



The Sheaf



ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY



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The official logo of the synodal path



A large, majestic tree, full of wisdom and light, reaches for the sky. A sign of deep vitality and hope which expresses the cross of Christ. It carries the Eucharist, which shines like the sun. The horizontal branches, opened like hands or wings, suggest, at the same time, the Holy Spirit.

The people of God are not static: they are on the move, in direct reference to the etymology of the word synod, which means “walking together”. The people are united by the same common dynamic that this Tree of Life breathes into them, from which they begin their walk.

These 15 silhouettes sum up our entire humanity in its diversity of life situations of generations and origins. This aspect is reinforced by the multiplicity of bright colours which are themselves signs of joy. There is no hierarchy between these people who are all on the same footing: young, old, men, women, teenagers, children, lay people, religious, parents, couples, singles; the bishop and the nun are not in front of them, but among them. Quite naturally, children and then adolescents open their walk, in reference to these words of Jesus in the Gospel: “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children”. (Mt 11:25)

The horizontal baseline: “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission” runs from left to right in the direction of this march, underlining and strengthening it, to end with the title “Synod 2021 - 2023”, the high point that synthesizes the whole.

The logo is available in many languages including Irish (above) and English (front page banner).



Frs. Clement Kwabena Narcher, S.V.D., Joseph Mensah, S.V.D., and Liwei Huang, S.V.D., on the occasion of their ordination to the Priesthood by Most Rev. Dermot Farrell, Archbishop of Dublin in St. Philip the Apostle Parish Church, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, on Saturday, 29th January, 2022.



Fr. Joseph Keegan, ordained a Priest for the Archdiocese of Dublin on 20th February, 2022, by His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, in the Church of the Precious Blood, Cabra, Dublin 7, receiving the presentation stole embroidered with the logo of St. Joseph's Young Priests Society from Pauline McHugh, President of the Dublin Diocesan Committee, after Fr. Keegan celebrated Mass in 23, Merrion Square, in advance of the Dublin Diocesan Committee meeting on 22nd February, 2022.

SEVEN INVOCATIONS ADDED TO THE LITANY OF SAINT JOSEPH

On 1st May, 2021, during the Year of St. Joseph, Pope Francis approved the addition of 7 further invocations to the Litany of St. Joseph.

The new invocations, in the original Latin, are:
Custos Redemptoris (Guardian of the Redeemer), *Serve Christi*

(*Servant of Christ*), *Minister salutis* (Minister of salvation), *Fulcimen in difficultatibus* (Support in difficulties), *Patrone*

exsulum (Patron of exiles), *Patrone afflictorum* (Patron of the afflicted), *Patrone pauperum* (Patron of the poor).

SAINT JOSEPH, GUARDIAN OF THE REDEEMER, PRAY FOR US!

THANKSGIVING FOR THE GIFT OF PRIESTHOOD

Each year, for the feast of Christ the King, the Dublin branches of St. Joseph's Young Priests Society organise a Mass of Thanksgiving for the Gift of Priesthood. The most recent annual Mass was celebrated at St. Andrews Church, Westland Row, Dublin, on the 21st November, 2021. This year, Fr. Séamus McEntee, who is the Chief Chaplain to St. Joseph's Young Priests Society and vocations director for the Archdiocese of Dublin, was the main celebrant. Fr. Frank Drescher, Blanchardstown parish, was the homilist. Fr. Frank was ordained last year and, to honour the occasion, was presented with a stole by St. Joseph's Young Priests Society. Those men from the Archdiocese of Dublin who are considering a vocation to priesthood were especially invited and they had an opportunity to meet and chat with Priests and seminarians afterwards.



In the Sacristy of St. Andrew's Church, Westland Row, Dublin 2, before the annual Mass in Thanksgiving for the Gift of Priesthood. L-R Seminarians Tiernan Burke (Cloyne) and Stephen Baxter (Derry), Fr. Frank Drescher, Deacon Joe Keegan, Fr. Séamus McEntee, Fr. Declan Blake, Fr. Robert Colclough, Fr. Chris Hayden, Fr. Paul Glennon

#Pray4Vocations

The Irish Bishops' Council for Vocations is asking people to pause and pray a short prayer for vocations each day at 4 p.m. during 2022. You might say the *Our Father*, *Hail Mary*, or *Glory Be* or use one of your own prayers. You can also use one of the following prayers (see below).

