



**Cardinal Joseph Tobin Award for Priestly Vocations
Seventh Annual 7th Grade Essay & Video Contest**

Information and Registration Packet

2025



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Registration Form

Each school or parish will select up to 3 essays to submit to the Office of Priestly Vocations. All essay submissions must include a completed copy of this form for the student's entry to be valid.

Email this signed form and essay submission to newarkpriest@rcan.org as one Word/PDF file per student.

Title of Essay

Student's Name

Grade

Age

Teacher/Parish Catechetical Leader Name

Teacher/Parish Catechetical Leader Email

Phone

School/Parish Name

School/Parish City

State

County

By signing this document, you affirm the following:

Student

I have read and understand the Official Rules and Guidelines and agree to abide by those rules. I have full authority to enter this essay into this contest and I promise that the essay is original and owned by me. If necessary, I have obtained all releases and permissions to enter this project into the contest.

I understand that in the event my submission is selected as a winning entry, and the rights and/or originality of my entry cannot be verified to the satisfaction of the judges, an alternate winner may be selected in my place.

Parent/Guardian

I understand that my child has submitted an original essay to the Cardinal Joseph Tobin Award for Priestly Vocations Essay Contest. I grant full permission and authority to the Archdiocese of Newark Office of Priestly Vocations and anyone authorized by the organization to use, publish, and display my child's work.

Student's Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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Overview of Essay Portion of Contest

This provides basic information for students, parents, teachers, and catechists.

Please review the complete terms and conditions of this essay contest included with your registration form.

Essay Topic: Write an essay that specifically answers the following questions:

What is the Roman Catholic Priesthood? How is it a force for good in the world?

Note: This is not a research paper. While there is a need for some research and drawing from sources, this essay should emphasize personal experience and reflection.

Essay Format, Parameters, and Information:

- Essay Length: 500-1,000 words.
- Essays should use 12 pt Times New Roman or Arial font and be double spaced.
- Students are highly encouraged to submit their essay and completed registration form to their teacher/PCL by Wednesday, February 19, 2025, as essays must be reviewed by teachers and PCLs prior to the essay submission deadline.

Registration Form and Essay Submission Information:

- Each school and/or parish is to select no more than 3 essays and will email digital copies of the completed and signed registration forms and essays to newarkpriest@rcan.org. (Subject line of email should read "<<School/Parish Name>> - Essay submissions" and title of digital essay document should be "<<Student Last Name, First Name>> - Essay Contest").
- *Essays and registration form must be submitted as a single PDF file for each individual student.* Thus, a maximum of 3 PDFs can be submitted by each school/parish.
- Pictures of the individual pages of the registration form and/or essay cannot be accepted; however, they can be combined into a PDF or Word file for submission.

Deadline: Each school and/or parish may select and submit 3 essays no later than 11:59 PM EST on Thursday, March 6, 2025. Submissions can be from Catholic school or Faith Formation officials (eg, teachers, principals, parish catechetical leaders (PCLs), directors of religious education, etc.).

Essays must be received by March 6, 2025.

Finalists: Three essay finalists will be chosen to create a video based on their essay.

Winner: One winner will be selected from the three video finalists and awarded the grand prize. A prize will also be awarded to the teacher who mentors the winning student throughout their essay's completion, and to both runners up.

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Rules and Terms and Conditions

Overview

- All essays should specifically answer the following questions:
What is the Roman Catholic Priesthood? How is it a force for good in the world?
- Essays will be 500-1,000 words.
- Three essay finalists will be selected to produce a video based on their essay.
- One final winner will be selected and offered a grand prize of \$1,500; two finalists will each receive \$250. The teacher who mentored the winning student will receive a prize of \$500.

Eligibility

The contest is open to students who are in grade 7 during the time of the contest period (January 27, 2025, through June 6, 2025). Writers must be enrolled in a Catholic school or parish Faith Formation program within the Archdiocese of Newark. All entries must be submitted to the student's teacher or parish catechetical leader (PCL), no more than one essay per writer.

Essay Length

Essays should be no fewer than 500 and no more than 1,000 words in length. Submissions that do not meet this requirement will not be accepted.

Deadline and Submission

Students may submit one essay and a completed registration form to their teacher or PCL, with every encouragement to do so before February 19, 2025. Essays must be reviewed by each student's teacher or PCL prior to the March 6, 2025 essay contest submission deadline. Each school or parish is to select no more than 3 essays and email digital copies of the registration form and essays to newarkpriest@rcan.org. The subject line of email should read "<<School/Parish Name>> - Essay submissions" and title of digital essay document should be "<<Student Last Name, First Name>> - Essay Contest".

