



Activities that teach, celebrate and explore the special vocations of our Catholic Faith.



Although these family activities are presented in a calendar format, month by month, do not feel limited by it. Each activity is totally independent of the others and could easily be done in ANY month, or repeated through the year.

Your family might choose to do only ONE activity, and build on that one idea throughout the entire year. If you have children in different age groups, you may find that one activity appeals to one child and an entirely different one is a favorite with another child. If you have Godchildren or grandchildren who only visit occasionally, you might choose to adjust the activities accordingly.

This program is designed to be a jumping off place for your family's prayers for vocations.....start here and see where the Holy Spirit leads!

Jane Carter
National Council of Catholic Women Supporting Member
Diocese of Knoxville, TN

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January

At the family mealtime add a “litany” of the priests who serve YOUR family. Start with the priest(s) who serve your parish, and add on when you visit another parish, you have a visiting priest, a parish mission, the Bishop comes to celebrate a school mass or Confirmation, the parish penance service, one member of your family goes on retreat, etc. Children love to remember things in sequence, and this is a wonderful way to highlight how many priests do serve your family!

ie: We pray for the priests who serve our family: Fr. John, Fr. Michael and Arch/Bishop _____.

GOING A BIT DEEPER....

January is traditionally the coldest month of the year in most states, so it's a perfect time to stay indoors and read. It is also a perfect time to read Scripture! Use these suggested passages to start prayer or discussion time with family members. You may look them up in the family Bible, or online at www.usccb.org/nab .

Deuteronomy 6:5, 30:11-14

I Kings 19:11-13

Jeremiah 1:4-9

Matthew 9:9-13, 9:35-38

Mark 12:30-31

Luke 9:57-62, 10:38-42, 12:22-34

Philippians 1:9-10

Prayer for Vocations

*Father, in your loving plan for our eternal salvation,
you provide shepherds for your flock.*

Fill your church with the spirit of courage, justice and peace.

*Call forth from the Church worthy ministers of your altars,
ardent but gentle shepherds of the gospel.*

*We pray that those whom you call may never lose awareness of the
dignity and need of their vocation. AMEN.*

+ John Clement Favalora, when Archbishop of Miami

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February

Select a special PRAYER for Vocations, and make it a part of your daily family prayer time. There are many samples of prayers to use throughout this resource. Another great source is the internet! Start with www.usccb.org.

Another idea is to carry a copy with you to Sunday liturgy and encourage everyone to pray it together before the celebration begins. You may choose to use the same prayer all year, pick a different one each week or month, or rotate who chooses among family members. There are many different prayer styles, and particular prayers speak to individuals in different ways. This is an opportunity for you to broaden your own personal prayer style.....and hear the Holy Spirit's whisper in new and exciting ways.

Marriage is a vocation too! As a couple plan to attend the World Marriage Day Mass or other diocesan wide celebration. Show your children and grandchildren by example that you give special attention to YOUR vocation!

GOING A BIT DEEPER....

Since 1997, each February the Church celebrates World Day for Consecrated Life, which was instituted by St. John Paul II. Attend the Mass nearest you as a family and celebrate with all those vowed religious (sisters and brothers) who serve in your diocese. Watch your diocesan newspaper or website for details.

“Consecrated life means, simply, living according to the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. Priests, brothers and sisters that we call Franciscans, Dominicans, Mercy Sisters, Jesuits, Paulists, Christian Brothers or Maryknoll Missioners all live lives consecrated to God and to God's people through the promise to live a poor, obedient and chaste life.” —from NCCV

VOCATION PRAYER

---Diocese of Nashville

Come Holy Spirit

**Bless those laboring in your service,
Inspire those searching to know your will,
Guide us in our prayerful reflection
Open our hearts to those you so call. AMEN.**

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A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Lord Jesus, you have chosen your priests from among us and sent them out to proclaim your word and to act in your name. For so great a gift to your Church, we give you praise and thanksgiving. We ask you to fill them with the fire of your love, that their ministry may reveal your presence in the Church.