Prayer for those discerning their Vocation

God, I know you love me and are calling me to choose life. But sometimes, I am overwhelmed by the thoughts of my future. Help me to listen to your call, in all the ways you speak to me: through prayer and the scriptures, through the Church and the circumstances of my life, through those who love and care for me, and through my own hopes and desires. Guide me to search openly and learn about life's choices, so that I may respond generously to your call, and choose the vocation and career that will enable me to love wholeheartedly, and serve others with the special gifts you have given me. God, today, I thank you for your love and for all things, Amen.

Prayer to Discover Your Vocation

Almighty God,
You have made me to know you,
To love you, and to serve you,
And thereby to find and fulfil myself.
I know that you are in all things
And that every path can lead me to you,
But, of them all, there is one path especially
By which you want me to come to you.
Since I will do what you want of me,
I pray you; send your Holy Spirit to me;
Into my mind to show me what you want of me;
Into my heart to give me the determination to do it,
And to do it with all my love, with all my mind,
And with all my strength, right to the end. Amen.

REMEMBERING MAUREEN KEOGH

Members of St. Joseph's Young Priests Society have been saddened to learn of the death of Maureen Keogh, who was the dedicated and much loved General Secretary of the Society. She first became a member in 1949 in the Motor Trade Branch. She was Assistant Honorary Secretary of the Society from 1974 until 1986, when she was appointed General Secretary, a post she held for 12 years. Maureen was an active member of her local branch of the Society in the Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, Harold's Cross, Dublin, while also highly involved in the Teachers Branch, South Central Dublin District, the Dublin Diocesan Committee and the Central Council of the Society. Her indefatigable and unremitting efforts resulted in the establishment of several new branches. In November, 2012, Maureen was presented with the *Benemerenti Medal* by the Archbishop of Dublin on behalf of Pope Benedict XVI, after lifelong commitment to fostering and supporting vocations. In a handwritten letter to branch presidents for the New Year, Maureen wrote:



"As we begin another year let us all resolve to do our level best to promote the aims of the Society in our own parishes and further afield. Let us endeavour to invite, to encourage and hopefully involve as many as possible to pray for an increase in vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life and to strengthen the Parish Branches."

Her words are still wise and the memory of her self-effacing, quiet and prayerful dedication are still an inspiration. *Leis an Maighdean Muire agus Seosamh Naofa, ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis.*

Remember us in your Will

Should you desire to include the Society in your legacy bequests, it is advisable to consult your solicitor when making or amending your Will.



A Vocation Story

Fr. Frank Drescher's Homily for the Mass in Thanksgiving for the Gift of Priesthood

Of all the chapters of Mark's Gospel, I particularly like the sixth one, which we have heard as our Gospel reading today (Mk. 6:30-34), because it has to do with my own life and vocation history in various ways.

I always wanted to serve God and his Church, even as a little boy. When people asked me at pre-school what I wanted to become, I always answered, "A Pastor!" But when I look back today, I think I did not always want to do it for the right reasons.

I am an "all or nothing" person. It was clear to me in my teenage years that I wanted to dedicate my life entirely to God. That I wanted to be a better Christian than anyone else in my home parish in Germany. And I thought that in the priesthood, perhaps also in religious life, there was an opportunity to do so.

In 1997 I entered seminary in Germany and started studying theology. The disenchantment came fast and quite hard. I quickly learned that clerics are not in all cases the better people. Not even the better Christians, I've found. They were just ordinary people, with all kinds of faults and quirks... What a disappointment!

I left the seminary three years later and distanced myself from the institutionalised Church. I was not sure of my vocation anymore, my will and power to stay faithful to my call, and I also did not want to be "one of them". Somehow, I felt that the three years in seminary have not done me much good and even that I probably was a better person before I entered seminary...

Later, as a lay student, I pursued my theological studies and continued to work in a parish where a good friend of mine from seminary was the parish priest. Then, in 2004 I had a key experience in this parish, which influenced me very much for my faith journey.

On the night of Holy Thursday, the Blessed Sacrament was, as every year, removed from the tabernacle and placed in a small side chapel of that church. My friend came to me that day and asked me if I could keep watch during the night from 3 to 4 o'clock in the morning. There was a register for parishioners to keep watch but

this one hour remained unfilled and the parish priest did not want the church to be left alone during the night.

