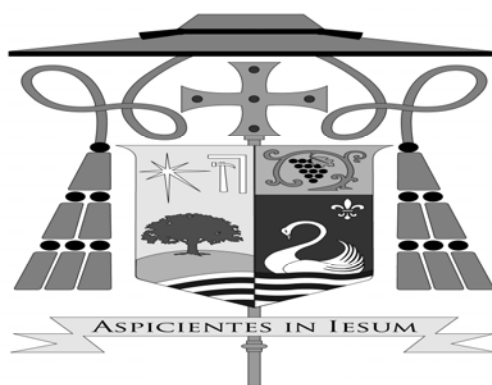




OFFICE OF VOCATIONS

Parish Vocations Advocate Guide



DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

2121 HARRISON STREET
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612-3772



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Section 1: Introductory Overview



DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

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Fall 2008

Dear Friends in Christ,

Through the grace of the sacrament of baptism, each of us has received a particular vocation from God. The word “vocation” means, “to be called.” Vocations ministry is focused on helping the people of God discover the particular calling that God has given them, even from before they were born.

God calls women and men to serve in many different ways. Some are called to consecrate their lives to God as religious brothers and sisters. Some are called to consecrate their lives as virgins or as 3rd order Religious. Many are called to live out their vocation as married persons. Others are called to respond to God in their capacity as single persons. Some are called as professional lay ecclesial ministers. Still others are called to dedicate their lives to God and the church as ordained priests and deacons.

Whatever the calling may be, discerning it prayerfully and responding to it fully is the key to experiencing God’s light and purpose in our lives. St. Thomas Aquinas reminds us that we are created by God for God – to obey God’s commands, to love Him and to bring glory to Him through lives of faithful service. Indeed, responding to our vocation is what brings life true meaning and joy!

I am grateful for your assistance to the Vocations Office through the establishment of the Parish Vocations Advocate ministry. The task of your position is to help all persons develop a deeper understanding of their God-given vocation. In a particular way, you will be helping the Vocations Office toward helping young persons respond to the vocations of priesthood and religious life. You will be doing a great service to the diocese, and for that I am deeply grateful.

May Almighty God bless you in your service of vocations ministry. I assure you of my prayers that the Lord of the Harvest may enrich us with many faithful and dedicated workers for His harvest (Luke 10:2).

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron
Bishop of Oakland



VOCATIONS OFFICE

Diocese of Oakland • 2121 Harrison St., Suite 100 • Oakland, CA 94612 • (510)267-8356

Fall 2008

Dear Parish Vocations Advocate,

In our present age, the fostering of vocations among all God's people is certainly a ministry deserving of our utmost attention and effort. To this end, we are asking for the help of dedicated and caring parishioners who are willing to serve as Parish Vocations Advocates in the eighty-eight parishes of the Diocese of Oakland.

We are happy to present you with this copy of the Parish Vocations Advocate Guide. Suggestions for getting started will help you begin your work. Three tasks are set before us:

Creating Vocations Awareness
Praying Earnestly for Vocations
Inviting Individuals to Respond

After you have had a chance to become familiar with the material in the guide, and as you begin the work, we encourage you to meet with your pastor, the staff of your parish and your Parish Council. Their collaboration and the approval of your pastor will help insure the success of your efforts.

Be assured of our prayers for the success of your work. You will have the assistance of the Vocations Office as you undertake the task of fostering vocations among the faithful; especially to priesthood, religious life, the diaconate and lay ecclesial ministry. May the Lord of the Harvest bless your efforts abundantly.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Larry D'Anjou
Director of Vocations

Br. Sebastian Sandoval, OFM
Associate Director of Vocations



EIGHT STEPS FOR A PARISH VOCATIONS ADVOCATE

1. Get Organized

Study the various sections of this guide. It is a good summary of the tasks you will face and what you need to do to be an effective Parish Vocations Advocate. Adapt the wording to your local situation if necessary.

2. Plan Activities

You have three basic tasks to carry out. They are:

Task # 1: Creating vocations awareness

Task # 2: Campaign of prayer

Task # 3: Inviting individuals personally

This section of the guide is important since it will introduce you to these topics.

3. Meet With Pastor and Parish Council

Always inform the pastor of your plans and vision. Invite his input and participation. It is also important to meet with the parish council at least once a year and inform them of your activities. Give them copies of your charter statement so they have a handy summary of your work and role.

4. Get the Word Out

Be sure to let the parish know you exist. Put an announcement in the parish bulletin (see sample announcement in Section 2). You could also give a short presentation at the end of all Masses some Sunday explaining to the people what you hope to accomplish (see sample script in Section 2). Or your pastor could give that presentation. Do what fits best in your particular parish.

5. Team Up With Others

Collaborate with other programs and groups in the parish. Attend their meetings and ask for their suggestions and help. These groups include: youth ministry, young adult ministry, religious education, parish school, ministers to the sick, parish prayer groups, liturgy committee, Knights of Columbus, Serrans, parish ethnic communities, small faith communities, people who attend morning Mass, etc.

6. Be Informed

Read the information in this guide. Also be familiar with the list of videos and other resources. The Diocesan Vocation Office will send regular mailings to you making new materials available to you.

7. Network

Stay in contact with other parish vocations advocates or parish vocations committees in your deanery. They can be a source of support and new ideas. Consider organizing regular meetings at a deanery level.

8. Find New Members

If you form a parish vocations committee be on the lookout for new members for your committee. Your committee can include as many as 10 members. Many hands make for light work.



TASK #1

CREATING VOCATION AWARENESS

The Parish Vocations Advocate has three major tasks:

- 1. Creating parish awareness of vocations.**
- 2. Launching a campaign of prayer for vocations.**
- 3. Surfacing names of potential candidates and personally inviting them to consider a church vocation.**

It goes without saying that a parish vocations advocate should be promoting vocations! If the role means anything it means using every opportunity to keep the need for vocations before the eyes of the people in the parish. And this task is made easier by the Diocesan Vocation Office which has a variety of material for the promotion of vocations at the parish level. This material includes posters, brochures and other materials that can be displayed in the vestibule of the church.

This material is already available to parishes, but it sometimes does not get used because nobody on the parish staff has the time to deal with it. That is where you come in. One of the important tasks of the parish vocations advocate is to assist parish staff in taking advantage of this promotional material. In reality, this may mean taking responsibility for seeing that the material gets used. Remember the average parish gets a large volume of mail each day and parish staff members do not have the time to follow up on all of it. They will be happy that you are taking this chore off their hands. Just keep the pastor informed about what you are doing and get his permission before you begin this new role.

Please see Section 3 for selected resources in creating vocation awareness. The Diocesan Vocation Office has posters, brochures and other promotional materials.



TASK #2

CAMPAIGN OF PRAYER

The second major task of the Parish Vocations Advocate is to organize a campaign of prayer in the parish. Prayer must always be the foundation of our work to promote vocations-personal prayer and community prayer.

Ways to Pray for Vocations:

- **Personal Prayer**

If you ask others to pray for vocations, you need to begin by praying yourself. Make vocations to the priesthood and religious life part of your private prayer every day. Use the vocation prayer printed in Section 4.

- **Vocation Cross Program**

The Vocation Cross Program is recommended by our Diocesan Vocations Office. Each week one family hosts a vocation cross and prays for vocations every night during that week. The following week a new family hosts the cross. This program can be organized on a parish wide basis. See fuller explanation in Section 4.

- **Votive Mass and/or Services for Vocations**

A sample votive Mass for vocations is included in Section 4. It includes a sample homily and tips for preaching about vocations. Also included is a sample "Prayer Service for Senior Citizens." Other specialized services can be written using the sheet entitled "Scripture Passages Related to God's Call."

- **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**

This is one of the best ways to pray for vocations. Some parishes do it one day a week; others do it seven days a week. Because of the organization involved signing up volunteers (somebody has to be present at all times while the Blessed Sacrament is exposed), you may want to start with a holy hour once a week or once a month. See "Holy Hour for Church Vocation" in Section 4 for more information.

- **Prayers of the Faithful**

There are sample prayers in Section 4 also. Give them to whomever writes the Prayers of the Faithful each week and encourage that person to include a petition for vocations in the Mass every Sunday.

- **Rosary Before Mass**

Ask those who recite the Rosary before daily Mass to recite the vocation prayer at the end of the Rosary each day.

- **Parish Prayer Groups**

Ask the leaders of your parish prayer groups to make vocations a special intention in their prayers and recite the vocation prayer regularly.

- **Prayers of the Sick**

Ask those who are sick to pray for vocations and offer up their sickness for this intention. By doing this the sick can become a powerhouse of prayer for vocations. A "Sick Person's Prayer for Vocations" is included in Section 4. To get this prayer out to the sick you will need to enlist the help of your ministers of the sick, assuming they are the ones visiting the sick every week. Included in this section is a sample letter you can send to ministers of the sick in the parish. Also included are sample vocation commitment cards. If visiting the sick is done by the priests, ask them to give the prayer cards to the sick and seek their commitment to pray.