Since they are earthen vessels, we pray that your power shine out through their weakness. In their afflictions let them never be crushed; in their doubts never despair, in temptation never destroyed; in persecution never abandoned. Inspire them through prayer to live each day the mystery of your dying and rising.

In times of weakness send them your Spirit, and help them to praise your heavenly Father and pray for poor sinners. By the same Holy Spirit put your word on their lips and your love in their hearts, to bring good news to the poor and healing to the brokenhearted.

And may the gift of Mary, your mother, to the disciple whom you loved, be your gift to every priest. Grant that she who formed you in her human image, may form them in your divine image, by the power of your Spirit, to the glory of God the Father.

AMEN.

VOCATION PRAYER

**Lord, let me know clearly the work which you are
calling me to do in life. And grant me every grace
I need to answer your call with courage and love
and lasting dedication to your will. AMEN.**

Prayers of the Faithful from the USCCB Website

For young men and women; That God may give them the gift of understanding to discern their service in the Church, the priesthood, diaconate, or consecrated life; And for the gift of courage to follow His call.

We pray to the Lord. . . .

For young people; That they may know the personal love of the Lord for them, and respond with open and generous hearts. We pray to the Lord. . . .

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March

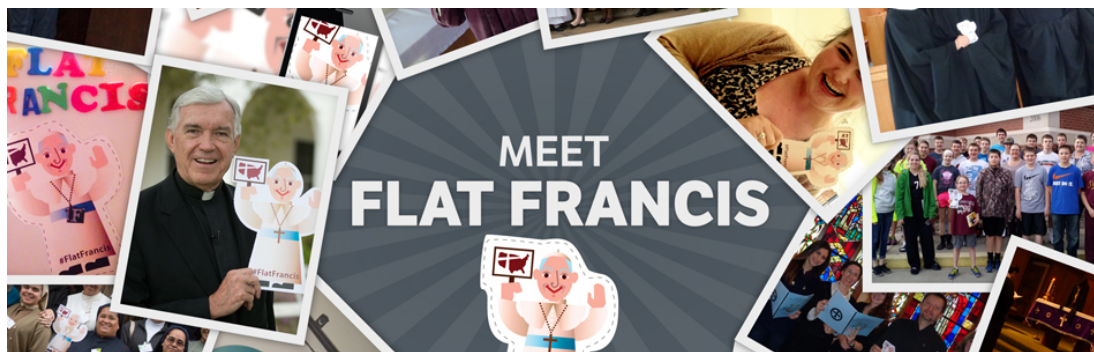
As a family, choose one of your Diocesan seminarians and pray for him in a special way. Write a family letter (one letter where each person writes a short message) and let him know that you are praying for him! Send a birthday card and/or a small gift, and remember him in a special way at Christmas and Easter. Have your children or grandchildren choose a RELIGIOUS card to send for each occasion. (Another teachable moment!) Be sure to send him a card on his SAINT day, too!

A current list of the seminarians from your diocese can be obtained from the Diocesan Vocations office. Usually a school address is provided, as well as their home parish. If you have an active Serra Club, they may be able to provide this information as well.

GOING A BIT DEEPER....

The Way of the Cross for Vocations devotional booklet, available from either NCCV (1-800-671-NCCV) or directly from the Rogationists (818-893-4526), is a wonderful way to use this prayer of the Church during Lent to focus on vocations. There is also a free, downloadable Vocations Way of the Cross on the USCCB website. What a gift for our priests for your family to pray these special stations!

Celebrate our Holy Father's Anniversary! **March 13th** marks Anniversary of Pope Francis' election as pope. Send him a special card from your family. With younger children or grandchildren it is a good idea to make it festive and visual—bake a cake, make a collage of pictures of our Holy Father cut from Catholic magazines, make an Anniversary Banner or carry FLAT FRANCIS around for the day and take photos---be creative! www.flatfrancis.org



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April

EASTER usually comes in April---and it is a time of celebration and renewal in the Church. Plan a simple party to celebrate your parish priest(s) ordination anniversary. You need not wait until 25 or 30 or 40.....celebrate EVERY year! (This might not be in April!) You may choose to do this with a few other families you know who have been praying for vocations this year. You might start with your children's religion classes, or your CCW guild/circle. Just remember that all children need for a party is a reason and a cake--and we are all kids at heart, right?

