



My Dear Friends:

Diocesan Year of Prayer for Priestly Vocations

As we enter into 2023, I have encouraged our Diocesan Worship Committee to help me make this year a special year in our diocese. I am hoping that together we can share a year of prayer, in particular, prayer for an increase in vocations to the priesthood. I remember when I entered the school to train as a priest, my family was very supportive of my choice, and prayed for me in the years of my formation. It was particularly special for my father, who not only saw me ordained as a priest in 1975, but also as a bishop in 1995.

Priests come from families. My family was small. I had only an older sister and a younger brother. But my extended family, grandmother, aunts and uncles, cousins, were all a part of prayer and support for me. As a diocesan family I am asking that we all engage in special prayers this year, to ask the Lord to give us young men who will respond to the call to be a priest and serve Jesus and His people in our Diocesan Church.

I am grateful for the many priests who have come from other countries to our diocese to assist us in ministry. But I am convinced that people who have been raised and educated in northern Ontario, would have a stronger grasp of the spiritual needs of our people. We ask the Lord to send His call to our young men in northern Ontario to open their hearts to God and to respond to that call.

During this year of prayer, we will have Prayer for Vocation cards available, we will have Holy Hours in our parish churches, we will ask families to pray for vocations in their family prayer, we will hear of the priestly life of our parish priests, and we will encourage vocations by our positive support for our priests in our words and actions.

Priests come from families, large and small, and God does plant the seed of a vocation in many hearts. For someone to respond to that seed, they need a family that prays together, a family that loves the Lord and His Church, and a family that will support a vocation to the priesthood. Maybe your family is the fertile ground for this vocation seed.

Let us make 2023 a year of intense prayer to the Lord for priestly vocations, for we know that God always answers our prayers.

Sincerely,
Bishop Fred J. Colli