

Praying for Deacons, Priests and Bishops

*A selection of prayers for those to be ordained;
for an increase in vocations
and for our Deacons, Priests and Bishops*



Introduction

Ordinations to the diaconate and to the sacred priesthood tend to happen in late June or early July, around the Feast of St Peter and St Paul, known as Petertide, although some occur slightly earlier around the time of the Feast of the Holy Trinity, which is on the first Sunday in June this year.

We are especially delighted this year to have been able to witness the consecration of a Society bishop – Fr Paul Thomas as the Bishop of Oswestry – earlier this year on the Feast of Candlemas in Canterbury Cathedral. This followed on in short succession from the consecration of another Society bishop – Fr Stephen Race – as Bishop of Beverley in York Minster towards the end of last calendar year on St Andrew’s Day.

Please do pray for all those who are preparing for ordination during 2023. The details of this year’s ordinations of Deacons and Priests relating to The Society can be found on The Society’s website: www.sswsh.com Do try to remember the candidates in your prayers, not only in the lead up to their ordination, but in the months after that as they begin their ministry as Deacons and Priests in God’s Church.

In this booklet, you will find prayers for those who are preparing for ordination. There are also prayers for more vocations; it is vitally important that we all pray that God will call more people to ordained ministry and that those who God calls will answer that call and follow Him.

You will also find prayers for Deacons, Priests and Bishops. In the ordination service, the Bishop asks the whole people of God if they will continually pray for the newly ordained Deacons and Priests and uphold and encourage them in their ministry. We urge you to pray to all called to God’s threefold ministry and that they will be faithful to that calling.

Finally, we urge you to make use of The Society’s prayer as part of your regular devotions:

Heavenly Father;
Bless the bishops, clergy and people of The Society.
Bind us together in love and faith.
Renew us in service and witness.
And by your Holy Spirit
Guide our future and make plain your purposes.
We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.
Saint Wilfrid, pray for us.
Saint Hilda, pray for us.

The Society, May 2023

Prayers for those preparing for ordination

Lord Jesus, we pray for all those preparing for ordination at this time.

We ask you to fill them with the fire of your love, that their ministry may reveal your presence in the Church. Since they are earthen vessels, we pray that your power shines out through their weakness. In their afflictions let them never be crushed, in their doubts never despair, in temptation never be destroyed, and in persecution never abandoned. Inspire them through prayer to live each day the mystery of your dying and rising.

In times of weakness send them your Spirit, and help them to praise you and pray for poor sinners. By your same Holy Spirit put your word on their lips and your love in their hearts, to bring good news to the poor and healing to the broken-hearted.

And may the gift of Mary, your Mother, to the disciple whom you loved be your gift to every priest and deacon. Grant that she who formed you in her womb, may form them in your divine image, by the power of your Spirit, to the glory of God the Father, Amen.



God our Father, Lord of all the world,
through your Son you have called us into the fellowship
of your universal Church:
hear our prayer for your faithful people
that in their vocation and ministry
each may be an instrument of your love,
and give to your servants now to be ordained
the needful gifts of grace;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen. (*Common Worship*)



Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts,
by your Holy Spirit you have appointed
various orders of ministry in the Church:
look with mercy on your servants
now called to be deacons and priests;
maintain them in truth and renew them in holiness,
that by word and good example they may faithfully serve you
to the glory of your name and the benefit of your Church;
through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen. (*Common Worship*)



Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hast purchased to thyself an universal Church
by the precious blood of thy dear Son: Mercifully look upon the same, and at this time to
guide and govern the minds of thy servants the Bishops and Pastors of thy flock, that
they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit
persons to serve in the sacred ministry of thy Church. And to those which shall be
ordained to any holy function give thy grace and heavenly benediction; that both by their
life and doctrine they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all people;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Eric Milner-White*)



Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, who of thy divine providence hast appointed
divers Orders in thy Church: Give thy grace, we humbly beseech thee, to all those who
are to be called to any office and administration in the same; and so replenish them with
the truth of thy doctrine, and endue them with innocency of life, that they may faithfully
serve before thee, to the glory of thy great name, and the benefit of thy holy Church;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Eric Milner-White*)



Prayers for Vocations

The Prayer of the Additional Curates Society

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.