Submissions are due no later than 11:59 PM EST on Thursday, March 6, 2025.

Plagiarism

All essays must be the original work of the student whose name is listed on the submission form. Any form of plagiarism will result in immediate disqualification.

Judges

Essays will be judged on their ability to address the topic in an articulate, clear, and organized manner. Essay submissions will be reviewed in a fair and unbiased judging system, where judges will all use the same criteria. Decisions of the judges are final.

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Rules and Terms and Conditions (continued)

Ownership and Use

The ownership of any submission remains the property of the writer, but entry into the competition constitutes the entrant's permission and consent, without compensation, with or without attribution, for the Archdiocese to use, reproduce, transmit, post, distribute, adapt, edit, and/or display the submission.

Selection of Finalists

Finalists will be notified no later than Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Finalists

Those selected as finalists will be notified and asked to produce and submit a video related to their essay. All video contest finalists must adhere to the following Video Contest Rules and Guidelines.

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Video Contest Rules & Guidelines

1. All entries must be a digital video.
2. Each entry must be based on the writer's essay.
3. The length of the video should be 3-4 minutes; videos longer than 4 minutes will not be accepted.
4. All entries should begin with a 10-second full screen "title screen" that includes the following information:
 - Student's name.
 - School/parish name, school/parish city.
 - Title of video.
 - Total running time.
5. All information presented in the video must be cited at the end of the video, giving credit to the original source. Plagiarism of any kind will result in disqualification. You must submit a list of your sources, properly cited.
6. There is no entry fee.
7. Entries may be submitted up to but no later than 11:59 PM EST, Monday, May 5, 2025.
 - a. Winners will be announced no later than Friday, June 6, 2025.
8. All entries must be submitted in digital format (ie, YouTube, Google Drive, email).
9. No copyrighted materials (music, images, etc.) may be used for this contest unless you own the copyright or have a license to use the material for this contest. Written permission must be obtained and provided upon request for all copyrighted materials.
10. No professional assistance is allowed. The student finalist will be the lead producer of the video. Adults may assist with production but are limited to verbal guidance only. Adults are allowed to be actors or cameramen but not content contributors. All actors must submit a release form (see #12).
11. All portions of the online entry form must be completed when you upload your video for it to be eligible.
12. You must submit a signed/completed **Parent Permission Form** and a signed/completed **Actor Release Form** for **each person** appearing in your video. Forms can be emailed to newarkpriest@rcan.org.
13. Content must comply with all local and national laws of the country of origin and the United States. Content must not 1) promote illegal or unethical behavior; 2) support racial, religious, sexual or other invidious prejudice; 3) violate rights established by law or agreement; 4) invade the privacy of any person; or 5) be otherwise inappropriate as determined by the Archdiocese of Newark in its sole and conclusive determination.
14. The judges' decisions, based on a predefined rubric, are final.
15. The only compensation for submitting a video is the opportunity to be awarded a prize if the entry wins. There is no additional compensation.

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Video Contest Rules & Guidelines (continued)

16. All entries should be submitted in English. If entries are not in English, they must include English subtitles.
17. Awards will be presented as follows: \$1,500 to the winner, \$250 each to two finalists, and \$500 to the teacher who mentored the first-place student in the contest.
18. The winner will be solely responsible for any federal, state, or local taxes on winnings (if applicable).
19. Students should keep at least one copy of their video. The Archdiocese of Newark is not responsible for any films that are lost, damaged, or that do not upload properly.
20. Ownership of the underlying intellectual property of the project remains with the entrant, with the following exceptions:
 - a. Entrants grant the Archdiocese of Newark the right to use their names, photographs, statements, quotes, testimonials, and video submissions for advertising, publicity, and promotional purposes without notification or further compensation.
 - b. Entrants also grant the Archdiocese of Newark the right to use, reproduce, reprint, distribute, perform, and/or display the entrant's project video without further compensation or notification to the entrant.
 - c. The Archdiocese maintains the right to reproduce, reprint, distribute, perform, display, or exhibit the project for advertising, publicity, and promotional purposes on their website, at conferences, or at any other venues.
21. By accepting the prizes, winners agree to hold the Archdiocese of Newark and all its employees harmless against any and all claims and liability arising out of use of such prizes. Winner assumes all liability for any injury or damage caused from participation in the contest or use/redemption of any prize.
22. Entrants agree to be bound by the official contest rules and decisions of the judges.