

Promoting Vocations to the Priesthood and the Religious Life

Resource Manual for Parish, Home and School

**FOREWORD
BY BISHOP DE ANGELIS OF PETERBOROUGH**

It is my great pleasure to introduce this vocation resource booklet to you and to encourage you to use the different suggestions and ideas as much as possible. God is still calling people today, especially our youth and young adults, to follow Christ as priests and deacons, as religious sisters and brothers. What has become more challenging for people today is to hear and pursue the call. Your prayers, your support and your initiative are, therefore, of greatest importance and will help create a positive culture for religious vocations in our Diocese, especially in our parish communities and families. Such a culture of vocations is needed to provide a safe, engaging and fertile environment where those who feel called can find the assurance, certainty and peace they need to embrace their vocation wholeheartedly.

IT'S ALL ABOUT KNOWING WHERE WE BELONG

Vocation is the great and beautiful mystery of God's call to each soul he has created. This call, so intimate and personal, is first and foremost a call to holiness of life and to service of God and neighbor. It is a call to a certain way of life, to a certain code of behavior, to a certain set of values to be embraced and lived in daily life by each believing soul whether single or married, whether religious or ordained. The call, therefore, is as varied and far-reaching as it is important, and extends to every person regardless of class, country or culture, regardless of race or religion.

More specifically, God calls each of us to where we would be most happy and fulfilled in life; where we can find the place which is meant uniquely for each of us alone and which is best suited for our individual circumstances and abilities. If this is the purpose and nature of God's call, there is nothing better we can do than to listen to him speak and to trust in his providential guidance. In the end, God's call is the guarantee of our happiness and fulfillment in this life and beyond.

If vocation is indeed the expression of God's willingness to show us where we belong in life, our response should be one of attentive silence, loving obedience and grateful acceptance: "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). The first challenge, therefore, for each of us is to discern our vocation and to be ready to follow God's call in faith and trust no matter where it might lead us, knowing it will be the most direct path to our holiness and happiness.

As beautiful and real as this call from God is, it is not always easy to hear. God's call needs to be discerned, despite the noisy world around us, in the silence of our hearts. There, deep within us, we can hear his voice, often just like a whisper, calling us. God speaks to us, then, in different ways: through the Church, her faith and liturgies, her sacraments and teachings; through the events and experiences of our lives; through the people he places along our path. This discernment is most often a process which can and should be helped along through the guidance of clergy and religious, as well as through the advice and support of family and friends. All members of the Church have a part to play in helping people discern their vocation.

Vocation, therefore, is at the heart of the Church's life and mission. The Church's vocation ministry is aimed at assisting each of us to become aware that God has created us for a specific purpose. Such ministry attempts to nurture an environment in which we are able to hear and respond to God's call once we are confronted with the question: "What does God want me to do with my life?" In a climate of vocation which is engaging and encouraging, some amongst us are able to hear and respond to God's call to marriage or to the single life; others to some form of lay ministry in the Church; yet others to the priesthood or to the religious life.

When priests, sisters or brothers are asked about the most important influences on their vocation choice, many will mention "my family", "my parish", "this priest" or "this sister". The family and the parish community are the most fundamental and fruitful environments for encouraging people to consider serving the Church in the ordained ministry or in the religious life.

The present Parish Vocation Resource booklet has been prepared to assist parishes in the Diocese of Peterborough in creating a "culture of vocations" and in promoting religious and priestly vocations. It may be used by the parish clergy, by the parish pastoral council, by a parish vocation committee, by a small group of interested individuals, in school or home. It provides suggestions, ideas and opportunities for vocation awareness and support within the parish community, in order to help people of all ages and walks of life to say from the bottom of their hearts:

"Speak Lord, for your servant is listening ..." (1 Samuel 3: 10)

1.