GO A BIT DEEPER....

Consider a special gift in "thanksgiving" for your parish priest(s) and/or deacons. Send a card with your gift to the Bishop's Bursar for seminarian, permanent diaconate and priest formation.

Spring is the perfect time to begin gardening. Get the whole family involved and plant a row to share with your parish food ministry in your priest's honor. Or plant simple flowers and share them with a local nursing home or assisted living center later in the summer.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

St. John Paul II while in the Archdiocese of New York

Oh Jesus, our Good Shepherd, bless all our parishes with numerous priests, deacons, men and women in religious life, consecrated laity and missionaries, according to the needs of the entire world, which 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 and His gifts.

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 to 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 the Father will grant what You have commanded us to ask. AMEN

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May

Does your diocese have Prayer Calendar for Priests? If not, this is a wonderful project for your Council of Catholic Women. A Prayer Calendar for Religious can also be created. The calendars list all the priests and religious of your diocese as well as noting special occasions—anniversaries and birthdays, providing the names on each day of the month. Copies would be distributed throughout the diocese.

At home, a printed copy might be hung someplace where everyone will see it—maybe as part of the refrigerator art or on a kitchen bulletin board next to the sports practice schedules. Encourage your children to check daily and pray for that priest and sister or brother. Just a quick prayer or perhaps remember them at bedtime or when you do table prayers before dinner. If you are a sponsor for someone in RCIA or the Confirmation class in your parish, share a copy of the calendar with them, too. Don't wait until Easter—help them feel connected during the process of RCIA!

GOING A BIT DEEPER....

Make time to visit the NCCW website and learn more about the special celebrations for Vocations. www.nccw.org

VOCATIONS PRAYER

from IMAGE, the St. Paul-Minneapolis Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women Newsletter

Loving God,
you speak to us and nourish us
through the lives of men and women
who serve the Church.
I thank you for these people.
Today I especially remember (name)
whose ministry I appreciate.

In the name of Jesus
I also ask you to send your Spirit to us
so that more men and women among us
will respond to your call
to service and leadership in the church
as sisters, brothers, and priests.

May those who are opening
their hearts to your call
be encouraged and strengthened
through my enthusiasm and faith. AMEN.

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June

June is traditionally the month of brides, and would be a great time to celebrate your vocation—MARRIAGE. (Or you might choose the month of your wedding anniversary.) Talk to your kids about the vocation of marriage in your own family. Include aunts and uncles, grandparents and other significant role models in their lives. Mark anniversaries with prayer as well as party! Read together paragraph 1603 in Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) and talk about it according to the ages of your children. Use your family copy, or access it online.

GOING A BIT DEEPER....

Read together “A Christian Declaration on Marriage” from the USCCB Committee on Marriage and Family Life, November 2002....here are two excerpts:

“We believe that marriage is a holy union of one man and one woman in which they commit, with God's help, to build a loving, life-giving, faithful relationship that will last for a lifetime. God has established the married state, in the order of creation and redemption, for spouses to grow in love of one another and for the procreation, nurture, formation, and education of children...”

“We believe that when a marriage is true to God's loving design it brings spiritual, physical, emotional, economic, and social benefits not only to a couple and family but also to the Church and to the wider culture. Couples, churches, and the whole of society have a stake in the wellbeing of marriages. Each, therefore, has its own obligations to prepare, strengthen, support and restore marriages.”

It is impossible to talk about marriage without talking about family....for your children are a gift of that union! Affirm them as individuals in prayer, as well as yourselves as parents/couple.