TASK #3

INVITING INDIVIDUALS

People Need An Invitation

The third major task of the Parish Vocations Advocate, which can be done in conjunction with a Parish Vocations Committee, is to surface names of individuals in the parish who might make good priests or religious, and personally invite them to consider this special call. This is a crucial part of vocation work and many young people have been lost to the ministry because it was not done. It is the missing link in vocation work. A Knights of Columbus study, done among young people some years ago by Fr. Andrew Greeley, found that nine out of ten young men who expressed some interest in the priesthood had never been encouraged by anybody, and as a result did not chose a priestly vocation. Meanwhile, a survey done among the seminarians in Mundelein Seminary in Chicago found that most men who have entered seminary have done so in part because someone along the way said: "You would make a good priest."

Who should we invite?

Following are four easy steps on how to surface names of potential candidates for personal invitation.

1. Pray about it

Prayer must always be primary. Spend some time before the Blessed Sacrament and ask the Lord's help and guidance in the important mission you are about to take on.

2. Consult

Meet with the pastor and parish staff and ask them for names of people they believe would make good priests and religious. Use the "Invitation Checklist" included in Section 5 of this guide. Conduct the same discussion with all the major organizations and groups of the parish, using the checklist.

3. Meet

If you have a parish vocations committee then meet as a committee to add more names to the list or refine the list you have compiled. It would be helpful to have the pastor attend this meeting since he probably knows the parishioners better than any one else.

4. Personally invite

It is now time to personally invite candidates whose names you have surfaced. When you or a suitable member of your parish vocations committee talks to the candidate say something like this: "I am contacting you on behalf of our Parish Vocations Committee. Our committee feels you would make a good priest/sister. If you would like to discern this call further I can put you in touch with our diocesan Office of Vocations."

If you feel self-conscious about doing this, remember that you are really complimenting the person. Even if the person is not interested in a church vocation, he/she will feel affirmed by your conversation. You may want to ask the pastor to do the inviting on behalf of the Parish Vocations Committee. An invitation from the pastor can be more effective.



Section 2: Resources for Organizing a Parish Vocations Committee



CHARTER STATEMENT FOR A PARISH VOCATIONS COMMITTEE

Name

The name of this group will be the Parish Vocations Committee of (*parish name*).

Purpose

The purpose of the Parish Vocations Committee is to inspire and assist the parish community in fulfilling its mission of fostering vocations, especially to ordained ministry and religious life. The committee will do this mainly in three ways:

1. Promote Parish Awareness of Vocations

Committee members will promote and advertise vocations in the parish in a variety of ways such as displaying posters and other materials in the church vestibule and having vocations mentioned regularly in the parish bulletin. They will remind liturgical planners to include vocations in the Sunday Prayers of the Faithful and encourage priests and deacons to preach on vocations on Good Shepherd Sunday, also observed as **World Day of Prayer for Vocations** (Fourth Sunday of Easter) and the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which begins **National Vocations Awareness Week** (usually the third week in January). They will also encourage parish and school committees to commemorate National Vocations Awareness Week by having speakers visit the classrooms of the school and religious education program to talk about vocations.

2. Campaign of Prayer

The committee will organize ongoing prayer for vocations in the parish. This may include holy hours and perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The sick and infirm will be asked to pray for vocations. Prayer groups and morning Mass people will also be asked to make vocations a special intention. Families will be invited to pray for vocations by participating in the Vocation Cross Program. Committee members will include vocations in their own personal prayer every day.

3. Inviting Individuals to Consider a Vocation

The committee will surface the names of potential candidates for priesthood and religious life and will personally invite them to consider that vocation.

Committee members will spend some time in prayer, preferably before the Blessed Sacrament, before surfacing names. They will also consult parish staff and parish organizations for suggestions. In this search they will use the "Invitation Checklist" contained in Section 5 of this guide.

4. Relationship to Other Groups

The committee is responsible to and reports regularly to the parish council. The committee will also work closely with other groups and programs in the parish: youth ministry, young adult ministry, religious education, parish school, YLI, ministers to the sick, parish prayer groups, liturgy committee, Knights of Columbus, Serrans, parish ethnic communities, small faith communities, people who attend morning Mass, etc. The committee will also try to meet regularly with other vocations committees in the deanery.

5. Personal Development of Members

Members of the committee will attend the workshops offered by the Diocesan Vocation Office each year, and will strive to inform themselves about vocation trends and programs across the nation. The Diocesan Vocation Office will assist in providing educational resources.

6. Membership

The committee is composed of not more than 10 members approved by the pastor of the parish. One of the priests and sisters in the parish should sit on the committee if possible. Members may serve not more than five consecutive years unless there is a good reason to do otherwise. The chairperson is selected by the members unless the pastor decides otherwise.

7. Annual Review

The committee members will attend the workshops organized by the Diocesan Vocation Office. These workshops will provide committee members with an opportunity to review the programs of the previous year and plan for the upcoming year.

Approved by the Pastor and/or Parish Council

Pastor

Council President

Date



PARISH VOCATIONS ADVOCATE & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Personal Attributes

- Has a love of and interest in church vocations.
- Is willing to devote time, talent, and energy to help other parishioners come to a better understanding about vocations within our church today.
- Will help assure that the parish vocation efforts remains vibrant through prayer, study, and planned activities for the parish.
- Will serve as the "connecting link" with the Diocesan Vocation Office about the progress and activity of the parish vocation efforts; engaging in ongoing dialogue about how the office can be of assistance in raising questions, concerns and issues for discussion.
- Has the support and approval of the pastor and pastoral staff.

Specific Duties

- Placing announcements in parish bulletins and newsletters, as well as requesting pulpit announcements regarding upcoming vocation events.
- Posting in the church vestibule, current flyers, brochures, and announcements concerning church vocations.
- Distributing appropriate flyers to young adult programs, youth programs, the parish council, school and other appropriate parish ministries.
- Being present at all parish vocation events.
- Affirming all priests, religious, deacons, parish ministers, teachers, students, scouts, altar servers, etc. in the parish community.
- Publicizing diocesan vocation events.
- Encouraging pastor and parish council to sponsor vocation events in conjunction with the Vocations Office of the diocese.



A SURVEY ABOUT VOCATION EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Please indicate on the scale shown the degree to which the concept discussed is presently being implemented in your parish.

Level one: Perception

Assisting people to come to a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the church, vocation, and ministry.

1. Vocations grow in a parish environment in which many people minister and are aware of themselves as ministers.

In our parish do we promote an awareness and understanding that each person is called, each has a vocation rooted in baptism?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

2. Perceiving a vocation depends partly on a person's awareness that Christ's call to service extends beyond the boundaries of family and parish.

Does our parish have ways to extend our ministry to other areas of church and society; to the poor and oppressed, near by and far away?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

3. We live in a time of tremendous challenge in our church and world, in which both face many difficulties and injustices.

Does our parish believe that in the midst of real challenge there is reason for hope and a need to invite people to minister among us?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

Level Two: Education

**Increasing people's understanding of the lifestyle of priests, sisters and brothers.
Helping them understand that vocation is experienced when a person searches
for God's call in life.**

4. Parents exercise a crucial role in creating in their children a world-view in which service to God and people is a high value.

Do we educate parents about their role in vocation promotion and provide them with a positive and updated image of the lifestyle of priests and religious?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

5. People need to know how God calls a person.

Do we share our own vocation stories as a means of sensitizing others to God's call in their own lives?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

6. People who are considering a direction in life want to know that they are needed.

Do we stress the increasing need for priests, brothers, and sisters in today's church?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

7. Has our parish made use of any materials or support provided by the Diocesan Vocations Office for parish, school religious education programs, or youth ministry?

Yes No

Level Three: Invitation

Reaching out to those who search for a direction in life with an invitation to consider a vocation to the priesthood or religious life.

8. Young people learn by doing. Do we make a special effort to invite young people to serve in ministry?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

9. For people to be able to consider a future in ministry, they need exposure to role models and information.

Do we provide opportunities for people to experience priests, sisters and brothers?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

10. When we recognize in a person in our parish the qualities necessary for the lifestyle of a sister, brother, or priest, do we invite them to consider that option for their future?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

11. Have we invited persons to attend "Come & See Weekends," information discernment programs or seminars sponsored by the vocation office, religious communities and the diocesan seminaries?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

12. Have we, as a staff, submitted to the diocese and religious communities who serve here, the names of men and women who might be suited for vowed or ordained ministry?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

Level Four: Community Involvement

Involving parish people in the work of promoting vocations and creating a healthy climate for hearing and responding to God's call.

13. Do we ask special groups in our parish to work for vocations - Serrans, Knights of Columbus, for example?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

14. Those who minister to young people have a special opportunity to promote vocation awareness.

Do we encourage or sponsor workshops and in-service training to sensitize religious education teachers and other educators to the needs of young people in the area of vocation discernment?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

15. Does our parish have a functioning vocations committee to involve people in the ministry of vocation promotion?

minimum _____ maximum
0 1 2 3 4 5

Please describe below any specific needs in parish vocation ministry that you would like to see addressed by the Diocesan Vocation Office or your own parish in the future:



SAMPLE BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

Parish Vocations Committee Formed

Our parish recently organized a parish vocations committee. The task of the committee is threefold:

1. To promote awareness of vocations in our Catholic community.
2. To pray for church vocations and organize parish prayer and services for this intention.
3. To periodically surface names of potential candidates for church vocations and personally invite them to consider this special call.

