. (Joachim Pham)



Some 90 religious vocation candidates watch video clips about services done by the Filles de Marie Immaculée, April 24, at the Xuan Thien Convent in Phu Loc district, Vietnam. The candidates also took part in cultural performances, swam at the beach, attended Eucharist adoration, enjoyed agape meals, and had good talks with sisters. (Joachim Pham)



Filles de Marie Immaculée Srs. Mary Vu Thi Thuy Anh (left) and Mary Elizabeth Tran Thi Bich Diep (middle in gray), and other women with candles in hand attend a Eucharist adoration at Xuan Thien Parish in Hue, Vietnam, to pray for more and more young people to answer God's vocational call. (Joachim Pham)



Children model the habits of nine women congregations at Loc Tien Church in Phu Loc district of Thua Thien Hue province, Vietnam, April 27. "The event aims at orientating youths to religious vocations so that they can choose and join them later," said St. Paul de Chartres Sr. Lucia Ho Thi Thuy, a member of the vocation promotion committee of the Women Orders Association, which held the event. (Joachim Pham)

Thuy said local sisters manage to develop young vocations by gathering youths to do charity work, calling on them to join associations, holding prayers for them, and building close relationships with them so as to acquaint them with religious life. The large youth gathering for World Day of Prayer for Vocations was one way of introducing young people to various congregations.

The Hue Archdiocese is home to five women congregations — Discalced Carmelites, Daughters of Our Lady of the Visitation, Filles de Marie Immaculée (Daughters of Mary of the Immaculate Conception), St. Paul de Chartres, Lovers of the Holy Cross

of Hue, and the Tu Hoi Doi Nu Tro Ta Tin Mung (Secular Institute of Servants of the Gospel).

The Ho Chi Minh City Archdiocese has about 150 women congregations, societies, and secular institutes.



Children in traditional costumes give cultural performances of daily activities at schools, hospitals and factories done by members of Tu Hoi Doi Nu Tro Ta Tin Mung, a secular institute based in Hue, Vietnam. The event was held April 27 at Loc Tien Church by the vocation promotion committee of the Women Orders Association. St. Paul de Chartres Sr. Lucia Ho Thi Thuy said the institute with 46 members last year had only two newcomers, but in previous years welcomed five to 10. (Joachim Pham)



Martha Vo Thi Nhan, aged 15 from Da Han Parish, told the gathering held by Lovers of the Holy Cross sisters on Apr. 28 that she and her sister are interested in religious vocations, although their parents would be reluctant to allow them to follow the consecrated life, as they have only two children. "We are attracted to the nuns' habits that keep us in close relationship with God and help us to earn the respect of others," the 10th grader said. (Joachim Pham)



Children in religious habits and Vatican flags in hand, joined by three Lovers of the Holy Cross nuns, Fr. John Le Quang Viet (right), his assistant priest, and catechists pose for a photo in Dong Tien Church to mark World Vocations Day in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, April 30. Some 200 catechism students and catechists attended the celebration and learned some congregations' spiritualities. (Joachim Pham)