FAMILY PRAYER

**In good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health,
we belong to each other
as we belong to you, God ever faithful.
By morning and by night
may your name be on our lips,
a blessing to all our days:
so may kindness and patience be ever among us,
a hunger for justice,
and songs of thankfulness in all we do. AMEN.**

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Blessing on Anniversary

from Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers USCCB March 1998

Almighty and eternal God,
you have so exalted the unbreakable bond of marriage
that it has become the sacramental sign of your Son's union with the church as his spouse.

Look with favor on us whom you have united in marriage,
as we ask for your help and the protection of the Virgin Mary.
We pray that in good times and in bad we will grow in love for each other;
that we will resolve to be of one heart in the bond of peace.

Lord, in our struggles let us rejoice that you are near to help us;
in our needs let us know that you are there to rescue us,
in our joys let us see that you are the source and completion of every happiness. AMEN.

FAMILY PRAYER

Lord God, we thank you for the gift of family.
We acknowledge that our image and name as family come from You.

We believe that within our family lies a home-made holiness. We affirm that it
is in this household of faith that we experience Your presence, Your
forgiveness, and Your love.

We are family. We give thanks to You, for the many joys and blessings
that have come to us through family.

As a family we sometimes feel pain. And so we offer you our disappointments,
frustrations and hurts. Help us to forgive those members of our family,
including ourselves, who have caused pain.

We pray for the strength to be a light within our family. May we open our
hearts, our eyes and ears and carry our light to those in need.

God, Creator of the earth and all its people, help us to be mindful that, as
members of one global family, we are equal in Your eyes. Help us to continue to
appreciate the diversity of persons in our homes and in our world. As members
equal in human dignity, may we build a better world and proclaim our
willingness to be the holy people You call us to be. Amen.

(Imprimatur: +Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago)
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July

Visit another church this summer, while on vacation inside or outside your diocese. Have your children or grandchildren ever been to another Catholic church in your diocese? Have they celebrated mass at the Cathedral? Don't forget while you are on vacation to check 1-800-MASS TIMES for help in locating the closest church and Mass schedule. Who is the celebrant for your Mass? Add him to your family Litany of Priests (see January.) Is he a diocesan priest or an order priest? Is it one of the orders you "researched" and prayed for in April? Each time you visit a new church, be sure to talk to your children or grandchildren about the differences in architecture and church function. What is the SHAPE of the sanctuary—does it have a purpose or special meaning? What artistic medium is used for the Stations of the Cross? Where is the Tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament? What colors are predominant? What are the windows like? What looks the same as your home parish church?

GOING A BIT DEEPER....

As you visit other churches, look for posters and prayers promoting vocations in other parishes and dioceses.

Prayer #4 from the USCCB Website/Vocation Prayers

Loving God, you call all who believe in you
to grow perfect in love by following in the footsteps of Christ your Son.
Call from among us more men and women who will serve you as religious.
By their way of life, may they provide a convincing sign
of your Kingdom for the Church and the whole world.
We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Gracious and loving God, help the men and women of our parish
to hear the call to serve in the Arch/Diocese of _____.
Our needs are great and our people thirst for your presence.

Open the hearts of many, raise up faithful servants of the Gospel,
dedicated, holy priests, sisters, brothers and deacons,
who will spend themselves for your people and their needs.

Bless those who are serving now with courage and perseverance.
Grant that many will be inspired by their example and faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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August

Ask a grandparent or older parishioner to share memories of special priests or religious from their childhood with your family. This could be done very simply after Mass, at “coffee and donuts,” or with more planning at a shared meal. Encourage your children to share their own special memories with this person as well—so often we gain real insight from a child’s interpretation of events and experiences. Children often surprise us with wonderful memories of priests or sisters!

GO A BIT DEEPER....

August is back to school time (or getting ready for back to school) for families throughout our country. Focus your family’s vocation prayers on the priests, sisters and/or brothers who teach in your diocesan high schools, and the sisters who teach in your religious education classes, elementary and high schools. Your diocese might be one of the many who also have sisters who assist with teaching bilingual or Spanish speaking religion classes. This focus on Catholic Education will help prepare your family for a deeper appreciation of Catechetical Sunday—watch your bulletin for the celebration in your own parish and make plans to attend. Passing on the faith is the responsibility of parents FIRST, but in a very real way, of the entire community.