The members of the committee have already attended a training workshop on vocations offered by the Diocesan Vocation Office, and the members will be installed at the *(time)* Mass by our pastor on *(date)*. The Committee members are: *(names of members)*.



SAMPLE PRESENTATION BY COMMITTEE MEMBER

These or similar words could be used by a committee member in a presentation at the end of Sunday Masses announcing the formation of the Vocations Committee in the parish.

Good morning! My name is _____. I am a member of the newly formed Vocations Committee in our parish.

Vocations Committees are being formed in the parishes of our diocese. These committees are part of the strategy to form a culture of vocations in the diocese. This strategy calls on all of us to make a concerted effort to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The Parish Vocations Committee, which is the heart of this strategy, will have three aims:

- 1. To create greater awareness of church vocations in the parish community.*
- 2. To pray for vocations personally and assist the parish community to pray for that cause.*
- 3. To periodically surface names of potential candidates for the priesthood and religious life and personally invite those people to consider this special calling.*

Members of the committee have already attended a training workshop offered by the Diocesan Vocations Office, and our members will be officially installed by our pastor on (date) at the (time) Mass.

I would ask you for your prayers for the success of this committee. I would also ask you to pray for vocations, that the church will have the priests and religious needed for the future.

If you have any questions about our committee, I will be available outside the church following this Mass. Thank you.



Section 3:
Resources for Task #1:
Creating Vocation
Awareness



UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES IN VOCATION AWARENESS

- ❖ Each of us is called by God. This call is rooted in Baptism, and is a way of participating in the mission of Jesus.
- ❖ There are a rich variety of calls given by God.
- ❖ Most people will choose marriage. Some people are single and may choose to serve God in that state. Others may choose to be sisters, priests, or brothers.
- ❖ All lifestyles are needed for the sake of God's people, to make the picture complete.
- ❖ Priesthood and religious life continue to evolve in ways never presented by the stereotypical images in the media.
- ❖ Sisters, priests, and brothers are ordinary people who don't claim to be perfect, but desire to be of service in how they live and work.
- ❖ To be a sister, priest or brother can be an exciting life of service. Priesthood and religious life are for healthy, happy and energetic women and men.
- ❖ Because there are fewer sisters, priest and brothers, ways need to be discovered in local situations for people to have first-hand experience with them.
- ❖ A celibate choice is a valid and healthy way of loving that demands an integrated sense of self and one's sexuality.
- ❖ Terms need to be defined that are related to church ministry and the lifestyles of sister, priest and brother, (charism, vows, formation, novitiate, etc.).
- ❖ Personal invitation continues to be the main reason someone chooses to consider religious life and priesthood as possible options.



EXAMPLES OF PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

The following material is made available to parishes by the Diocesan Vocation Office. Parish Vocations Advocates should offer to assist parish staff in taking advantage of this vocation material.

Vocation Posters and Brochures

Our office makes available posters, brochures and prayer cards on vocations. One important role of the Parish Vocations Advocates is to see that posters are displayed and to contact the Diocesan Vocation Office for a new poster if needed. He or she should also watch out for other materials---fliers and brochures--and encourage parish staff to display them in the vestibule of the church.

Parish Bulletin Announcements

The Diocesan Vocation Office mails a variety of bulletin announcements to the parish as a way of keeping vocations before the eyes of the people on Sundays. Parish Vocations Advocates should develop a relationship with the parish bulletin editor and remind that person to print these announcements as often as possible.

Material for National Vocation Events

The Diocesan Vocation Office sends out material to all pastors, deacons and administrators for Good Shepherd Sunday also observed as World Day of Prayer for Vocations (the Fourth Sunday of Easter) and National Vocation Awareness Week (usually the third week in January). This material includes ideas for a vocation homily as well as other suggestions for Mass on those occasions. Remind those planning Sunday liturgies to take advantage of this material and, if appropriate, offer to help.

Classroom Material

Parish Vocations Advocates should see to it that a vocation speaker visits the classrooms of the parish school and religious education program each year. This is particularly important for students in the 4th to 8th grades. Research has shown that the seeds of most religious vocations are sown during those years, even though the person does not make the final decision until years later. And if you have trouble finding a speaker (and do not wish to speak yourself) think about using one of our seminarians. They make excellent speakers for young people since they already have made the kind of decision we want some young people to make. For help in finding a seminarian speaker call the Diocesan Vocation Office.



PRAYERS FOR VOCATIONS FOR WEEKLY USE IN PARISH BULLETINS

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O God Almighty, we thank you for calling each of us into deeper life through Jesus. We thank you for the love we are called to bear one another and for the power you give us to love with your Spirit of love. Teach us to respect the many ways your Spirit is manifested and the many gifts needed to bring Christ's life in us to its fullness. Never let us forget that the greatest among us is the one who serves with joy and humility, using your gifts for the common good. We ask this in the name of your son through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

National Coalition for Church Vocations

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

In the Spirit, we pray for vocations, remembering the words of Pope John Paul II: "A vocation is a grace and a gift of God in Jesus Christ. This awareness of the divine gift gives our vocation its deep meaning, in the perspective of our whole life." Open our life to this gift. Amen.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Dear God, you gift us with life. Through baptism you have called us to new life. May we be a sign of your love in the world. We pray that you will continue to fill women and men with an abundance of courage to follow the path you set before them today. May those who feel compelled to serve as lay ministers, brothers, sisters, deacons and priests be blessed with passion and vision to make the world a better place. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

National Coalition for Church Vocations

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Thank you, Lord, for all your great and wonderful gifts. Help us to live each day with joy and humility. Keep us totally dedicated to serving you. Teach us to recognize the many ways you make your Spirit known. Then help each of us to accept your gift, then grace to answer your call to form, strengthen and expand the Body of Christ. Amen.

Diocese of Lexington

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Creator God, you give us life and entrust us to families where we learn about your love and care. As we share our family life, help us feel your presence so that faith will make a difference in our lives and we, in turn, will make a difference in our world and in the lives of others. Amen.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Generous God, you call us by name and ask us to follow you. Help us grow in the love and service of our church. Give us the energy and spirit to shape its future. Grant us faith-filled leaders who will embrace Christ's mission of love and justice. Bless the church by raising up dedicated and generous leaders from our family and friends who will serve as sisters, priests, brothers, deacons and lay ministers. Inspire us to open our hearts and hear your call. Amen.

Diocese of Austin

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Loving God, help us follow the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary in willingly giving ourselves in service to your church. Stir up the grace of priestly and religious vocations in the hearts of many within our community and send your Spirit to guide and strengthen them in answering your call. Amen.

Bishop Robert J. Carlson

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Loving God, you are the creator of the universe. You have gifted me with life. You call me to be a light to the world through baptism. Help me to share this joy of living with others. I want to do it now by caring and sharing like Jesus did. Show me how to do it later when I grow up. Amen.

National Coalition for Church Vocations

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Loving and merciful God, you call us into being and commission us to serve your people. We pray that our lives might make a difference and that our service might give you praise. Strengthen us, we pray, to be instruments of peace and justice in our church and in our world. May the desire to ministry as priests, sisters, brothers, deacons and lay ministers. We ask this in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen.

National Coalition for Church Vocations

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the savior of the world. Please manifest in your church the Spirit whom you also abundantly bestowed on your apostles. Call very many to priesthood and religious life. May zeal for your glory and for the salvation of the world inflame those you have chosen. May they be saints in your likeness. May our Holy Spirit strengthen them. May they be priests and religious according to your own heart. Amen.

Diocese of Marquette

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord God, you so loved the world that you sent your only son, Jesus, to bring eternal life to those who believe in him. I join him in his prayer for laborers in your harvest. May your Holy Spirit inspire and strengthen generous men and women to continue his mission in the world. May this same Spirit make known to me your will in my regard. Where you lead, I will follow. Let it be done to me according to your word. I make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Diocese of St. Augustine

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Jesus, we ask you to bless our parish and all those living their commitment to you as married couples, singles, sisters, priests, deacons and brothers. We pray that our young people may know their vocation and respond with enthusiasm and generosity of spirit. Increase the faith life of our parish and strengthen our family life. Bless our parish with many vocations. Grant, Lord, that faithfully sharing your mission in this life, we may come together to share your eternal life in heaven. Amen.

Archdiocese of Hartford

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Dear God, you have created us in your own image and have given us so many gifts. We ask you to bless us all, so that we may know best how to love you and each other with those gifts. We pray especially for those young men and women who are searching for ways to serve you in love. May they be open to all that you may ask. We pray for those who study for the priesthood and religious life, that their preparations may bring to the church happy and holy priests and religious men and women. We ask this, through Christ the Good Shepherd. Amen.

Archdiocese of Detroit Vocations Office

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord God, you know me. You know when I sit and when I stand. You have me always in your heart. I thank you for this, Lord. You know the path for my life and what will make me happy. Show it to me, Lord. Bless me, guide me and be my Lord, so that whatever road I choose, I may choose it for your glory. Amen.

Archdiocese of Detroit Vocations Office

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

You gave me life in baptism, Lord. Help me to share this joy of living with others. I want to do it now by caring and sharing like Jesus did. Show me how to do it later when I grow up. Amen.

