

Traveling Chalice

The purpose of the *Chalice Program* is to encourage families to pray and promote vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life. The consecrated Chalice is a tangible reminder of this special intention for the Church. The Second Vatican Council highlights the responsibility of the laity to pray for and support vocations. This urgent call has been strongly affirmed in the writings and addresses of both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI.

Praying for vocations is the most powerful way to support vocations. A vocation is a call from the Holy Spirit, a gift from God that is nurtured in prayer. When we pray for vocations, we lift up to our Father those men and women whom He is calling to follow Him in a very special way. We hope that those who bring the cup home will continue to pray daily for vocations.

How the Program Works

Each week at Mass, an assigned family is invited to take the gifts up at the Offertory Procession. At the end of Mass, the family is called by the priest to come forward to receive the chalice bag and a blessing. (This bag contains a consecrated chalice in a wooden chest, a poster of the seminarians to hang up, the prayer card, and stationery to send notes of encouragement to the Seminarians, Priests and Religious). The family takes the chalice home and puts it in a place of honor.

Each day for a week, during prayer time (morning, bedtime or at meals), the family prays for an increase and perseverance of vocations. They can also send a note of support to a Seminarian, Priest or Sister. The following Sunday the family returns the chalice bag for another family to take home.

Note: This *Chalice Program* is easily adaptable for classroom use. Instead of using the consecrated Chalice, a very special cup, picture, statue, icon, or candle could be designated for the purpose of praying for vocations.

The Diocesan *Prayer for Vocations* could be prayed each day along with a decade of the rosary.

Traveling Cross/Crucifix

A **Vocation Crucifix Program** can be developed to promote fervent and devotional prayer for an increase in vocations to the diocesan priesthood and the consecrated religious life.

This program offers a method that encourages praying for religious and priestly vocations in the Catholic families/households of the parish.

The parish provides a free-standing crucifix for this program. A parishioner acts as coordinator of the program. This individual invites families/ households from the parish to host the Vocation Crucifix in their home for a week. By accepting the crucifix, the family/household agrees to pray for religious and priestly vocations during that week (or month). *Our Bishop has asked us to pray the very generous prayer that the Lord chose from our own families those He will call to serve Him as priests and consecrated religious men and women.*

Each week (or month), the Vocation Crucifix is passed to another parish family/household at one of the weekend Masses in the parish. The importance of praying for vocations is thus kept alive and prominent before the parish community. A packet of suggested prayers should be included with the Crucifix.

An Introduction and explanation of the Vocation Crucifix Program

“The harvest is rich, but there are few laborers to gather it in. Beg the Lord of the Harvest to send laborers into the harvest.” –Matthew 9:37-38

“Prayer is not a means of receiving the gift of the divine call, but the essential means, commanded by the Lord” (The Conclusive Document: Developments of Pastoral Care of Vocations in the Local Churches, 1981). Vocations are the result of the Christian community actively engaged in prayer that “the owner of the harvest...will send out workers to gather his harvest.” Placing faith and hope in this command of the Lord, the intention of the Vocation Crucifix Program is to promote in local parishes fervent and devotional prayer. In the family, “the domestic church”, for the family—a community of faith, life and love—is the normal place for the human, Christian and vocational growth of children” (The Conclusive Document).

It is vital to future vocations that the seed be planted and nourished in families and local parishes. The Vocation Crucifix Program described here proposes a method that will keep the idea of religious and priestly vocations in the minds and prayers of Catholic families and parishes.

Each week, the crucifix is given to a particular family/household in the parish. The family/household accepting the crucifix for a given week agrees to pray during that week for religious and priestly vocations. Prayer for vocations can be offered at any time during the day, perhaps before the family’s main meal, or whatever time is most convenient.

Each week the Vocation Crucifix is passed to another family/household. This should take place at one of the parish's weekend Masses. In this way, praying for vocations is kept before all parishioners.

The Vocation Crucifix Program offers the hope that praying for vocations will be kept in the minds and hearts of parishioners. Further, it will encourage individual families/households to discuss and, hopefully, promote religious and priestly vocations.

A Pastor's Guide

As Pastor, you will hold a key role in encouraging the promotion of the Vocation Crucifix Program in your parish. While the program should not demand much of your time, it will be important that you personally promote the Vocation Crucifix Program in its initial stages and encourage your staff to do so as well.

Of primary importance is the person you will select to coordinate your parish's Vocation Crucifix Program. This person can be your Parish Vocation Promoter or some other person who has good organizational skills, is willing to ask others to be involved, and has the desire to help create better vocation awareness.

Your Parish Coordinator need not be priest. As a matter of fact, it is suggested that you appoint a deacon, lay person or religious who resides in your parish. Perhaps you know of someone who has been looking for a way that he or she can make a contribution of time and talent to the parish without being involved in existing structures.

Your contribution to this effort will lead the way for your parishioners to become more involved in nurturing and encouraging vocations to the priesthood and religious life. In turn, it is hoped that all will benefit by the graces that will come from the prayerful support that will be realized through the Vocation Crucifix Program.

NOTE: THE PARISH PROVIDES A CRUCIFIX FOR THIS PROGRAM.