VOCATIONS PRAYER

Father in heaven, we give you thanks for sending your Son,
Jesus Christ, into the world to be our Lord, Savior, and High Priest.
We believe that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus won for us the gift
of eternal life by his sacrifice on the Cross.
We believe that Jesus renews this sacrifice in the Holy Eucharist, through the ministry of his priests.

Father, we earnestly beseech you to raise up holy priests in your Church.
Grant young men the strength to accept generously the call to the priesthood.
May they joyfully give their lives so that all your people can receive your Holy Word and
Sacraments,
especially the Holy Eucharist, the great gift of the Body and Blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our
Lord, Savior, and High Priest, in whose name we make our prayer.
AMEN.

+Justin Cardinal Rigali, when Archbishop of St.Louis

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September

Invite a priest, deacon, sister or brother to have dinner with your family. Make it a “normal family meal” and not a huge party, so that all members of the family will have time to get to know your special guest. Encourage your children to continue whatever prayers for vocations your family has adopted from this program.....and to explain that this is the special way that your family is participating in praying for vocations in our church. If you are still using the litany prayer (see January) be sure to add your guest! This might be a great time to see if the children remember each priest on your list who served your family by encouraging them to share how each was added.

GO A BIT DEEPER....

World Priest Day (sometimes called Priesthood Sunday) is celebrated on the 3rd Sunday of September each year. It has been sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter since 2000. For more information go to www.wpd.wwe.org

World Priest Day is a celebration and affirmation of the men who commit their lives to the Lord and the Church via the Sacrament of Holy Orders. It is an opportunity to Catholic parishioners to thank, affirm, and share their love and support for our priests.

World Priest Day Prayer

Heavenly Father,

*We come before you today to ask your blessing on our brothers,
Whom you have called to the Sacrament of Holy Orders.*

Lord Jesus,

*We ask that you support them with Your presence
And fill them with grace to serve You faithfully.*

Gracious Spirit,

*Unite us in service with those whom you have called.
Open our hearts to encourage our brothers and sons to pursue Your calling,
And open their hearts to hear Your call to this most Holy Sacrament.*

AMEN.

---Worldwide Marriage Encounter

October

Have your family create a “Vocations from Our Parish” list. List all the priests, serving in your diocese or elsewhere, who were ordained at your home parish. Find out if any women or men from your parish entered vowed religious life. Since the Church in many parts of our country is made up of many “transplants,” if you have time, expand the list to family members of parishioners whose relatives serve in other dioceses.

GO A BIT DEEPER....

Make a **Vocations Prayer Booklet** of your own! Encourage younger children to illustrate it....include prayers from this program or others you have found. Share it with others in your parish and your children’s religion classes.

Prayer for Vocations

**Lord, Jesus, Christ,
Good Shepherd of Souls, you who know your sheep and know how to reach our hearts.
Open the minds and hearts of those young people who search for and await a word of
truth for their lives:
let them understand that only in the mystery of your incarnation do they find full light;
arouse the courage of those who know where to seek the truth, but fear that what you
ask will be too demanding.
Stir in the hearts of those young people who would follow you, but who cannot over-
come doubts and fears, and who in the end follow other voices and other paths
which lead nowhere.
You who are the Word of the Father,
the Word which creates and saves,
the Word which enlightens and sustains hearts.
Conquer with your Spirit the resistance and delays of indecisive hearts;
arouse in those whom you call the courage of love’s answers:
“Here I am, send me!”
AMEN.**

Pope John Paul II

Prayer for Vocations

O, God, You have asked us to pray for vocations; that there might be young men and women willing to give their lives for the sake of souls. Hear our prayer and the prayers of your Church and send us good and holy priests and religious. We offer you this day, all we shall think, do or say for this intention, through Christ, Our Lord. AMEN.