Archdiocese of Detroit Vocations Office

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord, I am older now. Time weighs heavy on my hands. They are too weak to labor now. Let my prayers be your hands, reaching out to touch younger men and women. Lord, the harvest is ripe, the laborers few. I beg you, touch the hearts of the young. Make them want to serve as lay ministers, priests, sisters, deacons and brothers. Amen.

Archdiocese of Detroit Vocations Office

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Loving Father, you call each of us by name and ask us to follow you. Bless your church by raising up dedicated and generous leaders from our families and friends who will serve your people as priests, sisters, brothers and permanent deacons. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Serra International

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O God, who wills not the death of a sinner but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech you, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary ever virgin, Saint Joseph her spouse, Blessed Junipero Serra and all the saints, an increase of laborers for your church, fellow laborers to spend and consume themselves for souls, through the same Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns. with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Serra International

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O God, you have constituted your only begotten son supreme and eternal priest for the glory of your majesty and the salvation of mankind; grant that those he has chosen ministers and dispensers of his mysteries may be found faithful in fulfilling the ministry they have received. Amen.

Serra International

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Good and gracious God, you have called us through baptism to discipleship with your son, Jesus Christ, and have sent us to bring the good news of salvation to all peoples. We pray you to grant us more priests and religious to build up your church here within our country. Inspire young men and women by the example of Blessed Junipero Serra to give themselves totally to the work of Christ and his church. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

Cardinal Roger Mahoney

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord, our God, you established the church as a sign of your continuing presence in the world. We ask you to raise up the faithful ministers to your church in the priesthood and religious life, so that the message of faith, justice and love contained in the gospel may be brought into the hearts of all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bishop John R. Quinn

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Almighty God, your son Jesus told us to pray for vocations since the harvest is great and the laborers are few. Help all of us who center our Catholic lives in word and sacrament to be active promoters of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The ministry of identifying and nurturing vocations belongs to each member of each family in our parish families. May we all accept this mission from Jesus with the determination that comes from faith. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bishop Elden F. Curtiss

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

God of life and love, you share these gifts with me in powerful ways through my family and friends. Help me to find ways to share the gifts of your life and love in service to others as a minister of the church. Help me to discern how I can best respond to this challenge and give me courage to do your will. I ask this in union with the whole church and in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bishop Thomas J. Murphy

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O God, send your Spirit, that we may hear and recognize your voice. in the deepest part of our beings. Give us the courage and strength to respond with the gift of our whole lives in witness to the person of Jesus Christ and the good news of the gospel. Amen.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Dear Lord, ours are the only hands that can do your work. Ours are the only feet with which you can go about the world. Ours are the only eyes through which your compassion can shine upon a troubled world. You have no body on earth but ours. Set our souls on fire to fulfill your ministry on earth. Amen.

Serra Club of Reno, Nevada

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O Lord of the harvest, your word finds a home in our hearts, calls us to community and invites us to generous service to the human family. Bless with courage and spirit your priestly people, called to full participation in the one body of Christ. May many choose to respond in public service to your call offered in Jesus' name. Amen.

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

God, source of creation and love, you invite each of us to serve you through the gift of our life. May your grace encourage men and women to serve the church as priests, sisters, brothers and lay ministers. Make me an instrument to encourage others to give of themselves and challenge me to do the same. Amen.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Loving God, you gift us with life. Through baptism you have called us to new life. May we be a sign of your love in the world. We pray that you will continue to fill women and men with an abundance of courage to follow the path you set before them today. May those who feel compelled to serve as lay ministers, brothers, sisters and priests be blessed with passion and vision to make the world a better place. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Loving Father, through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, Queen of Vocations, may our youth joyfully respond to your call to follow Jesus in the priestly or religious life. Amen.

Serra International

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Dear Lord, we invoke your help so more young men and women will be touched by your grace and become priests, sisters, brothers and lay ministers in service to you. We ask this in Jesus' name and through the intercession of your Blessed Mother. Amen.

Serra International

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, we pray as a community for the grace to encourage all who choose a religious vocation. For those who have already chosen a vocation, we pray that they may have the grace to keep and nourish that commitment. Amen.

Serra International

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Heavenly Father, if it is your divine will, inspire many of our youth to say "Yes" to your special calling to be priests, sisters and brothers. Amen.

Serra International

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Father, we pray that more young people will be generous in responding to your invitation to be priests, brothers and sisters. Teach them to follow in Jesus' footprints by bringing the light of the Holy Spirit to all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Serra International

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Most Holy Virgin, certain of your intercession, we pray that the mysteries of the Risen Christ and of the Holy Spirit may enlighten many to become willing and generous servants of the church. We pray for our youth to whom the Lord addresses a special invitation of closer fellowship. May they refuse to be carried away by the things of this world, but open their hearts instead, to the friendly voice that calls them. May they feel capable of making a life-long commitment to Christ and to his church for the salvation of mankind. May they trust that divine grace will endow them with the power to make a total offering of themselves as they feel the attraction of priestly, religious and missionary life. We pray for the Christian families, that they may provide a favorable atmosphere for their youngsters and help them make the right choices. We beseech you that all priests and religious be an example to our youth by their availability and humble readiness to accept the gifts of the Holy Spirit. May they be able to extend to all the fruits of love and peace. Amen.

Pope John Paul II

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O Mother, awaken among the young generation a willingness to serve God alone. Implore for us numerous vocations for the priesthood and the religious life. O Mother, confirm the faith of all our lay brothers and sisters that in every area of social, professional, cultural and political life that they may work according to the truth and the law which you Son has proclaimed to humanity in order to lead all to eternal salvation and, at the same time, to make life on earth more human, and more worth of man. Amen.

Pope John Paul II

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O Holy Mother, hasten to raise good laborers to the church. Hasten with the same concern that prompted you to go to Elizabeth's house bringing Jesus and God's graces. Hasten to visit our community and enrich it with good and evangelical laborers that they may bring Jesus in the hearts of people and his kingdom on earth for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessed Hannibal Di Francia

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O most holy Virgin, we come to you to implore a great grace on behalf of the people of earth. We ask you for many and holy laborers of the gospel. You, O Mother, are the queen of the apostles, you obtained the grace of the ministries. Every vocation comes through your intercession. Obtain for your church and whole world numerous and chosen priests, apostolic and holy men, fervent, zealous and loving souls. Remember the command of your son Jesus when he said: "Pray the harvest master that he send workers to his harvest." Hear us, O Mother, for the greater glory of the heart of Jesus. Amen.

Blessed Hannibal Di Francia

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Creator God, life is your gift. Through baptism you invite us to share in service to others. Give us the courage and generosity to respond to your call. Bless those who serve you as priests, religious, deacons and lay ministers. Open the minds and hearts of men and women to accept your challenge to build the kingdom. Amen.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O Jesus, good shepherd, bless our parishes with numerous priests, deacons, men and women religious, consecrated laity and missionaries, according to the needs of the entire world that you love and wish to save. We especially entrust our community to you; grant us the spirit of the first Christians, so that we may be a cenacle of prayer, in loving acceptance of the Holy Spirit. Assist our pastors and all who live a consecrated life. Guide the steps of those who have responded generously to your call and are preparing to receive holy orders or to profess the evangelical counsels. Look with love on so many well-disposed young people and call them to follow you. Help them to understand that in you alone can they attain complete fulfillment. To this end we call on the powerful intercession of Mary, mother and model of all vocations. We beseech you to sustain our faith with the certainty that God will grant what you have commanded us to ask. Amen.

Pope John Paul II

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O Holy Spirit, you have traced the marvelous path of Mary's soul. Inspire in many young girls the desire to follow her example. Show them the beauty of a life totally consecrated to God, the incomparable joy of total offering to him. Make them experience your call and inspire in them the generosity of a response without reserve. Knock harder at the hearts of those who would not hear and add vigor to the courage of those who hesitate. Make them discover Christ who invites them to the intimacy of his love and the immense need the world has for hearts vowed to chastity. For the joy and service of your church, stir up numerous virgins, the living images of Mary. Holy Virgin, spread over the world the enthusiasm with which you have offered to God your heart and your life and cultivate in many hearts the aspiration to follow the path of religious perfection. We pray you, O Virgin of Virgins, may you always be surrounded with many consecrated women so you may share with them your joy of being united with Christ. Amen.

Rogationist Fathers

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O Holy Spirit, you have formed the generous and pure soul of Mary, open the same path to many young women attracted by high ideals in life. Show them the beauty of a life consecrated to the Lord, the marvelous strength and the fruitfulness of total dedication. Let the call resound in the most profound depths of the awaiting heart. Make them welcome this urgent call as a marvelous gift. Reveal to them the admirable and meek face of Christ inviting them. Show them the immense need for souls rich in charity. For the good of the church, give rise to more virgins who reflect the face of grace of the first virgin. Amen.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, together with Mary your most holy mother, who stood beside you in the hour of your redeeming sacrifice, we pray that many youths may have the courage and the humility, the fidelity and the love to answer "Yes" to your invitation, just as Mary did when call to collaborate in the mission of redemption. Amen.

Pope John Paul II

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

With Mary, mother of the church, let us pray for an increase of vocations. You can solve the need of vocations in the church through prayer and personal commitment.

