



Take the Risk for Christ

Year of Vocation for Diocesan Priesthood

Signs of Growth



Just as a small seed lies hidden in the darkness and spurts forth, we are also seeing encouraging signs of new life, of growth, in the Lord's Harvest. For many years now, we have become used to diminishing numbers of men entering seminary. We are now seeing that trend beginning to reverse.

10 Men Ordained to the Priesthood

In 2023 there were ten ordinations to the priesthood for Irish Dioceses.

15 Men Enter Seminary

This year according to a survey conducted by the **Irish Catholic Newspaper**, 15 men have entered diocesan seminary for Irish Dioceses. The majority of these entering Maynooth. This number is up on 2022.

15 Men Commence Propaedeutic Year

The Catholic Communications Office report that this academic year 15 men will commence a propaedeutic year in Spain. Again, an increase on the number from the previous years. According to the CCO, this brings the total number of men at various stages of formation to 64.



Photo: 35 men attending the Exploring Priesthood (Come and See) weekend in Maynooth in November.

35 Men Attend "Come and See" weekend.

In November, the National Office in collaboration with the Seminary Formation Team in Maynooth held a Come and See Weekend in our National Seminary. No doubt some of the 35 who attended may be part of the 15 that are planning to commence their propaedeutic year in Spain.

The numbers are encouraging. Despite the general perception that some have about vocations, this is a sign that the Lord still calls men to follow him, and that there are those out there in our parishes who hear His voice in their hearts and are prepared to "Take the Risk For Christ".



Deacon Eric Cooney
National Vocations Office



ART FOR VOCATIONS

On October 18, the Feast day of Saint Luke, Patron of Artists, the National Vocations Office held the inaugural Art for Vocations Exhibition in the Portlaoise Parish Centre. Artists and Iconographers were invited to exhibit their work.

A presentation was given to those who attended by artist Eoin Madigan entitled "Finding God in Paint". Eoin, a former Benedictine Monk who gives retreats using Art said,

"visual art has the ability to communicate without words. It can inspire us, touch our emotions, reveal truths and challenge us in so many ways. What better medium than to explore our encounters with God? These are very special encounters that, without words, open our hearts and draw us into an awareness of God's presence"

Bernie Martin from the Irish Catholic Bishop's Conference exhibited a number of ICONS which she has written.



HOOK OF FAITH WEBINARS

INSPIRING PRIESTS FROM THE PAST, FOR THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

In collaboration with Fr. Billy Swan – Vocations Director for the Diocese of Ferns and editor of “The Hook of Faith” platform, we ran series of three zoom-based webinars, on three consecutive evenings from October 31 through to 2nd November. The webinars featured the stories of inspiring priests from the Past, for the Present and the Future.

