

Prayer Outreach for Vocations

The work of St. Joseph's Young Priests Society is based on the recognition of the Mass as the central act of our religious practice. There is a growing shortage of priests and vocations to the priesthood which obviously is of concern to us all. We need priests to celebrate the Sacraments into the future and so we must look to our own children and grandchildren, our families and parish communities, as seedbeds, where vocations can be nourished. We have the responsibility to hand on the Faith – to hand on a love and understanding of the Eucharist.

So, what can we do?

We can all pray for vocations in accordance with the words in Luke 10.2 and Matthew 9.37-38 where Jesus told his disciples: *"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the Harvest, therefore, to send workers into His harvest field"*. The task of fostering vocations begins in families and belongs to everyone in every parish community.

One particular initiative that has proven to be successful in promoting prayers for vocations in the parish, family or school has been the **Prayer Outreach for Vocations**. This prayer outreach uses a special Chalice (a symbol of the Eucharist, priesthood and vocations) which is made available to family and individual households in the parish, to take into their homes for a week and to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Other prayer intentions can also be included. In some instance the week can coincide with a particular family anniversary. The Prayer Chalice is then passed on to another household in the parish for a further week, and so on, for as long as there is interest in receiving it. The Chalice is made available together with a Corporal, Purificator, a candle, and a booklet of prayers, prayer cards and other literature as resource material.



Pictured L-R:
Brendan and Valerie Kennedy who hosted the **Prayer Chalice** for Vocations in their home for a week. (Their son Stephen was ordained to the priesthood recently).
Marie Harrington, President of the Clondalkin branch of SJYPS and Fr. Séamus McEntee, Chief Chaplain, SJYPS

Families and individuals, (including those who may be housebound) can host the Prayer Chalice in their homes for a week. The prayer outreach initiative has also been carried out in primary and secondary schools, where a Prayer Chalice remained in the classroom or oratory for a week. Prayers for vocations were prayed by the teacher and students each day or students could visit and pray separately in the oratory.

In the home, families or individuals who host the Prayer Chalice undertake a commitment to pray for vocations each day, by reciting the short prayer for vocations, and can also use other prayers of their choosing, (including the Rosary and the other prayers in the booklet supplied).

**ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY
LEIXLIP**

Prayer Outreach For Vocations



Chalice Presented to Very Rev. Fr. Christopher Hyland
On the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary
of his Ordination to the Priesthood

First Parish Priest To Leixlip (1971—1988)

PRAYER OF THANKS
(On Passing On The Chalice)

Lord Jesus,

We offer a prayer of thanks to _____ and family for taking part in the Prayer for Vocations Outreach and we offer their prayers in union with those of all who are taking part in this Outreach, that through the intercession of Our Blessed Lady, St Joseph and all the Saints, we will see a rise in Vocations where they are most needed.

Lord Hear us

Lord Graciously Hear Us.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

St. Joseph's Young Priest Society Leixlip

Taken from Prayer Booklet given by Lexlip SJYPS Branch to those who hosted the Prayer Chalice.

Most recipients of the Prayer Chalice have invited their neighbours in to pray for vocations, while some older people have brought together their extended family members on particular days, including children and grandchildren, and invited them to join in praying for vocations in the presence of the Prayer Chalice.

Some of the positive outcomes of the **Prayer Chalice for Vocations** initiative include:

- Bringing together and strengthening current members of SJYPS in the parish to plan, organize and promote the prayer outreach for vocations.
- Building the relationship between priests in the parish, SJYPS and families/individuals in the parish.
- Focusing the promotion of vocations to the priesthood through prayer and awareness, in the parish/ family/school/deanery.
- Promoting the presence and work of SJYPS in the parish community with the possibility of increasing membership.
- Increasing the faith and prayer-life of members of SJYPS and of the parish community, as a sense of hope and joy is restored, trusting that the Lord will continue to call labourers to the harvest.

This type of prayer outreach for vocations has been used successfully elsewhere, in some instances using symbols other than a Chalice, such as a Crucifix or a statue of Our Lady or St. John Vianney. We encourage more branches of our Society to initiate similar initiatives in their parish in consultation with their Parish Priest. Further advice and resource material is available on request at office@sjyps.ie