Harvest Prayer Association for Vocations

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Vocations grew out of the family. The family is the place where God dwells in a special way. It is a place of support and challenge, a place of love and acceptance. Within our family, we learn right relationship with our God, with others and with ourselves. Please pray for vocations encouraged by family members.

Father Jesse Cox, OP

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do I thank you; I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures, I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my soul; I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, so surrender myself into your hands. Without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my God.

Brother Charles de Foucauld



Section 4: Resources for Task #2: Campaign of Prayer



VOCATION PRAYER

VOCATION PRAYER

Loving God,

You speak to us and nourish us through the life of this church community.

In the name of Jesus, we ask you to send your Spirit to us so that men and women among us, young and old, will respond to your call to service and leadership in the church.



We pray, especially, in our day, for those who hear your invitation to be a priest, sister or brother.

May those who are opening their hearts and minds to your call be encouraged and strengthened through our enthusiasm in your service. Amen.



VOCATION CROSS PROGRAM

Vocations don't grow on trees. They come from families. For that reason, prayer for vocations should include prayer in the family. When families pray for future priests and sisters, God listens. More than that, God may plant a vocation seed in the very family doing the praying. And one practical way to get families to pray for vocations is to start a Vocation Cross Program in the parish.

A cross is circulated throughout the parish, with each family hosting the cross for one week. During that week the family prays every day--usually before the evening meal--for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Copies of a special vocations prayer are provided by the parish for use by the family. The cross is put in some prominent place in the house so the family members are reminded of its presence throughout the week.

It is best to present the cross to the hosting family during a Sunday Mass. As well as creating a formal setting for handing over the cross, this reminds the entire congregation to pray for vocations.

To have this program run smoothly someone (or group) will need to be in charge of keeping the calendar. Sponsoring families should sign up well ahead of time and will need to know what Mass to attend to receive the cross. The celebrant should present the cross to the family using some appropriate wording such as:

"I present this cross to you and commission you to pray each day this week for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We, the community, will also join our prayers to yours that the Lord will raise up the workers he needs for the harvest."

The crosses can be provided by the parish or the Diocesan Vocation Office.

See Appendix 1 for resources for the Vocations Cross Program. These resources can also be downloaded in English or Spanish by clicking on "Vocations" at www.oakdiocese.org.



VOTIVE MASS FOR PRIESTLY VOCATIONS (with homily outline)

For the Parish Community or Adult Groups Within the Parish

Suggested Scripture readings:

OT: Exodus 3 3: 1-6, 9-12

Response: Psalm 84:1-2, 3, 10, 11 -Refrain verse I

NT: Romans 8:28-30

Gospel: Luke 14:25-33 3 (Gospel Accl. -Mt. 4:19)

Opening Prayer:

Father, in your plan for our salvation you provide shepherds for your people. Fill your Church with the spirit of courage and love. Raise up worthy ministers for your altars and ardent but gentle servants of the gospel.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

General Intercessions:

Presider: We come before our God to present these special intentions.

Response: God, increase our love.

- That we may clearly understand the challenge of the Gospel: to live out our faith by giving ourselves to it each day, we pray ...
- That we may consider a generous response to the call of Christ to labor in the vineyard of the Lord, we pray...
- That each of us may validate our baptismal commitment in love and service to all God's people, we pray...
- For an increase in vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, brotherhood, sisterhood, and lay ministries, we pray ...
- For those who have already given their lives in service and love to carry on the work of Christ, we pray...

- Let us pray for our special intentions...

Presider: God, hear these special requests we make today. We renew our faith in your promise that whatever we ask in faith shall not go unanswered. Hear us and bless us through Christ our Lord.

Prayer Over the Gifts:

Pray brethren...

Lord, accept our prayers and gifts. Give the Church more priests and keep them faithful in their love and service.

Grant this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

Before the Lord's Prayer:

Jesus taught his disciples to pray. In the spirit of our common calling to follow him, let us join in prayer, using the words he gave us...

Prayer After Communion:

Lord, hear the prayers of those who are renewed with the bread of life at your holy table. By this sacrament of love bring to maturity the seeds you have sown in the field of your Church; may many of your people choose to serve you by devoting themselves to the service of their brothers and sisters.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Solemn Blessing:

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and has given us everlasting encouragement and good hope through his grace, comfort your hearts and make them strong for every good deed and word.

R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

Dismissal:

Our celebration is ended. Let us accept the challenge of Christ to "Come and Follow."



SUGGESTED HOMILY OUTLINE

- ◆ God challenges Moses to accept the leadership of the Israelites.
- ◆ He is reluctant, for he fears his inadequacy for the work.
- ◆ God promises to always be present to strengthen Moses in this endeavor.
- ◆ The sign of that presence will be found in worship.
- ◆ St. Paul, in his letter to the Christians at Rome, insists that God call certain people to do this work, to make God known among all people.
- ◆ The cost of being a disciple, of accepting the challenge, is great (Luke), but so, too, are the rewards great.
- ◆ For goodness to have an effect on the world, there must be those who give their lives in service completely. Moses had such a vocation; so did St. Paul -- so did Jesus.
- ◆ Accepting the challenge is not done without asking the important questions:
 1. What does the Lord want from me?
 2. What is the cost of this discipleship?
 3. What abilities do I bring to the challenge? What inabilities?
 4. Is this a mature decision on my part? Have I tested it?
 5. Am I generous enough to give the sort of response I believe God wants of me?
- ◆ Priests, deacons, brothers and sisters share in something larger than themselves; something greater than nations, peoples, or ages, For they have a part in the ongoing revelation of God to the human family, the formation of the human race into the People of God, the ultimate fulfillment of our destiny.
- ◆ God places the challenge before us today; may God grant the blessing of many generous responses from among our Christian family.



9 POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN PREACHING ABOUT VOCATIONS

1. **Root Your Homily in the Scriptures for the Day**

There are plenty of Scripture texts that lend themselves well to preaching about vocations. The themes of call and response, community, discipleship, self-giving and mission are regular features in the cycle of readings for the church year. When any homily is preached, its focus should always be the Word which has been given for the day. When you make a pastoral decision to focus on an invitation to priesthood and religious life, it is appropriate to do so when the Liturgy of the Word lends itself to that focus. Two very appropriate days are the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, when the church in the United States begins its observation of **National Vocation Awareness Week**, and the Fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday, which is also observed as **World Day of Prayer for Vocations**.

2. **Use Contemporary Images**

When choosing images and stories for a vocation homily, ask yourself, "Will a seventeen-year-old parishioner relate to this story?" Examples like Pope John Paul II, Mother Theresa, Dorothy Day, and other heroic Christians will probably strike a chord with young people because they have most likely heard of them outside of their church experience.

3. **Focus on Vocations to Priesthood and Religious Life -- Be Direct**

Perhaps you have noticed that often young men and women who make a choice for priesthood or religious life are already involved in some level of parish ministry, whether as paid professionals or as volunteers. When preaching on vocations to the priesthood and religious life, remember that your congregation includes these young adults who are already dedicated to serving God as lectors, music ministers, and catechists. Without implying that lay ministry is a lesser form of service, be direct in your invitation to consider the lifestyle of a vowed or ordained minister.

4. **Affirm the Faith of Your Listeners**

People who worship regularly in our parish communities demonstrate that they are people of faith searching for more. The motivations that carried them to Mass are already counter cultural. Thank God for their faith ... Jesus did.

5. Tell Your Story

"Young people have immense curiosity about the lives of people who appear to have discovered sense, meaning, and a measure of fulfillment" (Michael Hunt, CSP). Share a concrete moment from your story so your listeners might make a connection with your discernment, vocation, joy, and sense of mission.

6. Give a Bold, Personal Invitation

The number one reason young people say they haven't considered vowed or ordained ministry is that no one had ever asked them. Ask your listeners directly to consider the possibility of a church vocation. Be courageous.

"Today, I'm asking the young people in our parish to think about what it would be like to serve the People of God as a priest, brother, or sister."

7. Ask Parents and Grandparents

Enlist the help of parents and grandparents in the vocation effort of the church. Pope John Paul II clearly pointed out that vocations begin at home.

"Parents and Grandparents, please talk with your children and grandchildren about the possibility of serving in a religious vocation. We owe it to them to offer them the possibility."

8. Include Religious Life

When preaching on vocations, include reflections on religious orders. Do not neglect to promote communities of religious women and men. For years, sisters and brothers have generously supported vocations in our schools. Priests should return the favor.

"Think about what it would be like to do the work of a brother, to do the things a sister does. "

9. "The Church Needs You"

Let your listeners know that they are important. They could make a great contribution to the mission of Christ by serving as a priests, sister, or brother.

"The church needs You! Just one generous person can make such a difference in the mission of God by offering his or her life in the service of the church. "



PRAYER SERVICE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Leader: Anyone who can say with pride today that he or she is a "senior citizen" is saying other things as well. Hopefully each person is also saying, "I have learned through the experience of life. I am growing in wisdom as well as age. I want to share what I am and who I am."

Older members of our parish community are our treasures. You have indeed learned that life carries with it many joys as well as challenges. You have had and still have many opportunities to share, to give, to make the most of your talents and abilities for the sake of God's people.