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November

Participate in VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK!

Encourage each member of your family to research a different religious order on the internet or at the parish library. Share what you learn at the family dinner table. Then, ask each family member to make a list of people in your own parish that you feel might be called to serve the church as a priest, sister or brother. Share your list with each other, explain why each person was selected. Pray for each by name.

If your parish has a display of vocations materials available, use this resource! Often there are pictures of the habit/dress of the order, which children may find interesting. Young children may enjoy making a collage of priests and sisters in different dress/habits. (HINT: Pictures can also be found in some Catholic magazines and many also come in the mail and on old calendars from religious groups.)

In some dioceses, this week is observed in the spring, after Easter in conjunction with Good Shepherd Sunday. In some dioceses it is observed at another time---check with your Vocation office

GOING A BIT DEEPER....

What happens in YOUR parish to promote Vocations Awareness Week?
Special prayers at mass?
Adoration? Holy Hour?
Displays of Religious Order brochures and retreats?
Spiritual Bouquet for your pastor and/or your seminarians?
Special activities in your parish school or religious education program?
Sunday bulletin announcements or an article in your parish Newsletter?
What could YOUR family do to help your parish promote this week?

SERRAN PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O God, Who will 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, St. Joseph, her spouse, Blessed Junipero Serra and all the saints, an increase of laborers for Your Church, fellow laborers with Christ 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. AMEN.

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December

Take a serious look at your Christmas decorations—both inside and outside your home. Talk about how to make them more focused on FAITH and less secular. Add a special ornament to your family tree to represent your special prayers for vocations during this past year.

GOING A BIT DEEPER....

Our Blessed Mother is a very important figure in the Advent and Christmas story. As a part of your family's Advent plan, schedule a special family prayer time (perhaps even invite other families) to pray together this Litany for Vocations. Or, divide it up and pray several verses each Sunday when you light the candles on your Advent wreath.

Litany for Vocations

Mother of the Word Incarnate, help us to become more aware of the need for vocations...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Mother of God, grant that others, like yourself, may say "yes" to your son's call to the religious life...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Mother of the Church, may many workers be added to the service of your Son's Church...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Lady of Mercy, enlighten our minds so we may respond to our responsibility as parents to foster vocations in our own homes...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Queen of Heaven, help our young to follow your Son's footsteps...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Blessed Mother, open our hearts and minds to love our priests and religious, to recognize their humanness and their needs as we do our own...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Hail Mary, help our children to bind themselves closer to God, through a vocation in the Church...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Queen of angels, give our Church true disciples who will serve as priests, sisters and brothers...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Dearest Mother, keep our young open to hear God's call...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Mother of Love, make us more open to the love our priests and religious have for us...

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O, Mary, intercede for us!

Holy Family, help the families in this parish to discuss vocations to the religious life in a positive, encouraging manner...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Queen of the Rosary, remind us to pray for our religious, and those studying for the religious life, that they will remain zealous and dedicated to their call...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Our Lady of Lourdes, we ask for happiness among priests, seminarians and all those engaged in a special Christian vocation to service...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

O Mother, help us to be a sign of that which we believe; and thereby, be an inspiration to a young man or woman to become a priest or sister or brother...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Our Lady of Fatima, bring an increase in missionary vocations so that the Christian message will be heard by all nations...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Mother of Courage, be with the young man or woman, priest or sister or brother who most needs our help in a special way today...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Mary, Queen of Peace, may we provide and incentive for those already in religious life to grow in their vocation of service to the Church...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Mother of God, may we recognize our own vocation and the importance of religious vocations to ours...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Our Lady of Mercy, let us as parishioners become aware of the needs of our own priests and respond to them out of love...

O, Mary, intercede for us!

Mother of our Savior, may more young men and women go from this parish as priests, brothers, and sisters to bring the truths of our Catholic faith to all others, so that they may know and love your Son,

O, Mary, intercede for us!

---Vocations Office, Archdiocese of New York

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Add your favorite Prayers for Vocations...

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