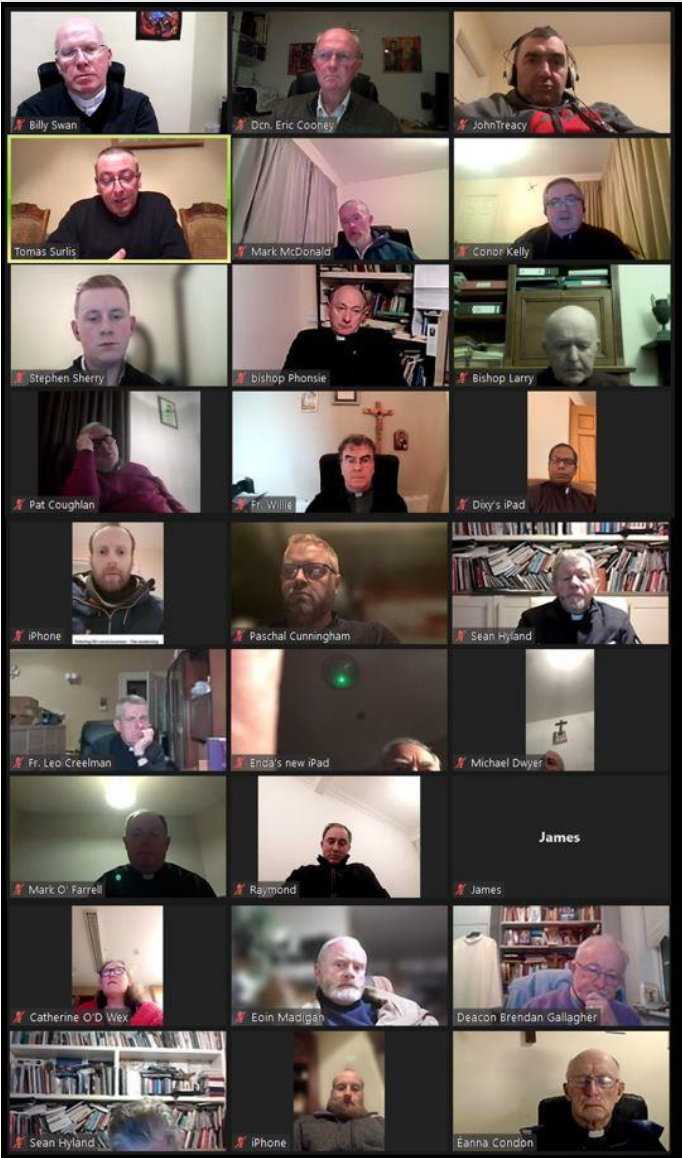
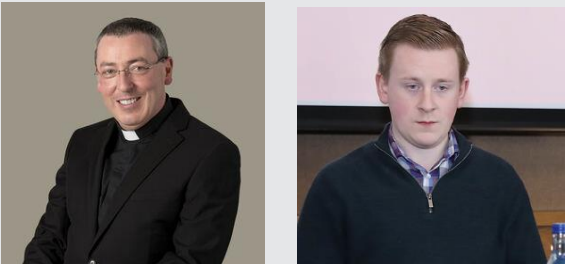
On the ‘Priests From the Past’ webinar, Dr Patrick Kenny will spoke about the Priestly Witness and Courage of Fr. Willie Doyle SJ.



For the webinar Priests for the Present, Fr Shaun Doherty, a recently ordained priest, shared his vocation story and Fr Billy Swan who celebrated his silver jubilee shared of his gratitude for his priestly ministry.



For the third and final webinar “Priests for the Future”, Fr Tomás Surlis, Rector of St. Patrick’s Seminary, shared on the seminary formation programme in Maynooth and Stephen Sherry, a seminarian for the Diocese of Clogher spoke about his vocation story and his experience of being a seminarian, studying for the priesthood.



RECENT EVENTS

From August through November

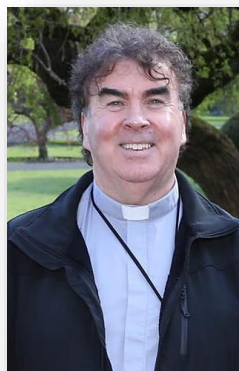
Winter 2023

Advent

COME & SEE WEEKEND

On the weekend of the 18th and 19th of November, we hosted a “Come and See” Exploring Priesthood weekend in our National Seminary in Maynooth.

We are extremely grateful to the formation team and the seminarians who made themselves available to welcome and interact with those attending.



Fr Willie Purcell
National Vocations
Coordinator

In total, we had 35 men attend, at one stage we had applications from 42 men, but due to work and family commitments a small number had to withdraw. All of these men, with one exception were in accompaniment with their diocesan vocation directors. The feedback from the weekend was very positive. For many they were greatly encouraged to meet and interact with others who were also discerning a vocation and having the opportunity to visit the seminary, meet seminarians and the formation team was very worthwhile. It was also very encouraging to the existing seminarians to know that there are others who are seriously discerning to follow in their path.

The commitment and dedication of our diocesan vocations directors was evident in this year's come and see event. Those who attended commented not only on the encouragement that their vocations directors give them but also the spiritual leadership in helping them discern a vocation to the Diocesan Priesthood. This work is ongoing and demands great dedication from our vocation's directors who while ministering in many other areas of priesthood continue to encourage dedicated men to take the risk for Christ.