Reading: Wisdom 7:7-12

Leader: It is not always easy to grow older, to change and to see people, places, and things change around us. But even in struggle and difficulty--even in pain--we are invited to share in the passion and resurrection of Jesus. Let us ask ourselves, "How can I be of service to others, not only in the joys that I experience, but also in pain and loneliness as well?"

(Pause for Reflection)

Leader: The senior members of our parish community are invited in a special way to be people of wisdom, people of faith and people of prayer. Each is invited to pray for and encourage others within the Christian community, that they might respond generously to God's will in their lives. We need generous and loving women and men to minister among us. We need people like you to pray for and encourage them.

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Leader: Let us pray for those who have ministered and do minister among us, and for women and men we know who may be in the process of deciding how they will respond to God's call.

(Spontaneous Prayers)

Leader: Let us each commit ourselves to a particular way of supporting those considering church ministry.

(Pass out commitment cards shown on following pages).

Prayer: The following prayer can be prayed by the leader or by all after commitment cards are collected.

(This prayer may be printed out and given to participants for personal use.)

A Senior Citizens Prayer for Church Vocations

Loving God,

You call me to be a person of faith, who desires to grow in wisdom as well as age. Teach me to be open to you in responding to your love in my life.

As I grow older, sometimes I am sick or without energy, or feel very lonely. Let me remember that you too know what it is to suffer and yet have hope.

I desire to offer the difficulties of my life for those who also struggle to be the people you desire them to be.

I ask that you bless our church community with generous and enthusiastic ministers who desire to work among us, who can bring your Good News to our world.
Amen.



VOCATION COMMITMENT CARD FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

*"God, teach me your way, how to
walk beside you faithfully."* Ps. 86:11

"May we move into the future united in hope and in a spirit of prayer, with boundless trust in the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. If each of us takes personal responsibility to encourage vocations to priesthood and religious life, then, together we will build a vocation-rich Catholic community. Pray the Lord of the harvest send laborers into the vineyard."

Bishop Joseph L. Imesch

***As a pledge for the intention
of Church vocations,
I will:***

1. Offer a monthly holy hour.
2. Pray the rosary at least once a week.
3. Pray daily for a young woman or man (by name) who is considering priesthood or religious life.
4. Do some act of kindness for someone else in need.
5. Accept willingly whatever daily life brings in terms of pain and loneliness.
6. Look for opportunities today to say "thank you" to those who minister to us.





HOLY HOUR FOR CHURCH VOCATIONS

An hour of quiet reflection to be used by a parish or by an individual for private prayer. (Scripture passages may be typed out on a sheet of paper or people may use Bibles.)

1. Select a passage – five to ten verses from the Bible (see the passages listed below).
 2. Find a place where you will be alone, not bothered, and free to move, speak, and be uninhibited in your response to God's presence.
 3. Find a comfortable posture, relaxed, and peaceful.
 4. Be aware of the presence of God. Acknowledge and respond to it.
 5. Pray the passage from scripture.
- Listen to the message God has for you.
 - Read, whisper aloud so you can hear, see, say God's word very slowly.
 - Rest on any words that call you to respond in a grateful, loving way - always in truth.
 - Read on, when nothing seems to happen.
 - When the time is up, thank God for speaking to you.

Suggested scripture passages:

Gen. 12:14; 15:6	Thess. 5:11
Deut. 29:3	Ex. 3:11-12
1 Kgs. 19:19-211	1 Sam. 3:1-10
Acts 9:1-19; 13:2.3, 16:9-10	Is. 6:1-9; 22:6-21; 26:12-19
Jer. 1:4-10: 17-19; 15:10-21	Am. 7:15
Mk. 1:16-20	Lk. 9:57-60; 5:1-11; 12:49-53
Jn. 1:35-512	2 Tim. 1:6-13

6. Closing Prayer:
Loving God, fill us with your spirit of love so that the fire Jesus came to light may blaze within us. May we become more visible signs of the reign of God. This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.



SCRIPTURE PASSAGES RELATED TO GOD'S CALL

Call of God

Extended freely by God:

Jer. 1:41ff; Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 15:9-10; Gal. 1:15

Demands faith and obedience:

Gen. 12; Mt. 4:18-22; 16:24-26; 8:18-22

Engendered newness in person called:

Gen. 17:4-8; Lk. 1: 13, 31-32, 59-63 Jn. 1:42

Corresponds with communication of the Spirit of God:

1 Sm. 10:6; 16:13; Is. 2:2; 42:1; Jn. 15:16, 26; 20:22; 14:16; Mk. 3:13

Called to the heritage of everlasting life: Mt. 22:1-14; Phil. 3:14; 11 Thess. 2:14;

1 Tm. 6:12; Hb. 9:15; Rev. 19:9

Communal aspect:

Rm. 9:7; 1 Cor. 12: 1ff; Col. 3:15; Eph. 4:1-12

Purpose of Call:

Ex. 3:14; Jg. 6:12-23; Ps. 20-38; Lk. 1:13-17; 1 Pt. 2:9

Assurance of Divine Providence:

Ex. 19:3; Jg. 6:13-14; Eze. 3:7-9; Jer. 1:7-9; Mt. 10:1-8; Mk. 3:15; Lk. 9:1-2; 1 Cor. 3:4-6; 4:7; Eph. 4:11

Results of following God's Call:

Persecution: Is 50:5-8; 53:1-12; Mt. 10:16-33; Mk. 13:11;
Lk. 21:14-15; Acts 9:15-16; 26:17-19

Rewards: Mt. 19:27-29; Jn. 15:15; II Cor. 2:15-17

Renunciation: Mt. 2:14; Mk. 10:17-22; Lk. 5:27-28; 9:57-62

Prayer for perseverance:

1 Thess. 1:11-12

Discernment:

Ps. 25(24); Rm. 8:28-30, 11:33-36; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Cor. 2:7-12; 1 Pt. 1:1-10

To persons:

Gn. 12; Ex. 3; 19: 3ff; 24:16; 1 Sm. 3; 2 Sm. 7; Is. 6:13;
Jer. 1:4-12; Acts 9; Mt. 4:18-22; Lk. 5:1-26; Jn 1:35-51

Covenant Theme:

Gn. 6:17-18; 8:13-9; 15:1-21; 17:1-27; Ex. 19:3-8;
2 Sm. 7:22-29; Ps. 50(49); 78; 89; 111; Jer. 31:1-6, 31-34; Heb. 8:7-12

Mission:

Is. 41:8-16; 42:5-9; 43:8-12; Lk. 9:2; 10:1-9; 24:46-48;
Mt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; 5:20, 42; 6:6; 7:1, 52-53; 10:42; 13:2;
8:12; 4:3; 18:10; 2 Cor. 2:14-16; 1:18-19

Servant

Is. 42:1-8; 49:1-7; 50:4-10; 52:13-53:12

Wedding Theme:

Ps. 45(44); Hosea; Song of Songs; Is 62:4-5; Mt. 22:1-13; 15:1-12; Lk. 14:7-24

Priesthood:

1 Pt. 2:2-10; Heb. 4:12-5:6; 10: 10-17

Seeking God:

Hos. 6:1-3; Ps. 27(26), 24:3-6; 105:1-4; 42:2-5, 12; 84:2-4; Is. 55:6-13

Poverty:

Prov. 22:1-2, 16, 22-23; Ps. 73(72); 40:5; 18; 107; 72;
Am. 2:6; 8:4-6; Is. 66:1-2; 11:1-5; 61:1-4, Mt. 5:1-12;
6:19-34; 8:10-20; 11:2-6; 19:16-22; Lk. 1:46-55; 4:18-21;
6:20-26; 12:13-21; 14:12-14; 16:1-13, 19-31; 20: 45-21:4;
Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; 2 Cor. 6:2-10;
8:1-15; Ja. 2:1-9

Chastity:

Wis. 3:16-28; 4:1-2; Mt. 19:12, 5:38; 1 Cor. 7:1, 7-8,
32-35, 36-40; 1 Thess. 4:1-7; 1 Tm. 4:10-12

Obedience:

Deut. 4:32-40; 6:4-6; 13-19; Is. 29:13-24; 53; Ps 50 (49);
Mt., 7:21-27; Jn. 6:35-40; 14:21-24; 8:38-42; Acts 4:19; 5:27-32



SAMPLE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Adding these Prayers of the Faithful regularly to your weekday and Sunday liturgies is encouraged both as a means of intercessory prayer and for promoting vocation awareness.

1. That families will strive to make their homes places where children can hear God call them by name.
2. That parents may realize their responsibility to be an example of faith for their children.
3. That those who feel a call to and desire for priesthood or religious life may find the courage to say yes to what God asks of them.
4. That young men and women will listen to the Spirit in their hearts and respond to the cry from deep within.
5. That our parish communities will nurture religious vocations through their lives of prayer and service, giving witness to God's loving action in the world.
6. That we may be signs of God's presence and love in the world.
7. That our daily living may transform our suffering world into a place of love, justice, and peace.
8. For those who struggle in their vowed commitment, that the mystery of God's deep love will strengthen them.
9. In thanksgiving for those priests, sisters, and brothers who inspire and strengthen us by the witness of their commitment.
10. We pray to you, our good and gracious God, that you will continue to call women and men of faith to serve as ministers in our church.
11. We pray that through the power of your Spirit you fill those you call with the courage and faith to respond to a life of service.

