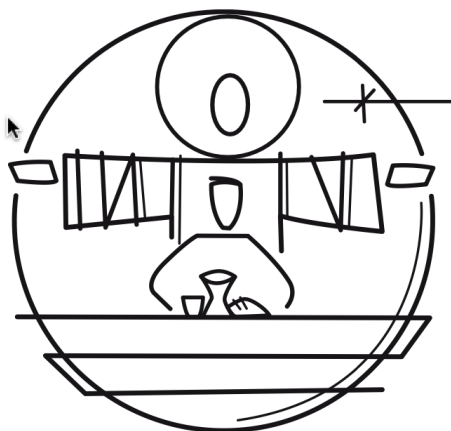


A PRIEST FOR CHRIST'S CHURCH

A Novena of Prayer for an Increase in Vocations to the Sacred Priesthood



**Saturday 22nd April – Sunday 30th April
2023**



Introduction

On Sunday 30th April, it's the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. As Catholics within the Church of England, we should be committed to seeing more vocations to the sacred priesthood, for where there are priests there are the sacraments, and where there are the sacraments there is the Church. Therefore, this Novena of Prayer in the days leading up to that day will allow us to ask God to send more labourers into the harvest and to bless all those who answer his call to ordained ministry.

Please pray also for our colleges, particularly the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, Ladyewell House and Emmanuel Theological College and St Stephen's House, Oxford. Pray too for the priests, people, parishes and organisations that seek to foster vocations.

This Novena of Prayer is not limited to the period prior to Vocations Sunday and can be used at any time, however the Fourth Sunday of Easter is a great opportunity in particular to focus our thoughts on where God may be calling each one of us. We hope and pray therefore that you will find this a valuable tool for praying both on Vocations Sunday and throughout the year, so that together, we can grow in our collective calling to be the Church of Christ in this world.

This Novena of Prayer is based on the ordination service for a priest and focuses on the elements of ministry which are particular to priests. As you spend time in prayer, I hope that you will also have a greater understanding of the role of the priest and the part that you can play in supporting and upholding vocation to this office and ministry.

Fr David Craven SSC

Mr Jean Kouacou

How to Pray the Novena

A Novena (from the Latin word for nine) is an ancient practice of prayer in the Church. A Novena consists of a series of prayers for a particular intention or theme over a period of nine days. This tradition started with that period of prayer between the Ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, when the disciples were gathered in prayer.

In this Novena we're praying for an increase in vocations to the sacred priesthood between **Saturday 22nd April** and **Sunday 30th April 2023**. You may also want to use this Novena at other times of the year, especially in the lead up to the beginning of the academic year and for the ordinands training at theological college.

On each day there will be a specific intention to focus our prayers on which will look at a different aspect of the ministry of the priest as included in the service of ordination. We start the prayer by making the sign of the cross and then there is a section from the charge that the priest receives as part of the ordination service. The time of prayer ends each day with the *Hail Mary, Our Father* and then two prayers for vocations to the priesthood.

Almighty God, give us priests:
to establish the honour of your holy name;
to offer the holy sacrifice of the altar;
to give us Jesus in the holy sacrament;
to proclaim the faith of Jesus;
to baptise and to teach the young;
to tend your sheep;
to seek the lost;
to give pardon to the penitent sinner;
to bless our homes;
to pray for the afflicted;
to comfort mourners;
to strengthen us in our last hour;
to commend our souls.
Almighty God, give us priests!

Holy Father, you gave us Christ as the shepherd of our souls;
may your people always have priests
who care for them with his great love.

We make our prayer, through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

1

The Priest as Servant and Shepherd

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Priests are called to be servants and shepherds among the people of the Lord to whom they are sent. They are to serve and care, to feed and provide for his family, to search for his children in the wilderness of this world's temptations, and to guide them through its confusions, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.