O Lord, my God,
you renew the Church in every age
by raising up priests outstanding in holiness,
living witnesses of your unchanging love.
In your plan for our salvation
you provide shepherds for your people.
Fill the hearts of men
with the spirit of courage and love
that they may answer your call generously.
Raise up worthy priests for your altars
and ardent but gentle servants of the Gospel.
Give the Church more priests
and keep them faithful in their love and service.
May many men choose to serve you
by devoting themselves to the service of your people. Amen.

Almighty God,
you have entrusted to your Church
a share in the ministry of your Son our great high priest:
inspire by your Holy Spirit the hearts of many
to offer themselves for the ministry of your Church,
that, strengthened by his power,
they may work for the increase of your kingdom
and set forward the eternal praise of your name;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen. (*Common Worship*)



Almighty God, look mercifully upon the world, which thou hast redeemed by the blood of thy dear Son, and incline the hearts of many to offer themselves for the sacred ministry of thy Church; so that by their labours thy light may shine in the darkness, and the coming of thy Kingdom may be hastened by the perfecting of thine elect, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Richard Meux Benson*)



“God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.” (*St John Henry Newman*)



Prayers for those discerning their vocation

Gracious God,
You have called me to life and gifted me in many ways.
Through Baptism You have sent me to continue the mission of Jesus
by sharing my love with others.
Strengthen me to respond to Your call each day.
Help me to become all You desire of me.
Inspire me to make a difference in others' lives.
Lead me to choose the way of life You have planned for me.
Open the hearts of all to listen to Your call.
Fill all with Your Holy Spirit that
we may have listening hearts and
the courage to respond to You.
Enkindle in my heart
and the hearts of others the desire
to make the world a better place
by serving you. Amen.



Loving God,
your Son, Jesus, has shown us that an open heart finds the way.
Help me to find my way in this world.
Keep my heart open to following Jesus' way of serving others in love.
Give me the courage to accept the guidance you offer me
through my family, my friends, and my parish community.
Through the Holy Spirit, you call me to a particular way of life.
If it is the way of a priest, deacon or religious, then
help me to walk it in joyful service to your people.
With you, my God, I know I can find my way. Amen.

For those in training for the sacred ministry

O thou true Light, that lightest every man that cometh into the world, do thou in thy mercy touch the hearts and lighten the understanding of all who are preparing for thy service, that they may readily acknowledge and cheerfully obey all that thou wouldst have them believe and practice to the benefit of thy people and their own salvation; who livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen. (*Henry Parry Liddon*)

Prayers for Bishops

God, eternal shepherd,
you tend your Church in many ways, and rule us with love.
Help your chosen servant *N* as pastor for Christ, to watch over your flock.
Help him to be a faithful teacher, a wise administrator and a holy priest.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Almighty and everlasting God, who alone workest great marvels: Send down upon our bishops and other pastors, and all congregations committed to their charge, the healthful spirit of thy grace; and that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our advocate and mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen. (*Book of Common Prayer*)

Prayers for Priests

O Lord Jesus Christ,
who at your first coming
sent your messenger to prepare your way;
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so make ready and prepare your way,
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world,
we may be found acceptable people in your sight;
who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end. Amen. (*John Cosin*)



Almighty and eternal God,
in your unfailing love you provide ministers for your Church.
We pray for those whom you call to serve the Church as priests
Inspire in them a generous response.
Grant them courage and vision to serve your people.
May their lives and service call your people to respond to the presence
of your Spirit among us that, faithful to the Gospel and hope of Jesus the Christ, we may:
announce glad tidings to the poor
proclaim liberty to captives, set prisoners free
and renew the face of the earth. Amen.

O Jesus, I pray for your faithful and fervent priests;
for your unfaithful and tepid priests;
for your priests labouring at home or abroad in distant mission fields;
for your tempted priests;
for your lonely and desolate priests;
for your young priests;
for your dying priests;
for the souls of your priests in Purgatory.
But above all, I recommend to you the priests dearest to me:
the priest who baptised me;
the priests who've absolved me from my sins;
the priests at whose Masses I've assisted and who've given me your Body and Blood in Holy Communion;
the priests who've taught and instructed me;
all the priests to whom I am indebted in any other way, especially ____
O Jesus, keep them all close to your heart,
and bless them abundantly in time and in eternity. Amen. (*St Therese of Lisieux*)