NATIONAL VOCATIONS OFFICE
IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE



QUEENS UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

Vocations Evening

On Tuesday 21st November, the Chaplaincy of Queens University, Belfast, organised a Vocations Evening. It began at 6 pm with a Holy Hour led by Bishop Cullinan.

This was followed by a meal and then a Panel Discussion chaired by Bishop Cullinan.

The panel comprised the Vocations Director for Down and Connor Diocese, Fr. Conor McGrath, Fr. Thomas McGlynn, local parish priest, Fr. Dominic McGrattan, Queens University Chaplain, Fr. Martin Mayerhoffer, European Chaplain for FOCUS International Theological Institute, Vienna and Deacon Brett Lockhart KC, retired barrister, family man and permanent deacon, spoke with plenty of interaction from the 30 men in attendance.

It is clear that the University Chaplaincy in Belfast has a very lively apostolate with students.

Bishop Tony Farquhar who had died only a few days previously was fondly remembered. Bishop Farquhar who was, himself, a former Chaplain in QUB, may he rest in peace. May he intercede for many vocations to the priesthood in the future.

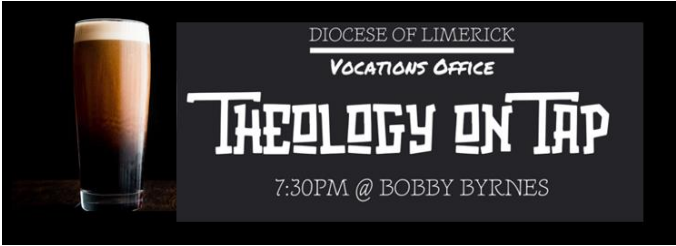


Bishop Tony Farquhar



LIMERICK DIOCESE

Limerick Diocese have a monthly “*Theology on Tap*” event. For this “Year for Vocation to Diocesan Priesthood”, instead of different topics each month, there is a focus on priesthood. The presenters are priests (or Tim Collins their seminarian) and they addressed different aspects of the life of a diocesan priest.



To date there have been three events. The first was **Fr. Sean Harmon** on hospital chaplaincy; second was **Fr. Eamonn Fitzgibbon** on the common priesthood; third was **Tim Collins** (seminarian) on discerning your vocation in a crazy world. They hope to host three more in the spring semester, though the presenters are still to be determined.

Adoration for Vocations

St. Saviour's continues to host Adoration after Wednesday Mass for the intentions of Vocations.

The St. Joseph's Young Priests Society held a special Holy Hour for Vocations last month. in Raheen. Limerick



KILMORE DIOCESE

Memory of a Priest

During Eastertide parishioners throughout the diocese of Kilmore were invited to submit a memory of a priest who was significant in their lives.

This request resulted in a large number of submissions as people shared wonderful stories of priests who played an important role in their lives, the lives of their family, and their communities. Many of these stories centred on how priests had ministered in a sensitive and supportive way at times of sickness, bereavement and tragedy. It was ordinary human things such as kindness, gentleness, prayerfulness and being there when needed that made the most impact.

These wonderful stories are now being regularly shared on the Kilmore Diocesan Social Media during this time of prayer for vocations.

Booklet on Diocesan Priesthood



Kilmore diocese linked in with the other dioceses in the Armagh province who with the support of the northern province of the **Knights of Columbanus** produced an information booklet on the diocesan priesthood with the contact details of the Vocations Director.

These were circulated to the most populous churches in the diocese as a resource.



KILLALOE DIOCESE

Year of Vocation

The Diocese of Killaloe has commenced a year-long initiative to encourage men to consider joining the priesthood. The Diocese are very hopeful that they can build on recent progress whereby three men from the Diocese will enter the seminary at Maynooth over the next 12 months.

Their vocations initiative includes visits by their Vocations Director Fr. Ignatius McCormack to parish churches where he will be seeking to kickstart conversations within family groups, with local priests and in communities across the Diocese on the vocation of priesthood.



Vocation Videos

The Diocese of Killaloe has commissioned a number of video messages from Bishop Fintan Monahan as well as a vocation story from Mark Nestor, one of their new seminarians.