12. We pray, God of hope, that you will continue to call women and men to serve your church as sisters, brothers, and priests.
13. We pray, God of love, that our lives may be a sign of your presence and love in the world.
14. We praise you God, for your mysterious ways among us; for your presence in the midst of human affairs and for the many ways you gift us with life.
15. For parents and teachers, that they may have the courage and faith to speak God's word in their words and actions.
16. For all women and men throughout the world: that they may find in Christ their source of contentment, peace, and security.
17. For all who seek to know the truth: that their searching may lead them to a life of generous service.
18. We pray for young people: that they may persevere in hope, trusting in God's faithfulness to them as they search for deeper meaning in life.
19. For wisdom for parents and educators, that they may know how to hand on the faith to children.
20. We pray for the whole church, especially for preachers and catechists, that the words they speak may be words of life for those who experience struggle, weariness and emptiness today.
21. For each of us, for our families and our friends, that we respond fully to the call of our baptism, and accept the grace to remain open to God's call to serve.
22. We pray for a sincerity of heart, a firmness of hope, and a purity of intention in our lives and in the life of the world.
23. We pray that young people may find a joyful faith in their families and encouragement to respond to a life of ministry and service.
24. For men and women in seminaries and religious formation programs, that they may know the support and love of our community as they grow in self-awareness and continue to discern God's call.
25. For those responsible for guiding the spiritual growth of seminarians, candidates and novices, that they will rely on the wisdom of the Spirit in their ministry.



SAMPLE LETTER TO MINISTERS OF THE SICK

Dear Minister of the Sick:

I am writing to invite your assistance in promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The sick and shut-ins of our parish can provide a tremendous resource of prayer for vocations, and I hope you can help us to ask their prayers for this important purpose.

I enclose our new prayer cards, "Prayer of the Sick for Vocations" and a "Senior Citizen's Prayer for Vocations" which have been made available by the Diocesan Vocation Office. Use of these cards by the sick of our parishes is an important part of the strategy to implement a culture of vocations in the diocese. We would like to distribute these cards to the sick, shut-ins, and elderly, so that they might offer their illness or infirmities to the Lord for an increase of vocations. We call these people our **Powerhouse of Prayer for Vocations**. There are thousands of people who would probably be very happy to share in this worthy endeavor.

Membership in the **Powerhouse of Prayer for Vocations** is open to everyone who is willing to pray daily the prayer on one of the cards. There are no dues, no mailing lists, no meetings and no other obligations. The members have the spiritual benefit of knowing that their prayers and sufferings are for a good purpose, united with the prayers of many other people throughout the Oakland diocese.

Please let me know how many cards you can use. They are available without cost. Thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Note: If you decide to use a "Prayer of the Sick for Vocations" or "Vocation Commitment Card" please include the samples in your letter.



A SICK PERSON'S PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Prayer of the Sick for Vocations



Lord,

you are a good and loving Father so I have great confidence that you are listening to me. Today we need many priests and consecrated men and women to serve your church.

I offer my sufferings, my illness, the infirmities of old age, and my personal inconveniences for your greater honor and glory. Give a spirit of generosity to our youth. Give them a vision, your vision, of how they can serve their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Oh God, give me strength to pray constantly, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Office of Vocations
Diocese of Oakland



Section 5: Resources for Task #3: Inviting Individuals



AN INVITATION CHECKLIST

Who are you looking for?

There are many single Catholics around who are prayerful, generous and involved in the parish. Assuming they have normal health and average intelligence, these are the kind of people who would make good priests and religious. But they often need a personal invitation from somebody to begin seriously considering a special call from God.

Where will you find them?

You will find them on the lists of volunteers that make up the membership of your parish organizations and programs. Take a close look at the following groups in particular, making sure to include all ethnic communities in your parish:

- **Liturgical Ministers**
Look through the list of servers, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, and cantors. According to the CARA study “The Class of 2007: Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood”, 76% of diocesan ordinands who responded to the survey said they were altar servers, 60% said they had served regularly as lectors, and 51% said they had served regularly as Eucharistic ministers. These statistics suggest that close proximity to the Eucharist fosters in a person the desire to consider a church vocation.
- **Religious Education Teachers**
Check your catechism teachers. The CARA study also found that 14% of the ordinands said they were RCIA team members at their parishes. These are the people who have already responded to the call to spread the faith to others. Full-time ministry could be the next step.
- **Parish Organizations and Groups**
Check through membership lists in the following groups: charismatic groups, cursillo and other retreat participants, parish council and other parish committee members, hospital workers, RCIA team, scripture study faithfuls, youth ministry team, choir, social justice activists. There may be other groups in your parish not on this list.

- **Sunday Congregation**

Single Catholics who attend Sunday Mass regularly may also be potential candidates. You can also enlist the help of the Sunday congregation in searching out candidates. Put an announcement in the Sunday bulletin asking people to suggest names. You should also ask the congregation to pray for you in this important search. And ask the pastor to make an announcement about your search and to include the intention in the Prayers of the Faithful that week. See the sample bulletin announcement later in this section.



SAMPLE BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

Search for Candidates

This month the Parish Vocations Advocate is conducting a search of potential candidates for the priesthood and religious life. The names surfaced will be contacted and personally invited to consider a church vocation. During this search process the Parish Vocations Advocate will consult with the organizations of the parish asking for suggestions. If you know of single Catholics whom you think would make good priests and sisters, please contact the Parish Vocations Advocate with their name and phone number. And please help by including them in your prayers.

Research has shown that most people who decide to study for the priesthood and religious life do so because somebody along the way said to them: "You would make a good priest or you would make a good sister or you would make a good brother."



LIFE CHOICE OPTION CHECKSHEET

This checksheet is a helpful tool for someone who may be assessing themselves as a potential priest or religious. It can be used as a resource for discussion with these persons or may be given to them directly as an aid toward assessing their life choice options.

A. Marriage

1. If you were to marry, what for you would be the best part of being married? Why?
2. What would you find the hardest? Why?
3. What factors would you consider most important in deciding whether or not to marry and/or deciding what person to marry?
4. Do YOU want to get married? Why or why not?

B. Single Life

1. If you remain single, what would you like most about that state in life? Why?
2. What would you find hardest? Why?
3. What do you think would be important factors which would lead someone to decide upon the single life?
4. Do YOU want to remain single? Why or why not?

C. Religious Life

1. If you became a sister or brother or religious priest, what would you find best about this state in life? Why?
2. What would you find hardest? Why?
3. What do you think are the reasons men and women choose religious life today?
4. Do YOU want to become a religious sister, brother, or priest? Why or why not?



Section 6:
Vocation Resources:
Videos/DVDs,
Publications, and Websites



VIDEOS/DVDS, PUBLICATIONS & WEBSITES ON VOCATIONS

Videos/DVDs: Junior/Senior High through Adults

A Different Path

(60 min.) An up-close look at the lives of two communities of religious women, the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Clyde, Missouri, and the Sisters of St. Joseph, Brooklyn, New York. NCCV.

A Question of Conscience

(47 min.) On November 16, 1989, uniformed soldiers entered the Jesuit residence at El Salvador's Central American University and murdered six priests, their cook and her daughter. This video tells the story behind this massacre - but it also speaks of committed priests, whose words and lives led to their deaths because they spoke out for the sake of the poor and the cause of justice. They stand as reminders that the Gospel message is costly - but we need people who are willing to pay the price. Amazon.com.

Merton -A Film Biography

(57 min.) An intimate look at the life of the Trappist monk. Amazon.com.

Roses in December

(56 min.) Documentary about the ministry of lay missionary Jean Donovan and the three American sisters who were murdered in El Salvador. Amazon.com.

St. Francis -Troubadour of God's Peace

(60 min.) One-man drama by Leonardo Defilippis. St. Luke Productions.

The Call-Living a Life in Christ

(12 min.) Real life stories about three men who are Diocesan priest. NCCV.

Vocación: Priesthood

(10 min.) Produced by the Archdiocese of San Antonio to help surface some of the issues Mexican-Americans face when they contemplate priesthood. For use with students, parents and parish groups. English & Spanish with English subtitles. NCCV.

You Could Make a Difference

(17 min.) Shares the stories of two priests and three sisters as they work around the country. NCCV & USCCB.

Videos/DVDs: Adults

Completely Christ's

(60 min.) Discover how to find, follow and fulfill His plan for your life. Rogationist Publications.

Fishers of Men

(18 min.) A fast-paced film which shows many of the facets of a priest's daily life. Several priests provide testimony to their own vocation. USCCB & Grassroots Films.

God's call: A Family Affair

(27 min.) A revealing program about several young men and women and their parents becoming aware of God's call to religious life and priesthood. Serra International.

My Soul Proclaims: Voices of Catholic Women

(60 min.) The historical and contemporary contributions of Catholic women. Discussion guide. USCCB.

Priesthood

(30 min.) Meet three priests of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis who reflect on their vocational choice and share the joys and challenges of their lives. Communications Office, Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis.

The Catholic Priest Today

(30 min.) This documentary offers a fresh perspective on what it means to be a dedicated priest in today's culture by following the lives of three actual priest through the course of an ordinary week. Midwest Theological Forum.

