

PRAYING FOR OUR PRIESTS

Maria Regina Cleri, an apostolate of the Archdiocese of Omaha, is piloting a prayer program among five parishes to encourage the **lay faithful to consistently pray for the priests who serve their parishes.**

This effort is not a true “program” in that we do not recommend a “one size fits all” that parishes implement for a short time in the parish. Instead, MRC seeks to help each parish find what will work for them and their priests. This effort has several unique characteristics:

- There are a variety of ways parishes can pray for their priests.
- The prayer initiative requires the approval of the pastor; however, it is entirely administered and promoted by lay people in the parish.
- MRC works with each parish to help facilitate the implementation of the prayer option that works best for the parish.
- Materials are available from MRC if you would like guidance in praying for priests.
- Based on our work with pilot parishes, we help to spread the practice of consistent prayer for priests throughout our Archdiocese and beyond.

Why Pray for Priests?

There are many things to pray for – why should we specifically pray for our priests?

- **The priest in your parish is the shepherd.** He has willingly taken on the role of shepherding the flock. Intercessory prayers from the “sheep” he serves are particularly powerful.
- **As the world pulls further and further away from God, the priest’s role in shepherding us becomes much more difficult.** Our prayers provide much-needed sustenance for a priest who serves on the front lines.
- **Prayer by the laity helps us understand and appreciate the priesthood.** The more we pray for priests, the more we grow in our faith, and the more we unite ourselves to the Body of Christ.

Ways to Pray

There are a variety of ways your parish can pray for your priests. You may develop an option that is unique and best fits the charism and flow of your parish. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Pray a Hail Mary for the celebrant before or after every Mass.** Ideally, a Hail Mary would be prayed for the priest about to celebrate Mass as a starting point for every parish initiative. This can be announced and prayed after announcements and before the processional hymn if announcements in your parish are read prior to the start of Mass. Otherwise, the cantor can introduce and lead the Hail Mary at the start of Mass or before the processional.
- **Hold a Holy Hour each month for priests.** A Holy Hour is a powerful way to help your parish come together to pray for priests. Ideally, you will also have Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
- **Ask participants of your Adoration program to pray for priests.** If you already have an Adoration program running, e-mail participants and ask them to pray specifically for priests at least one Holy Hour per month.
- **Start a prayer group where each member commits to praying for your priests one day each week before the Blessed Sacrament.** This would be a special group that is devoted to prayer and ensures your priests are covered by prayer every day of the week.
- **Ask parishioners to commit to taking a day each month to pray the Rosary for your priests.** Much like the 31 Club used to pray for vocations, parishioners choose a day each month where they specifically pray the Rosary for the priests who serve your parish.
- **Ask parish groups to rotate in praying for your priests.** One group commits to praying at the beginning of their meeting or event so that your priests have people praying for them at least once per week.
- **Use MRC printed or audio prayers to pray for priests.** You can easily insert the names of your priests into the prayers.
- **Insert the short educational features on the priesthood in your bulletin.** These short features will help to educate your parish members on the beautiful, mystical nature of the priesthood and help them begin to see your priests as more than CEO's of the parish business, reduced to their ability to deliver a homily, or simply as someone there to serve their needs.



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