I was a bit cranky, because I was expected to interrupt my sleep for this. But I wanted to do my friend a favour, so I agreed. I set my alarm-clock and stomped grumpily and half asleep to the church with my breviary under my arm to sit there alone for a long hour in the middle of the night. But I saw something that struck and deeply touched me. Small pebbles were let into the concrete in front of the altar there. And right there, on the stony ground knelt five devout members of the parish keeping watch with the Lord! They had not entered their names on the list but came very naturally to stay with the Lord and look after him in adoration.

I learned that night that you do not have to be a priest or a monk to be a good and faithful Christian. And I began to admire the ability in many people to live normal, "ordinary" lives as fathers or mothers, working hard in their respective professions to feed their families. I admired their strength and courage to face all the challenges that comes with that, and yet being devout Christians who are dedicating their lives to Christ in their own way, which means accepting and living their own, personal vocations as living members of the one body of Christ, which is the Church. How easy my life as a celibate man suddenly looked in comparison...

Well, I still had doubts afterwards whether I wanted to be "one of them," a cleric. The scandals came in Germany, Ireland and many other countries in the world. And what I heard did not encourage me to pursue a priestly vocation.

The day came where I had to make a decision about my priestly vocation in 2009. I couldn't say yes to it at that time, so I graduated from university and started working in the private sector. My career led me to Ireland after a while, where I found a new home in Dublin.

Then, in 2014, the old senior parish priest retired, and my priest friend had long since moved to another parish. As everywhere, vocations were scarce in the diocese, and the congregation did not know whether a

new parish priest would ever be appointed there. In this Holy Week, the people of the congregation looked at me in a certain way. Nobody said anything, but I could hear their silent question. "Frank, why didn't you become a priest, our priest?"

I felt a kind of responsibility for these people. I felt that I had somehow left them alone because I had too little confidence. Confidence in God, in his Church, in myself. And I realised that the priestly ministry is not about being "one of them". It's not about being the centre of attention or feeling important. It is not about being a better Christian. It's about being there for those who belong to Christ. To share their joy as well as their grief in the ups and downs of earthly life. To encourage them and strengthen their faith when the wolves approach to tear them apart. And there are many wolves in our days...

I realised that I had a purpose in my life. Namely to be a shepherd after the heart of Christ. A shepherd who is not afraid to be with the flock waiting for the one who is the true shepherd. The Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Pope Francis once said that a good shepherd knows "the smell of his sheep". And when I look back on my life, I now realise that I got to know this smell for many years in my working life.

I am a priest now, and a newly ordained curate I am still learning from many good and holy priests in our diocese and in our country. And I would be honoured and delighted if people would see me as "one of them" one day, a good and holy priest. I am also still learning from the many faithful in our parishes who dedicate their entire lives to Christ as mothers and fathers, as devout and faithful Christians.

At the end of my homily, I would like to encourage you to be what you already are, good and faithful Christians. Preach the Gospel with your life, with your love and your devotion to Christ. Remember the word that are attributed to St. Francis: "Preach the Gospel at all times. And if necessary, use words." Your personal testimony is important to the world and it may help one day a naïve, young man who is struggling with his priestly vocation.

For the Church and the Pope

Thanks to you!

The following letters, addressed to all members of the Society, were received from a recently ordained Priest and a First Year Theology Student.



Archbishop Dermot Farrell presenting the cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* to Dominic Dowling

Congratulations to Dominic Dowling, KCHS, who has received the cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* (Latin: *For the Church and the Pope*) from Pope Francis for his lifelong service to the Church and on completion of 25 years as voluntary editor of *The Sheaf* for St. Joseph's Young Priests Society. The presentation was made by His Grace, the Most Reverend Dr. Dermot Farrell, Archbishop of Dublin, in Archbishop's House, Drumcondra, shortly before Christmas.

Ad multos annos Dominic! We pray for your continued good health and God's blessings upon you and your family.

Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice is a decoration of the Holy See, instituted by Pope Leo XIII on 17th July, 1888, to mark the Golden Jubilee of his Priestly Ordination, initially to reward those who had assisted in celebrating that Jubilee but, since 1898, it is conferred by the Pope on those who have merited the distinction by means of their services done for the Church and Pope. The central motif of the cross itself is a representation of the Apostles of Rome, Saints Peter and Paul.

Dear John,

On Sunday the 24th of October, Mission Sunday, I was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan for the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore. I write to express my sincere thanks to St. Joseph's Young Priests Society for the many prayers and support it has offered me over the past six years.