Print Publications/Periodicals:

OYE Magazine

An annual bilingual magazine published by Claretian Publications. Contains informative articles about priesthood and religious life.

Vision Magazine

A annual publication of the National Religious Vocation Conference published by TrueQuest Communications. Contains informative articles about priesthood and religious life.

Vocations and Prayer Magazine

A quarterly magazine published by Rogationist Publications. Contains ideas for vocation ministry, informative articles about priesthood and religious life.

Catholic Updates, Youth Updates

From St. Anthony Messenger Press: "Are you called to be a lay minister?" Carol Luebering and Robert E. Schmitz; "Lay ministry not just for a few" Thomas Richstatter OFM; "Sacrament of Marriage: Sign of Faithful Love" Thomas Richstatter, OFM; "Ten Things to Discuss Before Marriage"; "Why Become a Priest, Sister or Brother Today?" Catherine Bertrand, SSND.

Websites:

A Guide to Religious Ministries for Catholic Men and Women
www.religiousministries.com

Catholic Vocations
www.vocation.com

Diocese of Oakland
www.oakdiocese.org

Institute on Religious Life
www.religiouslife.com

LifeTeen Vocation Page
www.lifeteen.com/default.aspx?PageID=VOC_HOME

National Coalition for Church Vocations (NCCV)
www.nccv-vocations.org

National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors (NCDVD)
www.ncdvd.org

National Religious Vocations Conference (NRVC)
www.nrv.net

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
www.usccb.org

United States Conference of Secular Institutes (USCSI)
www.secluarinstitutes.org

USA Council of Serra International
www.serraus.org

Vatican: The Holy See
www.vatican.va

Vision-Vocation Network for Catholic Vocations
www.vocation-network.org

Other Sources:

Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life & Vocations, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 3211 Fourth St., NE, Washington, D.C. 20017,
Phone: 202-541-3033.

Catholic Campus Ministry Association (CCMA), 1118 Pendleton St., Suite 300,
Cincinnati, OH 45202. Phone: 888-714-6631.

Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), 8808 Cameron St., Silver Spring,
MD 20910. Phone: 301-588-4030.

Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR), PO Box 4467,
Washington, D.C. 20017. Phone: 202-832-2575.

Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), 8808 Cameron St., Silver
Spring, MD 20910. Phone: 301-588-4955.

National Association of Diaconate Directors (NADD), 7625 North High St.,
Columbus, OH 43235. Phone: 614-985-2276.

National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors (NCDVD), 5400 Roland Ave.,
Baltimore, MD 21210. Phone: 410-864-4111.

National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM), 415 Michigan Ave.,
Suite 40, Washington, D.C. 20017. Phone: 202-636-3825.

National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC), 5401 South Cornell Ave., Suite
207, Chicago, IL 60616. Phone: 773-363-5454.

Where to Find it:

These are the addresses of the organizations from which you may purchase the materials listed in this resource bibliography. In most cases, the publishers have catalogues that include other materials that might aid your vocation efforts.

Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis, Communications Office, 226 Summit Ave.,
St. Paul, MN 55102. Phone: 651-291-4411.

Claretian Publications, 205 W. Monroe St., Chicago, IL 60606. Phone: 312-236-7782.

GrassRoots Films, 119 Eagle St., Brooklyn, NY 11222. Phone: 718-349-7622.

Midwest Theological Forum, 1420 Davey Rd., Woodridge, IL 60517.
Phone: 630-739-9750.

National Coalition for Church Vocations (NCCV), 5401 S. Cornell Ave., Suite 205,
Chicago, IL 60615. Phone: 800-671-6228.

Rogationist Publications, 6635 Tobias Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91405.
Phone: 818-782-1765.

Sacred Heart Kids Club, 869 S. Rimpau Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90005.
Phone: 323-935-2372.

Serra International, 65 E. Wacker Place, Suite 802, Chicago IL 60601.
Phone: 888-777-6681.

St. Anthony Messenger Press, Franciscan Communications, 28 W. Liberty St.,
Cincinnati, OH 45202. Phone: 800-488-0488.

St. Luke Productions, PO Box 886, Battle Ground, WA 98604. Phone: 360-687-8029.

TrueQuest Communications, 806 W. Washington Blvd., Suite 201, Chicago, IL
60607. Phone: 312-829-7200.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Publishing (USCCB), 3211 Fourth St.,
NE, Washington, D.C. 20017. Phone: 800-235-8722.



Section 7: Appendices



APPENDIX 1: VOCATION CROSS PROGRAM RESOURCES

Sample Announcement for Introducing the Parish Vocation Cross Program

Today we as a parish are being invited to become a part of a new program being initiated by our Oakland Diocesan Vocation Office. It's called the parish Vocation Cross.

Here's how the program will work:

Each Sunday a family, couple, or individual will come forward at the end of the (*time*) Mass (or one of the Masses) to receive the vocation cross and a special prayer written to accompany it. In taking the cross they commit themselves to pray during the week in the name of our parish the vocation prayer in thanksgiving for all those generously sharing in Church ministry and in particular for the gift of priests, deacons, sisters and brothers to serve in our Oakland Diocese.

All of you are invited to participate in this program. There is a sign up sheet in the back of the Church. We encourage you to sign up for one of the weeks and then to attend the designated Mass that week to receive the cross.

It is our hope that this experience will encourage each of us to take seriously our vocation as a member of the Body of Christ and encourage ALL of us to pray for the gift of vocations to priesthood and religious life (not just the family with the cross for the week!). We believe the Spirit is calling forth men and women from our faith community to these roles of service. May our prayer help inspire young women and men to be attentive to the movement of the Spirit within them and to step forward in faith and with generous hearts to wherever the Spirit leads them.

Parish Vocation Cross Sample Directions for Participants

On behalf of the Parish we thank you for your participation in the Parish Vocation Cross Program. Here are some details regarding your participation.

Receiving the Cross:

Be sure to attend the Mass at which the cross will be distributed.

After the closing prayer of the Liturgy you will be invited to come to the altar to receive the cross and the special vocation prayer. You can return to your place after you receive it.

Prayer during the week:

Please pray the Vocation Prayer with your family at a convenient time each day during the week. You might also use this as an opportunity to talk together about priests, sisters, and brothers you have known and admire.

Returning the Cross:

Please return the Vocation Cross and Prayers to the sacristy the following Sunday before the same Mass in which you received it. It is very important that you return it on time so the next participants will be able to receive it on time.

Thank you again for this ministry of prayer in the name of all of us at our parish.

Parish Vocation Cross Prayer of Commissioning

Priest or Deacon:

In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us, “Pray that the master of the harvest send out workers for his harvest” [Mt 9:38]. We, the Parish of (*mention parish name*) give you this Vocation Cross, and commission you to pray each day this week for Church vocations. In particular pray that men and women respond generously to the Spirit’s call for priests, religious sisters and brothers, deacons and lay ecclesial ministers. I also invite all of us to unite our prayers with theirs, so that our Church may share in an abundance of workers for God’s harvest.

We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS



Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: O God, listen to our prayer as we gather to pray for vocations to priesthood and religious life in the Diocese of Oakland. As we look upon the cross, we remember the love of Jesus, who calls us through Baptism to follow him in service to our sisters and brothers in the Church.

Psalm: Psalm 100

Leader: Shout joy to the Lord, all the earth, serve the Lord with gladness, enter God's presence with joy!

All: Serve the Lord with gladness, enter God's presence with joy.

Leader: Know that the Lord is God, our maker to whom we belong, our shepherd and we the flock.

All: Serve the Lord with gladness, enter God's presence with joy.

Leader: Enter the temple gates, the courtyard with thanks and praise; give

thanks and bless God's name.

ALL: Serve the Lord with gladness enter God's presence with joy.

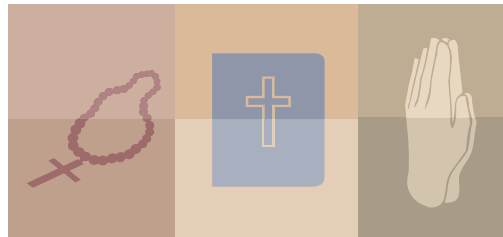
Leader: Indeed the Lord is good, God is lasting love faithful from age to age.

ALL: Serve the Lord with gladness, enter God's presence with joy.

Reading: Luke 10:1-3

After this, Jesus appointed seventy-two others and sent them ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them: "The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few; pray therefore to the Master of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Response: A moment of silence



Petitions:

Leader: Master of the harvest, we thank you for the faithful witness of our diocesan priests, deacons, religious, and lay ministers dedicated to building the kingdom of God in the diocese of Oakland, We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Master of the harvest, we pray for the gift of vocations to the priesthood for our diocese. May those you are calling respond with generous hearts. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Master of the harvest, we pray that you call committed women and men to give their lives in service and love to the Church through vowed life in community. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Master of the harvest, we pray that all members of our faith community will share our gifts generously for the service of God's people. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Master of the harvest, we bring to you our needs and intentions, trusting in your great love for us (your intentions may be prayed aloud). We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

All: Our Father...

Leader: Almighty God, we are confident that you will send laborers into the vineyard of your Church. Help us be open to your love in, our lives and respond generously. Hear us and bless us in Christ our Lord. Amen.



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