

Armagh Diocesan Vocations Commission offers a thought for Lent

“God comes silently and discretely without imposing on our freedom”. Pope Francis

We're now in the season of Lent, a time when each one of us endeavours to commit more fully to our faith, to strengthen our personal relationship with God. In light of this, Armagh Diocesan Vocations Commission wishes to suggest some simple yet effective ways to do this, while helping us to promote a much needed and enhanced response to Vocations to Priesthood in our diocese, given the current situation.

One of the greatest assets we have had over many years has been the generous and unselfish willingness of so many men to answer the call to priesthood. For many reasons, this flow has dwindled somewhat in the 21st century. It would be a sad and worrying thing if we were ever to be left without the comfort of the great gift of the Eucharist and the celebration of the Sacraments.

“A shortage of priests jeopardises the life of faith for Catholics who no longer have a priest to minister to them”

So If you are a person still wondering about what you might ‘do’ for Lent, and even if you already have a Lenten plan, go to a quiet place where thoughtfully and with a listening ear, you can consider if you might be able to help influence this decline in vocations using some of the strategies offered below, particularly in light of this special year of the World Meeting of Families:

- Offer family prayer for Vocations to Priesthood
- Pray as a parish that at least one young man in your parish may answer The Call
- Offer up a particular Lenten fast/activity to help alleviate the crisis
- Discuss Vocation within family/prayer groups/school groups/parish groups/youth groups
- Encourage people to consider Vocation to the Priesthood
- Suggest ideas within parish to promote Vocations
- Pray for the priests you already know, that the Holy Spirit may work in them and bring them peace and comfort on difficult days.

Perhaps while you are doing these things, you will find time to listen for, to hear and to respond to that call to serve which may be meant especially for you.

Pope Francis reminds us that: *“Vocation is today! The Christian Mission is now!”*

(More resources and ideas can be found at www.armaghpriest.com)