(From the Ordination Service for a Priest – Common Worship)

Today we pray for an increase in vocations to the sacred priesthood as we start this Novena. May all who are preparing to take on the role of shepherd, have their hearts enlarged with love for God, and for the people committed to their care.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

God, eternal shepherd, you tend your Church in many ways and rule us with love. Help your chosen servants called as pastor for Christ, to watch over your flock. Help them to be faithful teachers, wise administrators, and holy priests. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Dear Lord, we thank you for the great gift that the priesthood is to us and to your Church. We humbly ask you to call more men to serve you as priests, and to provide for them everything they need to carry out this vocation faithfully. Help each one of us to grow in our devotion to you each day. Help us to be more eager to devote ourselves entirely to you in whatever ways you call us to. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

2 The Priest as Minister of Word and Sacrament

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Priests are called with their Bishop and fellow ministers, they are to proclaim the word of the Lord and they are to unfold the Scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season, and to declare the mighty acts of God. They are to preside at the Lord's table and lead his people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. They are to feed God's pilgrim people, and so build up the Body of Christ.

(From the Ordination Service for a Priest – Common Worship)

We pray today for all who are preparing to enter into a new relationship with the sacramental ministry of the Church. We pray that the celebration of the Mass will continue to sustain and strengthen their ministry; praying for them as they prepare to administer the sacraments of the Church.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

God, eternal shepherd, you tend your Church in many ways and rule us with love. Help your chosen servants called as pastor for Christ, to watch over your flock. Help them to be faithful teachers, wise administrators, and holy priests. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Dear Lord, we thank you for the great gift that the priesthood is to us and to your Church. We humbly ask you to call more men to serve you as priests, and to provide for them everything they need to carry out this vocation faithfully. Help each one of us to grow in our devotion to you each day. Help us to be more eager to devote ourselves entirely to you in whatever ways you call us to. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

3

The Priest as Nurturer of God's People

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

With all God's people, they are to tell the story of God's love. They are to baptize new disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to walk with them in the way of Christ, nurturing them in the faith.

(From the Ordination Service for a Priest – Common Worship)

We pray today for all people across our parishes who will benefit from an increase in vocations to the sacred priesthood. We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide, nurture and sustain all priests in a life of holiness; and that this life of prayer and dedication to Jesus will strengthen them as they nurture and lead us on the path of holiness.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

God, eternal shepherd, you tend your Church in many ways and rule us with love. Help your chosen servants called as pastor for Christ, to watch over your flock. Help them to be faithful teachers, wise administrators, and holy priests. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Dear Lord, we thank you for the great gift that the priesthood is to us and to your Church. We humbly ask you to call more men to serve you as priests, and to provide for them everything they need to carry out this vocation faithfully. Help each one of us to grow in our devotion to you each day. Help us to be more eager to devote ourselves entirely to you in whatever ways you call us to. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

4

The Priest as Steward

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, Priests are to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people, that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith.

(From the Ordination Service for a Priest – Common Worship)

We pray today that priests will inspire others to consider whether God is calling them to the sacred priesthood, that they will foster vocations with enthusiasm and gentleness and that more of God's people may bless his Church with their gifts and talents. We also pray for those preparing for ordination.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

God, eternal shepherd, you tend your Church in many ways and rule us with love. Help your chosen servants called as pastor for Christ, to watch over your flock. Help them to be faithful teachers, wise administrators, and holy priests. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Dear Lord, we thank you for the great gift that the priesthood is to us and to your Church. We humbly ask you to call more men to serve you as priests, and to provide for them everything they need to carry out this vocation faithfully. Help each one of us to grow in our devotion to you each day. Help us to be more eager to devote ourselves entirely to you in whatever ways you call us to. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Priest as Pastor

5

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

As pastors, it is the duty of the Priests to speak in the name of God and expound the gospel of salvation. They are to bless the people in God's name. They are to resist evil and intercede for all the people. They are to minister to the sick.

(From the Ordination Service for a Priest – Common Worship)

Today we pray that as pastors, priests may be given the courage and the words to speak out in God's name. May the Holy Spirit guide, sustain and support them in their ministry as they care for his people.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

God, eternal shepherd, you tend your Church in many ways and rule us with love. Help your chosen servants called as pastor for Christ, to watch over your flock. Help them to be faithful teachers, wise administrators, and holy priests. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Dear Lord, we thank you for the great gift that the priesthood is to us and to your Church. We humbly ask you to call more men to serve you as priests, and to provide for them everything they need to carry out this vocation faithfully. Help each one of us to grow in our devotion to you each day. Help us to be more eager to devote ourselves entirely to you in whatever ways you call us to. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

6

The Priest as Messenger and Watchman

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Priests are to proclaim the word of the Lord and to watch for the signs of God's new creation. They are called to be messengers and watchmen of the Lord; they are to teach and to admonish. They are to tell the story of God's love.