Mary, Mother of Jesus,
throw your mantle of purity over our priests.
Protect them, guide them, and keep them in your heart.
Be a Mother to them,
especially in times of discouragement and loneliness.
Love them and keep them belonging completely to Jesus.
Like Jesus, they, too, are your sons, so keep their hearts pure and virginal.
Keep their minds filled with Jesus, and put Jesus always on their lips,
so that he is the one they offer to sinner and to all they meet.
Mary, Mother of Jesus, be their Mother,
loving them and bringing them joy.
Take special care of sick and dying priests, and the ones most tempted.
Remember how they spent their youth and old age,
their entire lives serving and giving all to Jesus.
Mary, bless them and keep a special place for them in your heart.
Give them a piece of your heart, so beautiful and pure and immaculate,
so full of love and humility, so that they, too, can grow in the likeness of Christ.
Dear Mary, make them humble like you, and holy like Jesus. Amen.
(*St Theresa of Calcutta*)

Prayer for Priests of the Society of the Holy Cross

The Society of the Holy Cross - or SSC from the Latin Societas Sanctae Crucis - is a Congregation of priests, who live and minister under a common Rule of Life. There are currently over 1,000 members around the world in parishes, missions, chaplaincies, schools and other areas of pastoral ministry, committed to witnessing to the Cross of Christ by their lives and ministry. The Society of the Holy Cross (SSC) was founded in London in 1855 by a small group of Anglo-Catholic priests led by Father Charles Lowder.

We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
for he is our salvation, our life and our resurrection.
Through him we are saved and made free.
Father, your Son showed the depth of his love
when, for our sake, he opened his arms on the cross;
and has commanded us to love one another.
Keep the brothers of the Society of the Holy Cross
united in love and faith.
Through the power of the Cross
impressed inwardly upon their lives
and expressed outwardly in their work,
may we come to know your love and truth
through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Prayer for the Company of Mission Priests

The Company of Mission Priests is a dispersed community of priests who live to a rule in order to be free to focus their whole lives on the mission of the Church, especially in areas of poverty and deprivation. Members express their common life through attendance at General Chapter each May. They also participate in a Regional Chapter and share in the fellowship of prayer. The Company draws inspiration from the life of St Vincent de Paul who renewed the French Church of the seventeenth century through care for the poor and thorough formation of the clergy. Members of the Company therefore attend closely to their own ongoing formation as priests in order best to serve God's people.

God, our Father,
You turn us from the vanities of the world
and kindle within us the love of our high calling;
inspire the hearts of all united in the Company of Mission Priests,
that we may be faithful to our promises
made for your glory and the salvation of souls.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers for Deacons

Almighty God, who by thy divine providence hast appointed divers Orders of Ministers in thy Church, and didst inspire thine Apostles to choose into the Order of Deacons the first Martyr Saint Stephen, with others: Mercifully behold these thy servants now called to the like office and administration; replenish them so with the truth of thy doctrine, and adorn them with innocency of life, that, both by word and good example, they may faithfully serve thee in this office, to the glory of thy Name, and the edification of thy Church; through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and for ever. Amen. (*Book of Common Prayer*)



Our Lord and God, we turn to you to pray for our Deacons. Since the time of the Apostles you have inspired the Church to appoint members of your Church to assist in particular ways in it's mission. We give you thanks for how you have blessed your Church; for how you are continuing to build and shape your Church; and for the joy of appointing Deacons to serve your Church. We ask that you would bless our Deacons; that they may know true humility and be faithful in their service for you. Remind them of the example of our Lord Jesus Christ who in fulfilling the ministry you gave to him came to serve, rather than be served; sought the needs of others, rather than seeking his own; ministered to people without prejudice, and with courage and determination; loved people unconditionally. We ask, Lord God, that you pour generously into their lives your Holy Spirit; fill them with your love and compassion, so that they may see their brothers and sisters as you see them, and that they are equipped to carry out the duties that they have been appointed to fulfil. We ask this for his name and glory. Amen.

Prayer for a departed Priest

O God, you raised your servant, *N*,
to the sacred priesthood of Jesus Christ,
according to the Order of Melchizedek,
giving him the sublime power to offer the Eternal Sacrifice,
to bring the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ down upon the altar,
and to absolve the sins of all in your own Holy Name.
We ask to reward his faithfulness
and to forget his faults,
admitting him speedily into your Holy Presence,
there to enjoy forever the recompense of his labours.
This we ask through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.