PARISH CONTACT PERSON FOR VOCATIONS

In order to help establish a culture of vocations in the whole Diocese of Peterborough, a parish contact for each parish community would be most helpful. No specific talents or abilities are required other than a wholehearted love for the Church and for priestly and religious vocations. This person may gather together others in the parish to help with specific tasks or even form a Parish Vocation Committee (see page 2). In any case, here is what the contact person would be asked to do:

- be in contact regularly with the Vocation Office in Peterborough and its director to keep the issue of religious and priestly vocations alive in the local parish;
- consult the parish priest, other clergy and religious regarding possible initiatives by this Office for the local parish;
- assist the parish community in fulfilling its mission of encouraging and developing vocation awareness and provide opportunities for parishioners to be actively involved in this work;
- help inform the parish on the need for Church vocations and help develop appreciation for the ministerial priesthood and religious life.
- coordinate prayer initiatives and other programs in the parish aimed at promoting vocation awareness and discernment;
- support, directly or indirectly, those individuals who are interested in the ordained ministry or the religious life;
- act as a liaison with the parish schools in vocation awareness initiatives;
- make available any material from the Vocation Office to be handed out to parishioners;
- ask Vocation Office in Peterborough for help whenever needed.

***“I have called you by name. . . You are precious in my eyes. . .
You are honoured and I love you.”***

(Isaiah 43)

2.

STEPS IN FORMING A PARISH VOCATION COMMITTEE

If there are more people in the parish interested in promoting vocations, these dedicated parishioners may want to form, with prior approval and assistance of the pastor, a vocation committee. The advantage of a committee is to be able to draw on the resources and talents of more individuals in the parish to work with the Diocesan Vocation Office to promote vocations. Here is how such a committee could be established and function:

1. Gather together, under the direction or with the permission of the pastor, all those in the parish who are interested in promoting vocations.
2. The Diocesan Vocation Director, along with some representatives of the Diocesan Vocation Office, is available to meet with members of the parish to discuss this resource and to give an initial orientation concerning parish vocation committees. At this initial gathering various representatives of the parish could be invited at the discretion of the Pastor such as members of the Pastoral Council, Catholic Women’s League, Knights of Columbus, school representatives, those involved in youth ministry, any committed or interested parishioner. At this session the following aspects would be addressed:
 - purpose of a parish vocation committee
 - review of the vocation resource handbook
 - suggestions for activities, prayer, programs, etc.
3. The committee, once formed, should meet on a regular basis. The members should be committed to promoting vocations and able to work well with various parish organizations and with the parish priest.
4. The committee would review the suggested activities section of the resource handbook. A list is drawn up of some ideas and plans to be achieved within an initial period of time. (A sample worksheet for this planning meeting is provided on page 8.)
5. It is important that the pastor, the parish council and the various groups in the parish be kept updated on and be, to a certain extent, involved in the work of this committee.
6. The list of ideas and plans should be reviewed and evaluated by the committee following the designated period of time. It should be discussed what has been achieved so far and what still needs to be worked on. A new list of plans is drawn up for the next period of time.
7. The Diocesan Vocation Director and representatives of the Vocation Office are available at all times to offer support and suggestions to the committee.

You did not choose me; no I chose you. (John 15:16)

3.

SUGGESTIONS, IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES

Vocation Petitions at the Sunday Liturgy: Mass is, of course, the greatest prayer we have been given and the most central act of Christian worship. Prayers for vocations are, therefore, most fitting and most powerful during this celebration of the Eucharist and could be inserted at the time of the general intercessions or at other opportune moments. (For sample petitions see Appendix 3)

Mass Intention for Vocations: Parish priests could offer Holy Mass on a regular basis, announced in the parish bulletin, for the intention of vocations; for an increase in priestly or religious vocations; for those already in the ordained ministry or religious life; for seminarians, candidates and novices; or for those thinking about their personal calling.

Thirty-One Club: Members of the parish are asked to select one day each month for a period of one year and mark this day on a calendar sheet posted somewhere in Church. On the day chosen, they will attend Mass and offer up as their intention an increase in vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life. Information and calendar sign-up sheets are available through the Diocesan Vocation Office.