Year for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood

Vocations Director Fr. Iggy McCormack is visiting parishes across the Diocese of Killaloe as part of a year-long initiative to encourage men to consider joining the priesthood.



**And who will go for Us?
“Here I am!
Send me.”**

The Call of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-13)



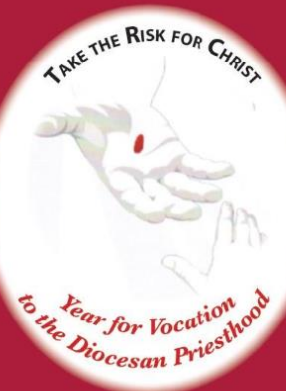
Visit www.killaloe-diocese.ie
email vocations@killaloe-diocese.ie or follow
Killaloe Diocese on social media for more details.



Archdiocese of Dublin

"Whatsoever you ask in my name, I will give you," JN 14:14

9 DAYS FOR VOCATIONS



PRAYING THE NOVENA AT HOME

You can pray this Novena each day by following this format in your own home.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit Amen

Daily Intention

You are invited to pray for an intention each day: The intentions are given overleaf.

Daily Reflection

Provided for each day & taken from Pope Francis Message for Vocations Sunday 2023

Novena Prayer

Pray the Diocesan Prayer for Vocations given overleaf

Conclude your daily Novena Prayer

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...

PRAYING THE NOVENA AT DAILY MASS

Daily Intention

At the beginning of Mass the Celebrant is invited to announce the Novena Intention for the particular day: The Intentions are given overleaf.

Daily Reflection

Taken from Pope Francis Message for Vocations Sunday 2023 can be used in the context of a short homily or during the Prayers of the Faithful

Novena Prayer

After Communion pray the Diocesan Prayer for Vocations

DAILY INTENTIONS

Day 1: For Pope Francis, our Bishops, Priests and Deacons, that through joyful and enthusiastic service of God's People they will attract others to follow Christ

Day 2: For Parents and Grandparents that through word and example they will be witnesses to the Joy of the Gospel & encourage their children & grandchildren to consider lives of service in the Church

Day 3: For Teachers in our schools and for leaders of young people in the community that they will encourage a culture of vocation and service

Day 4: For all involved in various ministries in the Church that they will through their service lead others to lives of discipleship and faithfulness to the Gospel

Day 5: For those discerning a vocation that they will discern their true calling with the support of the Church community

Day 6: For all the Baptised that they will be conscious of their responsibility to pray and be promoters of vocations

Day 7: For seminarians and all preparing for priesthood that they will persevere with God's help and the support of the People of God

Day 8: For those involved in the ministry of formation that they will accompany all candidates leading them to discern God's path for them

Day 9: For all our young people that they will come to know Jesus Christ and have the courage to use their gifts in the service of Christ and His people.

DAILY REFLECTIONS

Day 1: "For this has always been God's dream: that we should live with him in a communion of love."

Day 2: "We were created by love, for love and with love, and we are made for love."

Day 3: "God's call to the gift of self tends to make itself known gradually: in our encounter with situations of poverty, in moments of prayer, when we see a clear witness to the Gospel, or read something that opens our minds."

Day 4: "The gift of vocation is like a divine seed that springs up in the soil of our existence, opens our hearts to God and to others, so that we can share with them the treasure we ourselves have found."

Day 5: "There is no vocation without mission. There is no happiness and full self-realisation unless we offer others the new life that we have found."

Day 6: "This missionary activity does not arise simply from our own abilities, plans and projects, nor from our sheer willpower or our efforts to practice the virtues; it is the result of a profound experience in the company of Jesus."

Day 7: "The Twelve were people from different social classes and trades; none of them was a person of influence."

Day 8: "Within the Church, all of us are servants, in accordance with the variety of our vocations, charisms and ministries."

Day 9: "Viewed in this light, the Church is a vocational 'symphony'; with every vocation united yet distinct, in harmony and joined together in 'going forth' to radiate throughout the world the new life of the kingdom of God."