I studied at both St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, and the Irish College, Rome. I look back on the last six years as a great blessing, privilege and adventure. I don't think of my ordination last Sunday as my day, but that especially of my family, parish and the wider Church community. Many people have helped me by sharing their Catholic Faith with me, and many more have been faithful in praying for vocations. I see my calling to the priesthood as a part of God's answer to those their prayers.

Thank you once again to all at St. Joseph's Young Priests Society for all your prayers and support.

May the Lord help you all with this important work, and may He reward you and your families with His blessings,

Yours, in Christ, Fr. John McEneaney, Tramore.

Greetings of joy and peace in our Jesus Christ.

First and foremost I wish you a very happy and prosperous year. Dear benefactor I hope and pray that you are safe and sound in hands of our lord Jesus Christ. I am Nilu saha (Deepak), very grateful to God and to you for helping me spiritually and financially to reach the holy altar. I am very glad to receive your financial support. I assure my prayers for your well-being and ask God to be with always and guide. Once again I wish you a very joyful and prosperous year in Our Lord Jesus Christ. May your heart's desires come true through Jesus Christ. Thanking you for your benevolent and generous heart.

Your spiritual son in Jesus Christ,

Bro. Nilu Saha (Deepak), First Year Theology, St. Albert's College Ranchi, India

Recently Deceased & Acknowledgements

VOCATIONAL BRANCHES

Garda Síochana Mick Diggin.
Motor & Engineering Maureen Keogh, Bridget (Bridie) Kelly, Michael J Kelly

LOCAL BRANCHES

Abbeyfeale Eily Harnett
Armagh John Brannigan, Peter Donnelly
Ardmore Mons. Ignatius McQuillan
Ballinahinch/Killoscully John Power, John Ryan, Kathleen O'Connor
Ballymena - All Saints Fr Hugh Boyle, SDB, Peggy McQuillan
Beauparc Marie Sheridan
Blackpool Olive Henchy
Bohermeen James Dowdall, Billy Dowdall, Kathryn Boyle, Anne Howard, Patricia Harte, Michael Fitzsimons, Joanne Power, Maureen Brennan, May McNamee, Loretto Barker, Noel Dolan, Margaret Quinn, Dina Smith-Fitzsimons
Carrickmacross Hugh P. Carroll
Castlewellan Branch Philomena Burns
Derrygonnelly/Botha Packie McTeggart, Peter Jones, Marie Magee, Oliver McKeever, Kieran

Curley, Rita Howe, Paddy Duffy, Geraldine Cameron, Mary McTeggart, Joan Love, Molly Gallagher, Kevin Gilbride, Vera Tracey, John Melanophy
Ennis Mary Anne Casey
Enniskillen Attracta McGrath, Annie McBrien
Faughanvale (St Mary's) John Comey, Fr. Patsy Mullan
Graiguenamanagh Teresa O'Leary
Harold's Cross Maureen Keogh
Killesher Rose Alice McManus, Mary Monaghan, Eileen Gilheaney, Mary Usher, Cathy Rowan
Killorglin Mrs. Hannah Daly
Kinnegad James McCaffrey
Maghera Noel Bradley, Francis McLaughlin, James Gribbin, Francis Lagan, Anna Murphy, Camillus Logue, Anne Quinn, Michael Convery, Sarah McGuckin, Ann Quinn, Colm Kelly, Bridget Leyden, Sister Betty Diamond
Merrion Square Fr. Neal Carlin (Columba Community), Maureen Keogh (Former General Secretary)
Mountmellick Sr. Rosarii Fennelly, Mr. William (Bill) Lawlor

Passage West John Forde
Our Lady Crowned (Mayfield) John Mullane
Portadown Betty Corrigan, Marie McAvoy, Brenda McNeice, Tommy Berry, Fr. Michael Bingham SJ, Vera Magarity
Raheen Mary Rushe, Bridie Creaton
St. Columba's Long Tower Fr. Aiden Mullan
Rathmines Mary Clear
St. John the Baptist - Clontarf Matilda (Tillie) Woulfe, Brigid (Breege) McGuinn
St. Patrick's - Limerick Anna Malone
Trillick Moira McCaughey, Una McCann, Jean McMackin, Dick McCusker, Mary Ann Harte, Michael Gray, John McGirr, Anna Maguire, Kathleen McCarney, Fr. Brendan Shannon, Brian McCann, Joe McCann
Upper & Middle Killeavy Monica McAuley
Whitehall Peg O'Boyle

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Bequests
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Anonymous Donations £30