Vocation Prayer Cards: Prayer cards can be obtained at the Diocesan Vocation Office, or they can be printed or copied in the parish using the prayers in this handbook (see appendix 1). These cards can be left at a convenient place in Church or be distributed to parishioners after Mass, to shut-in parishioners and parishioners in nursing homes, to confirmation candidates and high school graduates, etc.

“Promise of Prayer” Cards: Special mention should be made of the “Promise of Prayer” cards which are distributed through the Diocesan Vocation Office. The cards go beyond the scope of individual prayer cards. Individuals are invited to make a concrete promise of certain prayers which they would say on a weekly basis for the intention of vocations. Individuals would send half of the card back to the Diocesan Vocation Office indicating the concrete promise they have made.

Parish Prayer for Vocations: Members of the parish can be encouraged to pray for vocations at other times the faithful of the parish gather for prayer such as during Eucharistic adoration, rosary prayer, bible study sessions, prayer group gatherings, altar-server and youth group meetings. Prayers in this handbook may be used (see appendix 1) and additional material may be obtained at the Diocesan Vocation Office.

Rosary Prayer: During rosary prayer, in public or in private, certain mysteries could be dedicated for

the intentions of vocations such as those described above under Mass Intentions.

Prayer Groups: Parts of prayer group gatherings could be dedicated to prayer for vocations and certain specific intentions.

4.

Cenacle Groups: Also in Cenacle gatherings the intention for vocations could be included in various ways.

Homilies and Pulpit Presentations: Homilies can focus on the topic of vocations, especially on Good Shepherd Sunday, which is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. During or after Mass brief pulpit presentations could be made or parishioners invited to special presentations at any other convenient time.

Parish Visits: Guest speakers such as a seminarian or sister could be invited to visit the parish and give a presentation and witness talk either during the Sunday liturgy or at group meetings.

Individual Activities and Initiatives: Apart from participating in the parish activities and initiatives mentioned above, members of the parish could be encouraged to do the following on an individual basis:

- collect favorite vocation prayers;
- write letters of support or appreciation, anniversary cards or 'thank you' notes to bishops, priests, deacons, religious, seminarians or novices;
- make prayer for vocations part of family prayers and topic conversations at dinner table;
- praise clergy or religious for good homilies, services or special efforts;
- make positive statements about priests and religious in public when negative comments are being made;
- be aware of heavy workload of priests, deacons and religious;
- adopt a priest, deacon, religious, seminarian or novice;
- spiritually study the faith;
- spread the good news.

Other ideas of your own:

***When I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send?"
"Here I am," I said, "Send me."
(Isaiah 6:8)***

5.

AWARENESS PROGRAMS

World Day of Prayer for Vocations: This is a worldwide Catholic Day of Prayer for Vocations held each year on the 4th Sunday of Easter. Resources for the celebration of this day are available through the Diocesan Vocation Office.

Parish Bulletin Suggestions: The parish bulletin can be used to promote vocations, raise awareness of the need for vocations and invite parishioners to certain presentations on the topic. The announcements in the bulletin can include Vocation Views, Vocation Prayers, Info on upcoming Ordinations, Occasional listing of Vocation Websites or Prayer Requests.

Bulletin Front Cover: The front cover of the bulletin can have a permanent feature such as: "*Priesthood or Religious Life?* for further information or assistance contact Fr. Norbert at the Diocesan Vocation Office in Peterborough".

Vocation Posters: Posters on vocations should be visibly posted in the Church, in the parish office and in school(s).

"Called By Name": This is a program to encourage parishioners to identify potential candidates for the priesthood or for the religious life. The program runs over a period of a few weeks during which parishioners are asked through homilies and talks to identify, confidentially and anonymously, anyone who they believe would be a suitable candidate as a priest, deacon or religious. For information and materials, contact the Vocation Office.