9 DAY NOVENA FOR VOCATIONS

Archdiocese of Dublin

As an initiative to encourage prayer for Vocations, the vocations team in Dublin (Fr Seamus McEntee and Fr Bill O'Shaughnessy) have designed a leaflet and compiled prayers for a nine-day Novena. The Novena can be prayed during or at the end of Mass and the enclosed leaflets have been distributed to parishes to help parishioners.

Alternatively, the Novena could be prayed during Adoration or individually at home or offered to a prayer group such as St. Joseph's Young Priests Society.

No specific dates have been chosen to start or finish the novena on, giving parishes and individuals the option to decide on a date to suit parish or individual needs. However, they suggest you could choose a feast day that has a connection with priesthood

Archdiocese of Dublin



Fr. Séamus McEntee
Vocations Director



Fr. Bill O'Shaughnessy
Assistant Vocations Director

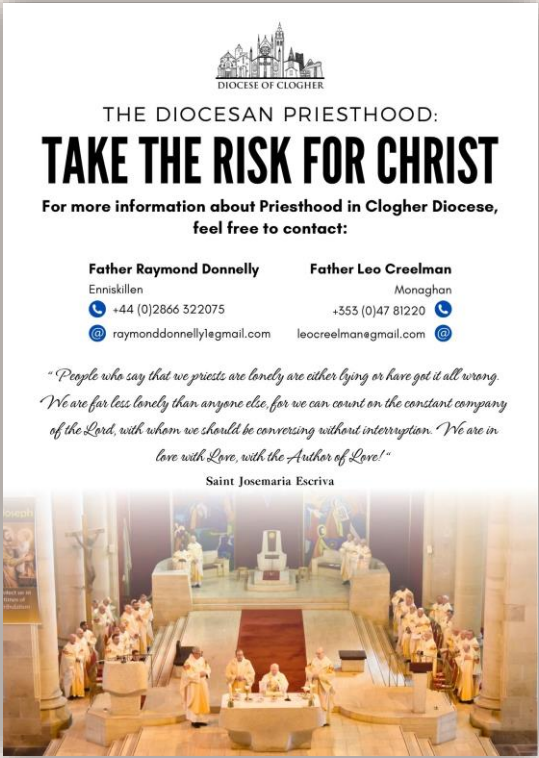


NATIONAL VOCATIONS OFFICE
IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

CLOGHER DIOCESE

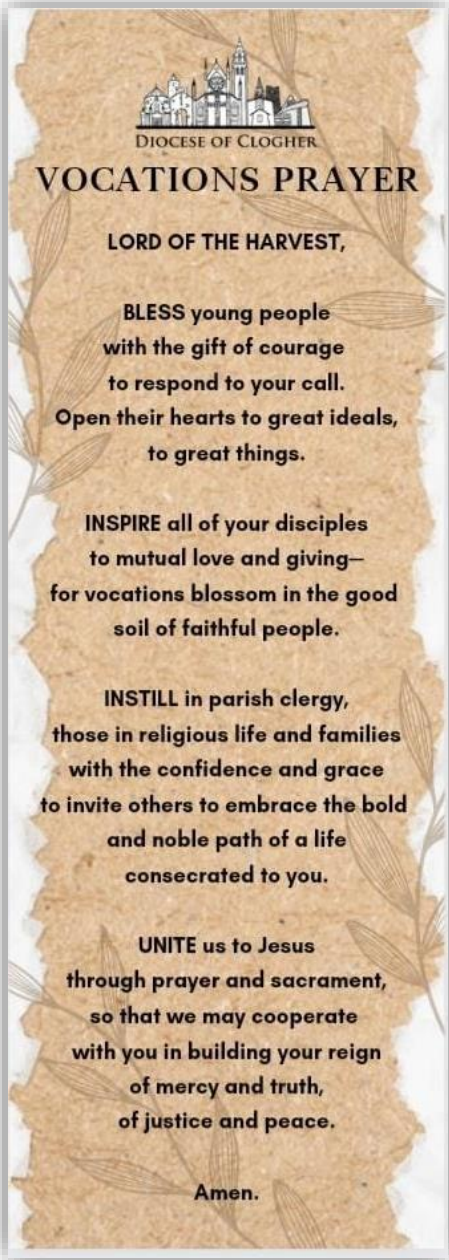
New Poster

Clogher Diocese produced a new poster for display in their churches for the Year for Vocation for Diocesan Priesthood. The poster was launched and distributed at the Diocesan Clergy Meeting in October.