(From the Ordination Service for a Priest – Common Worship)

The Priest from time to time is called upon to say difficult things, both to the Church and wider society. Therefore, we pray that they may be sustained by the Holy Spirit in this task. May they remain faithful to the message they have received and do the work of an evangelist with boldness and without fear or compromise. May they accomplish these tasks through the courage and love of the Good Shepherd.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

God, eternal shepherd, you tend your Church in many ways and rule us with love. Help your chosen servants called as pastor for Christ, to watch over your flock. Help them to be faithful teachers, wise administrators, and holy priests. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Dear Lord, we thank you for the great gift that the priesthood is to us and to your Church. We humbly ask you to call more men to serve you as priests, and to provide for them everything they need to carry out this vocation faithfully. Help each one of us to grow in our devotion to you each day. Help us to be more eager to devote ourselves entirely to you in whatever ways you call us to. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

7

The Priest as Advocate

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

They are to support the weak, defend the poor, and intercede for all in need. They are to minister to the sick and prepare the dying for their death. They are to search for God's children in the wilderness of this world's temptations, and to guide them through its confusions, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. Formed by the word, they are to call their hearers to repentance and to declare in Christ's name the absolution and forgiveness of their sins.

(From the Ordination Service for a Priest – Common Worship)

In all of our parishes, we do not have to look far to see people who are struggling, those society has forgotten about. in poverty, isolation or need. The call to stand alongside the needy and marginalised is all too great. May our priests model their ministry on Jesus, the Good Shepherd; so that they champion the poor and needy.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

God, eternal shepherd, you tend your Church in many ways and rule us with love. Help your chosen servants called as pastors for Christ, to watch over your flock. Help them to be faithful teachers, wise administrators, and holy priests. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Dear Lord, we thank you for the great gift that the priesthood is to us and to your Church. We humbly ask you to call more men to serve you as priests, and to provide for them everything they need to carry out this vocation faithfully. Help each one of us to grow in our devotion to you each day. Help us to be more eager to devote ourselves entirely to you in whatever ways you call us to. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

8

The Priest as Teacher and Preacher

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Following the example of the prophets and the teaching of the apostles, they are to proclaim the gospel boldly, confront injustice and work for righteousness and peace in all the world ... They are to unfold the Scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season, and to declare the mighty acts of God.

(From the Ordination Service for a Priest – Common Worship)

The roles of the priest as a teacher and preacher are very important. We pray therefore for priests to preach the Gospel boldly and teach the Catholic faith with passion and clarity. We pray that their example will testify to the words they proclaim and teach. May their lives speak of the Gospel.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

God, eternal shepherd, you tend your Church in many ways and rule us with love. Help your chosen servants called as pastor for Christ, to watch over your flock. Help them to be faithful teachers, wise administrators, and holy priests. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Dear Lord, we thank you for the great gift that the priesthood is to us and to your Church. We humbly ask you to call more men to serve you as priests, and to provide for them everything they need to carry out this vocation faithfully. Help each one of us to grow in our devotion to you each day. Help us to be more eager to devote ourselves entirely to you in whatever ways you call us to. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

9

The Priest as Representative of Christ

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Priests are called to ... preside at the Lord's table and lead his people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. They are to bless the people in God's name. They are to resist evil, support the weak, defend the poor, and intercede for all in need. They are to minister to the sick and prepare the dying for their death. Guided by the Spirit, they are to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people, that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith.

(From the Ordination Service for a Priest – Common Worship)

We rejoice today for all who have answered God's call and we pray for more vocations to the sacred priesthood. We pray for all in formation that they may be filled afresh by the Holy Spirit, overflowing with love, and being conformed more and more into the image of God's Son.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

God, eternal shepherd, you tend your Church in many ways and rule us with love. Help your chosen servants called as pastor for Christ, to watch over your flock. Help them to be faithful teachers, wise administrators, and holy priests. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Dear Lord, we thank you for the great gift that the priesthood is to us and to your Church. We humbly ask you to call more men to serve you as priests, and to provide for them everything they need to carry out this vocation faithfully. Help each one of us to grow in our devotion to you each day. Help us to be more eager to devote ourselves entirely to you in whatever ways you call us to. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.