Travelling Vocation Chalice: A chalice, symbol of priestly vocation in particular and religious vocations in general, is given to each parish for a week. The parish is to focus during this 'vocation week' on prayer and local initiatives to promote vocations. Some suggestions could include:

- Mass for vocations
- prayers such as mentioned in this manual (Appendix 1)
- evening of open questions and answers with video presentation
- holy hour
- a mini evening retreat
- rosary hour
- school visits and visits to youth groups
- homilies and pulpit presentations focusing on vocations
- movies related to the topic of vocations
- visit of guest speaker, seminarian or religious

- initiatives with the local school(s) (see Appendix 4)
- literature on the topic of vocations
- sign-up sheets for “come and see” weekend.

6.

Book Rack: A book rack in a convenient location within the church could display and make available literature, articles, books, magazines, videos on vocations and related issues.

Photo Gallery: A photo gallery could be arranged in a suitable location in the church or hall to display photos of any priests or religious who have come from the parish or who have served in the parish.

Adopt a Seminarian or Novice: Parishioners could be invited to spiritually adopt or pray for a specific seminarian or novice during their formation.

Adopt a Priest, Deacon or Religious: Parishioners could be invited to spiritually adopt a priest, deacon or religious from the Diocese. Names of all priests, deacons and religious could be collected and parishioners asked to pick a name for a period of one year.

Youth Involvement: It is critical that youth and young people are involved in the life of the Church. The more they are involved in the Church, the more they will feel comfortable with their faith and might entertain the idea of a personal call to the ordained ministry or to the religious life. Children, youth and young adults should therefore be encouraged to get involved, according to age and maturity, as altar-servers, lectors, eucharistic ministers, visiting nursing homes or shut-ins and in other forms of ministry in the parish.

Recognition: Since it is important to allow young people to become familiar with the topic of vocations, it is important to take special care of groups or opportunities which could expose children and young people to the idea of priestly and religious vocations such as altar-servers, youth involved in other liturgical ministries, youth groups, choirs or those just helping out around the Church. Some form of recognition could be an encouragement to the young people to get even more involved. Such recognition could include plans for pilgrimages, trips to a seminary or religious house, house of study or university.

Ordinations: Invitation of young people to ordinations to the priesthood or diaconate as well as to celebrations of religious profession in the Diocese. The annual Chrism Mass (during Monday of Holy Week) is also a good opportunity to expose young people to the idea of the priesthood.

Other ideas of your own:

7.

RESOURCES

Contacts:

Diocesan Vocation Office: Fr. Norbert Glasmacher
350 Hunter St. W., Box 175,
Peterborough, ON. K9J 6Y8
Phone: 705-745-4681- Fax: 705-745-9258
e-mail: veyo@peterboroughdiocese.org
vocations@peterboroughdiocese.org
Website: www.veyopeterboro.org

The Diocesan Vocation Office, established by Bishop De Angelis and composed of lay volunteers of all ages and walks of life from any and all parishes of the Diocese, is committed to:

- promoting and fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life,
- supporting and affirming priests and religious, and to helping develop an appreciation of the importance of their ministry in our parish communities,
- strengthening the Church's vocation ministry through a program based on prayer, fellowship and education.

Websites:

"With the advent of computer telecommunications and what are known as computer participation systems, the Church is offered further means for fulfilling her mission. Methods of facilitating communication and dialogue among her own members can strengthen the bonds of unity between them. Immediate access to information makes it possible for her to deepen her dialogue with the contemporary world." (Pope John Paul II, World Communication Day, May 27, 1989)

Different websites related to vocations and vocation ministry:

www.veyopeterboro.org

www.vocations.ca

www.vocations.com

www.staugustines.on.ca (St. Augustine's Seminary, Toronto)

www.rcec.london.on.ca/Seminarv (St. Peter's Seminary, London)

www.nccv-vocations.org (National Coalition of Church Vocations -Vocation Resources)

www.nccbuscc.org/vocations (United States Catholic Conference - Secretariat for Vocations)

www.visionguide.org (Vision Magazine)

APPENDIX 1: VOCATION PRAYERS

These sample vocation prayers may be used in the parish bulletin, on prayer cards (given out to students, shut-ins, parishioners at large), used at parish meetings or at vocation committee meetings.

1. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord, you gave me new life in baptism. Help me to share with others the joy of living with you and for you. I wish to do so now by following Jesus and by showing love as he did. Help me to continue on this journey throughout my life. Amen.

2. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord, time passes quickly and much work needs to be done for the salvation of souls. Let my prayers be your hands, reaching out to touch younger men and women. Lord, the harvest is ripe, but the labourers are few. I beg you, touch the hearts of the young. Awaken in them a desire to serve as priests, deacons, sisters, brothers and lay ministers in your Church. Amen.

3. 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, permanent deacons, sisters and brothers. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

4. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord God, you call us to new life through our baptism, which challenges us to be ministers in your Church today. Give all your baptized people the faith and courage to respond to this challenge. Call forth men and women to live out a vocation of Christian service in marriage and the single life. Be present to all those who serve you and the Church as ministers of charity, word, and sacrament: lay ministers, deacons, religious and priests. Inspire men and women to respond to your call to serve as ministers in your Church. Call forth, in a special way, candidates for the priesthood who will celebrate the Eucharist for us and be pastors for your people. Deepen the commitment of all to collaborate with your grace. Help me, Lord, and all people, to hear your call and respond with generosity and good will. Amen.

5. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

God, send forth 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 to the good news of the gospel he preached. Amen.

10.

6. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

God, source of creation and love, you invite each of us to serve you through the gift of our lives. May your grace encourage men and women to serve the Church as priests, sisters, brothers and lay ministers. May we be instruments to encourage those you have called to give of themselves, and challenge us to do the same. Amen.

7. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

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

8. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

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

9. 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, deacons, religious and lay ministers. Open the minds and hearts of men and women to accept your challenge to build up your kingdom. Amen.

10. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord, guide all who are seeking you. May your Spirit direct all who are called to a religious vocation and strengthen those who have committed themselves to the priesthood or the religious life. Inspire men and women to serve your Church and keep us all in your grace. Amen.

11. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

God, you want all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Send workers into your harvest that the gospel may be preached to every creature, and your people, gathered together by the word of life and strengthened by the power of the sacraments, may advance in the way of salvation and love. Grant this through Christ the Lord. Amen.

12. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O Virgin Mary, we commend to you those who seek to follow your Son as priests, brothers and sisters. You know the difficulties, struggles and obstacles they face. Assist them to utter their "yes" to the divine call as you did at the invitation of the angel. Draw them near to your heart so they may understand with you the joy and beauty that awaits when the Lord calls them. Make them witnesses of the Lord's love. Enable them to inspire the Church with their consecration. May your all powerful intercession touch the hearts of many that they may respond to the Lord's call. Repeat to them in the depths of their hearts what you said to the waiters at Cana: "Do whatever Jesus asks." Amen. (Pope John Paul II)

13. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Holy Spirit... It is you who open the heart and the mind to the Divine call; it is you who make effective every impetus toward good, toward truth, toward charity... Open the hearts and minds of people, so that a new flowering of vocations may show forth the fidelity of your love, and all may know Christ, the true light come into the world, to offer to every human being, the sure hope of eternal life. Amen. (Pope John Paul II)

11.

14. 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)

15. 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)

16. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you", I believe with all my heart that you have planned that I should live my life with you and in you. Help me live by that faith so that I may never seek any vocation but my true one, nor ever doubt that by your help I shall find it. For my part, I promise that, on the day when I learn your holy Will, I will choose it and be faithful to it forever.

O Blessed Mother of God, whose vocation was the greatest of all, pray with me in your own words: "I am the Lord's servant; as you have spoken, so be it". Help me to be faithful to his promises so that, as he did great things through you, he may do great things through me. Amen.

17. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

In communion with all young people in the world, we raise our prayer to the Lord of the harvest that the Gospel labourers be increased in the certainty that He will want to hear that which the Lord Jesus has expressly commanded us to do:

God our Father, we entrust to You the young men and women of the world, with their problems, aspirations and hopes. Look upon them with love and make them workers for peace and builders of a loving civilization.

Call them to follow Jesus, your Son. Make them understand that to give one's whole life for you and humanity is worthwhile. Grant generosity and readiness in reply.

Listen, Lord, to our praise and our prayer also for the young people who, after the example of Mary, Mother of the Church, have believed in your word, and are preparing for Holy Orders, profession of the evangelical counsels and missionary work. Help them to understand that the call which you have made to them is ever real and urgent. Amen! (Pope John Paul II)

12.

APPENDIX 2: POINTS FOR HOMILIES

1. Talk about the beauty and power of God's call in general.
2. Talk about God's call to a specific way of life such as marriage, the priesthood, the diaconate or the religious life.
3. Talk about the necessity of priests and religious in and for the life of the Church.
4. Speak about the awesome privilege and responsibility of the priest to be 'another Christ'.
5. Speak/explain what it is like to be a priest. Talk about the joys as well as the challenges of being a priest today.
6. If possible share your own vocation story.
7. Give the message that priests can be happy (!) and fulfilled (!) in what they do.
8. Speak of the different types of priests such as diocesan or religious priests.
9. Speak of the great variety of work the priest does every day.
10. Speak of the grace which sustains the priest and makes his work fruitful, effective, enjoyable and beautiful despite the setbacks and difficulties.
11. Talk about the many wonderful people within the community who wish to support the priests, especially when they are in need.
12. Talk about the great and urgent need for prayer on behalf of priests and vocations.
13. Carefully address the negative publicity surrounding the priesthood over the last many years and make clear that people understand that the vast majority of priests are trying hard to do good work for the people entrusted to their care.
14. Mention that there are other issues (celibacy, male priests) which might be difficult for people to understand these days, but which can indeed be appreciated as positive realities.
15. Make sure you address not just younger (high school and college age) candidates.
16. Mention that good Christian families are the ideal environment for vocations, and that families should encourage vocations in their home life.
17. But mention also that vocations are not restricted to such environments, for God can call anyone anywhere at any time.
18. Ask people directly whether they have ever felt in their heart that Jesus is calling them.
19. Be available after Mass to address any questions and to talk about vocations.

20. Draw attention to diocesan vocation office where people can call in for information and questions.

13.

APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE PETITIONS

(One of these sample petitions could be included in the General Intercessions at each Sunday Eucharist.)

1. That we may remain faithful to the challenge of our baptism and remain open to God's call to service in the Church.
2. That all our families may strive to make their homes places where young people can hear God call them by name.
3. That those who feel a call to the priesthood or the religious life may have the courage to say 'yes' to what God asks of them.
4. That young men and women may listen to the Holy Spirit in their hearts and respond to the cry from deep within.
5. That our parish family may nurture priestly and religious vocations through fervent prayer, active encouragement and faithful witness.
6. That those who are called to be priests, deacons and religious brothers or sisters may find support and encouragement in our homes, schools and parishes.
7. That those who are searching in life may listen to God's call and find in it the way to happiness, peace and security.
8. That young people may persevere in hope, and trust in God's faithfulness to them as they search for deeper meaning in their life.
9. That those who seek to know the truth may be led to a life of faith, and trust in God's plan for each of them.
10. That those who are presently in seminaries and religious formation may know the support and love of our parish family as they discern God's call.
11. That those seminarians who are preparing for ordination may be ready to dedicate their lives in humble service to God's Church.
12. That those who are in religious formation may be ready to consecrate themselves to a life of poverty, chastity and obedience.
13. That those presently in the Church's ministry as bishops, priests or deacons may find strength in God to persevere in their vocation.
14. That deceased priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters who have served in our diocese may find the reward for their faithful service.
15. That our diocese may be blessed with an abundance of vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life also from among our own young people.
16. That our bishop, priests and deacons may be inspiring examples of selfless dedication and generous service.
17. That the religious sisters of our diocese may give joyful witness to a life totally consecrated to God.
18. That our diocese may be open to welcoming new religious communities in our midst and find in them places of spiritual refuge.
19. That the Church of God may never tire to proclaim and show forth the beauty of a life of radical discipleship.
20. That the Holy Father may continue to be an example of perseverance, generosity and dedication to all bishops, priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters.