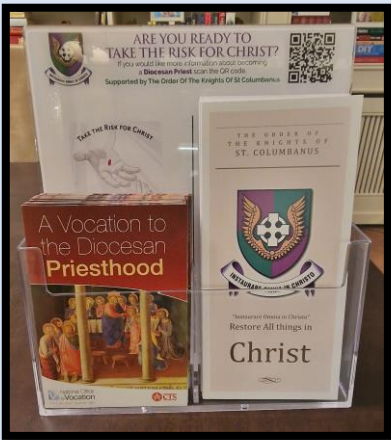
Launch of Vocations Prayer Card in Advent

Clogher are also launching a vocations prayer card which they are distributing to parishes throughout their diocese.



Leaflet Display

The Knights of St Columbanus have developed a Vocations Leaflet Display for churches in Ulster.

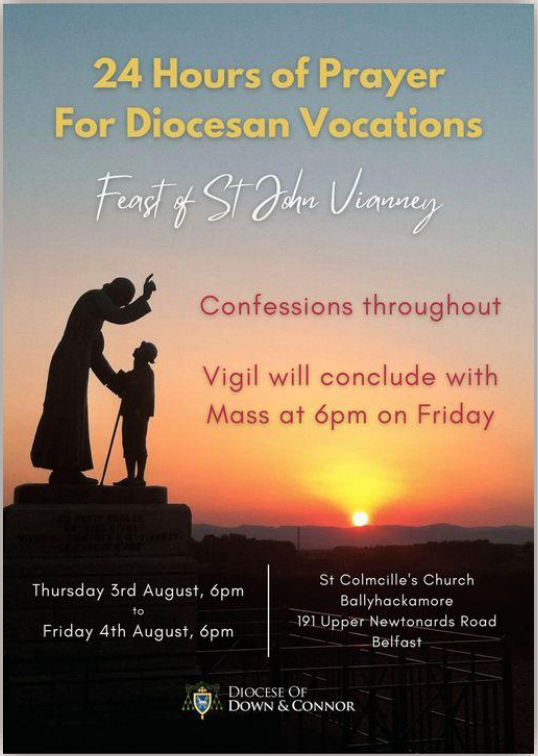


DOWN & CONNOR

NORTHERN VOCATION DIRECTORS

24 Hour Vocations Vigil

In Down and Connor there was a 24 hour Vocations Vigil in St. Colmcille’s Church, Ballyhackamore. for the Feast of St John Vianney. Each hour was lead by different groups from across the diocese.



The following events are being planned by the Northern Vocation Directors in collaboration with each other.

Vocations Gathering & Lunch

A Vocations Gathering & lunch for discerners is scheduled for February 18 in the Mellon Country Inn with a tour of the Ulster American Folk Park afterwards.

Vocations Retreat

Also ,a Vocations Retreat from 8th - 10th March in Drumalis Retreat Centre, Larne. The retreat director is **Fr Ryan Connors**, Professor of Moral Theology and Dean of Seminarians, St John's Seminary, Boston.



Diocesan Vocations Hike

A Diocesan Christmas Hike is planned on the 29th December up Slieve Donard for men discerning priesthood and seminarians.

Vocations Retreat

Also ,a Vocations Retreat from 8th - 10th March in Drumalis Retreat Centre, Larne. The retreat director is **Fr Ryan Connors**, Professor of Moral Theology and Dean of Seminarians, St John's Seminary, Boston.



WATERFORD AND LISMORE

Holy Hour for Vocations

There is a Holy Hour for Vocations in the **Holy Family Mission**, Glencomeragh House, Kilsheelan, Co. Tipperary on the third Thursday of every month from 7.30 - 8.30pm.

Scripture, meditations, rosary, Adoration, music and silent prayer.
All welcome.



Plans for next year:

40 hours of Adoration for the weeks in Lent in several locations around the Diocese.

Social Media

Bishop Cullinan is working with his social media contractor to increase awareness on social media. They have two key initiatives.

Vocation Story Clips

To produce a series of one minute video clips for social media of young priests in Ireland.

Online Discussion Panel on Facebook Live.

This would be a panel discussion comprising young people and young priests and sisters on a range of faith related topics.



RAPHOE

Vocations Rosary Leaflet

Raphoe Diocese are printing a Vocations Rosary resource. This will be available both in hard copy and in PDF format. Other Dioceses are welcome to use this resource.

Through the example of priests and religious striving for holiness,
Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord

Through a renewed sense of fidelity to our Catholic Faith,
Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord

That young people might seek to live the truth of Christ,
Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord

That young people might seek God's will for them in their lives,
Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord

That young people might hear the call to give their lives for the mission of the Church,
Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord

That all priests and religious might be renewed in the spirit of the new evangelisation,
Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord

That Bishops might be strengthened to be courageous shepherds,
Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord

That we may always zealously pray for and promote vocations,
O Lord of the harvest, graciously hear us

Amen

Those who are being called to be priests and religious might respond generously,
O Lord of the harvest, graciously hear us

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *Spare us, O Lord*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *Graciously hear us, O Lord*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *Have mercy on us*

The harvest is great but the labourers are few.
Beg the harvest Master to send out labourers for His harvest

Let us Pray

O God, Who chose the Apostles to make disciples of all nations and Who by Baptism and Confirmation have called us to build up Your Holy Church, we earnestly implore You to choose among us, Your children, many priests and religious who will love You with their whole heart and will gladly spend their entire lives making You known and loved by all. Through Christ our Lord.

A Rosary for Vocations

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke 10:1-12

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals, and do not greet anyone on the road."

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house."

"When you enter a town and are

welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The Kingdom of God is near you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town."

"If you say the Rosary every day, with a spirit of Faith and love, Our lady will make sure she leads you very far along her Son's path."

SAINT JOSEMARIA ESCRIVA

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The Luminous Mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary

1st Luminous Mystery
The Baptism of Jesus

The mystery of our Lord's Baptism is the mystery of Jesus taking upon Himself the mission of the Messiah. Thus begins His public ministry. Let us offer this decade for those who are called to the priesthood and religious life, but are afraid to answer because of what others may say or think. Grant them courage, O Lord, to accept the mission you are giving them.

2nd Luminous Mystery
The Wedding Feast of Cana

Through the intercession of Mary, Jesus transforms ordinary water into extraordinary wine. What incredible things God's grace can do in our lives! Let us offer this decade for those who are being called, but doubt that they have much to offer. May they trust in the power of God to bring all things to completion and say "yes" to His call.

3rd Luminous Mystery
The Proclamation of the Kingdom

Our Lord begins His public ministry by announcing the arrival of the Kingdom of God. What joyous news this is for all humanity to hear! Let us offer this decade for an increase in vocations that there might be many more priests and religious who will proclaim this truth and bear witness to it with their lives.

4th Luminous Mystery
The Transfiguration

Jesus strengthened the faith of His Apostles by allowing His divinity to be momentarily perceived. He wished them to gain a supernatural perspective on His forthcoming Passion and Death. Let us offer this decade for all those who are being called as priests and religious that they may have the grace to recognise God's call in the midst of life and courageously accept carrying the Cross.

5th Luminous Mystery
The Institution of the Holy Eucharist

The gift of the Most Holy Eucharist is a mystery beyond our ability to fully comprehend. Our Lord's abiding Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, the saving mystery of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass – the world would suffer a great loss without these miracles. Jesus gives Himself in the Holy Eucharist through the ministry of His priests. Let us offer this decade for more priests for our diocese. May God call many more men to share in the Priesthood and may they respond generously.