APPENDIX 4: SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

School Masses: School Masses could be celebrated regularly for the intention of vocations. Different priests, deacons or religious could be invited to attend and to visit the school or individual classes afterwards.

Letter from the Parish: A letter from the Pastor and from the parish community may be sent to all confirmandi to congratulate them and encourage them to use their gifts to serve others and to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life. A similar letter could be sent to all High School graduates from the parish. Add the contact vocation office phone number.

Vocation Art Contest: A contest among the students in your school(s) could be held focusing on different topics related to vocations. Various forms of art could be used: essays, posters, videos, drama, etc. An evening could be set up to display these and appropriate awards given to the most creative. Themes could be service of a religious, interview with a priest, or perhaps a logo contest.

Adopt a Seminarian or Novice: One grade could be selected (grade 5 to 7), and each class would spiritually adopt a seminarian or novice by sending letters of support at Christmas and Easter and praying on a regular basis for this seminarian or novice. The seminarian or novice should send a response explaining how they are preparing for priesthood or religious life and thanking the students for their interest and initiative.

Adopt a Priest or Religious: In a similar fashion, a school class could spiritually adopt a priest or religious for whom the students would pray on a regular basis and who could be contacted personally through letters and cards or visits to the school.

Vocation Prayer Cards: At some time during the school year (perhaps, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 4th Sunday of Easter) a Vocation Prayer Card or Bookmark could be given out to all students grades 5 to 8, from the parish.

Morning Prayer: Include a prayer for vocations in the morning prayers at school.

“Homemade” Vocation Prayers: Students could create their own vocation prayers. One could be selected to be used at all Masses one Sunday. Prayers for their own vocation, secular or religious, (marriage, teacher etc.) should be added.

Co-op Program: Student or students could be invited to do a high school co-op term working in the parish. University or college students could be hired to work in the parish during summer break cleaning, raking, flowerbeds etc.

Career Day: A priest or religious could be invited to career day at the school to give a presentation to a class or assembly on the ministry, apostolate and daily work he or she is involved with.

Resource Material: Resource material and assistance are available at the Diocesan Vocation Office.

Other ideas of your own:

15.

RESOURCE COMMENT SHEET

In order to assist in making this resource manual even more useful and effective for other parishes in the future, we would appreciate receiving any comments. At any time feel free to send in suggestions or any other ideas or programs that you have used that could be included and any other resources that you feel should be on the resources sheet.

Simply photocopy this sheet, fill it in and send it to Fr. Norbert at 411 Reid St. Box 175, Peterborough, ON K9J 6Y8. Phone 705-745-4681 or fax 705-745-9258 or e-mail to veyo@peterboroughdiocese.org or vocations@peterboroughdiocese.org.

1. Were the guide and steps for creating a Parish Vocation Committee helpful? Was there anything you would change or add to this section?

2. Do you have any other ideas, activities or programs that you feel should be added to the material in this handbook?

3. Were the resources given helpful and effective? Were there any other resources that you have used and should be listed here?

4. What was the response on the part of parishioners, especially young people, to the various initiatives you have undertaken?

5. Did you have any concrete responses of people expressing interest in the priesthood, permanent diaconate or the religious life?

6. Any other comments concerning this Parish Vocation Resource?