A Litany for Vocations

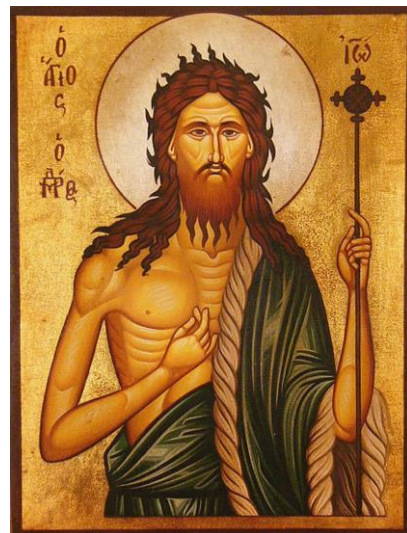
Lord, have mercy.	<i>Lord, have mercy</i>	St. Charles Borromeo, Patron of Seminarians,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Christ, have mercy.	<i>Christ, have mercy</i>	St. John Berchmans, Patron of Altar Servers,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Lord, have mercy.	<i>Lord, have mercy</i>	St. Maria Goretti, Patron of Teenagers,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Christ, hear us.	<i>Christ, graciously hear us</i>	St. Patrick, St. Brigid and St. Colmcille,	<i>Pray for us</i>
God the Father of Heaven,	<i>Have mercy on us</i>	Patron Saints of the Diocese,	<i>Pray for us</i>
God the Son, Redeemer of the World,	<i>Have mercy on us</i>	All you holy men and women,	<i>Pray for us</i>
God the Holy Spirit,	<i>Have mercy on us</i>	Be merciful,	<i>Spare us, O Lord</i>
Holy Trinity, One God,	<i>Have mercy on us</i>	Be merciful,	<i>Graciously hear us, O Lord</i>
Holy Mary,	<i>Pray for us</i>	Through your mercy,	<i>Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord</i>
Holy Mother of God,	<i>Pray for us</i>	Through Your kindness,	<i>Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord</i>
Holy Virgin of Virgins,	<i>Pray for us</i>	Through the fervent prayers and sacrifices of Your people,	<i>Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord</i>
St. Michael, Leader of the Heavenly Host,	<i>Pray for us</i>	Through the power of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass,	<i>Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord</i>
St. Gabriel, Messenger of God's Divine Plan,	<i>Pray for us</i>	Through the intercession of all the Saints and Angels,	<i>Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord</i>
St. Raphael, Companion of the Journey,	<i>Pray for us</i>	Through the sanctification of the family,	<i>Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord</i>
All you Holy Angels and Archangels,	<i>Pray for us</i>	Through parents being generously open to life,	<i>Send workers into Your harvest, O Lord</i>
St. Joseph, protector of the Holy Church,	<i>Pray for us</i>		
St. John Vianney, Patron of Parish Priests,	<i>Pray for us</i>		
St. Aloysius Gonzaga, Patron of Youth,	<i>Pray for us</i>		
St. Alphonsus Liguori, Patron of Vocations,	<i>Pray for us</i>		

Scripture Themed Intercessions for Vocations for Advent

First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2023

In our first reading the Prophet Isaiah tells us *“And yet, Lord, you are our Father; we the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hand.”* We pray that those whom the Lord is calling to serve as a priest, deacon or religious will discern to submit their lives into the hand of the Lord, that like clay in the potter’s hand, God will form them into worthy ministers of his Gospel.



Second Sunday of Advent

December 10, 2023

In our Gospel today, we hear how St. John the Baptist was called to be a messenger, *“a voice that cries in the wilderness”*. We pray for those whom the Lord is calling to be his voice, serving as a priest, deacon or religious, that they will hear his call and have the courage to answer.

Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2023

In today’s letter from St. Paul to the church in Thessalonica, St. Paul encourages them to pray constantly and assures them; *“God has called you and he will not fail you.”* We pray for those whom God is calling to live their lives in service of the Gospel as a priest, deacon or religious, that they may hear God’s call in their hearts and know that God will not fail them.



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

We pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood, the Diaconate and Religious life. We hear in today’s Gospel, that Mary, despite being deeply disturbed – she responded in trust by responding *“Let what you have said be done unto me”* – We pray that those who are being called by God may have the same trust as Mary and respond to God’s call – Let what you have said be done to me.

