

# Advent 2021

## VOCATION MATTERS



NATIONAL VOCATIONS OFFICE  
IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

“It’s not happiness that makes us grateful;  
It’s gratefulness that makes us happy”

*Brother Daid Steindl-Rast*



**A**s we start a new church year, let us be grateful for the blessings we have received. Our Gospel for the first Sunday of Advent reminds us to ‘*pray at all times*’ and to “*watch for the signs*” that we might discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to help those whom the Lord calls.

### Autumn Conference

In September we had a wonderful conference for our Vocation Directors given by Fr. Stephen Langridge over Zoom. Fr Stephen has extensive experience in vocations ministry in the UK. Fr Stephen highlighted that COVID has only served as an accelerator for underlying issues, and that there is no “quick-fix” to the Vocation situation



The solution he maintains is for parishes to become more mission based and places of welcome where faith and a relationship with the Lord can be fostered and for people to become disciples of the Lord, rather than consumers of church services. On the following page you will find an excellent summary of Fr Stephen’s key message by Fr Willie Purcell.

### Winter Zoom Gathering

Last week we had our “winter” meeting of the national diocesan vocations directors over zoom. It was very worthwhile with the opportunity for vocation directors to listen to each other and to share ideas of what could be done to collaborate and promote vocations. Some of the key points that were raised included:

- Experience of developing Lay Vocations Councils / Teams
- The need for promotion materials for both social media and traditional hard copy
- The value of the Vocation Resources (Prayer of the Faithful and Newsletter inserts) that the National Office has been distributing.
- The possibility of a National Novena for schools
- Vocations Participation in World youth Day 2023

### Future Events

Following the successful “virtual” discernment evening that was run earlier in the year for the dioceses in the Cashel & Emly province, the Office plans to run another Virtual “ event in the new year via Zoom.

When restrictions ease, we plan to provide a discernment weekend in our National Seminary in Maynooth for all those across the country who are in accompaniment with their vocation directors. This would be very helpful particularly for those dioceses who only have one or two men in accompaniment as it would provide support, encouragement to them knowing that they are not on their own.

We plan to expand our footprint in the use of Social Media with the development of our Twitter account, use of YouTube videos and deployment of Google Ad campaigns.

## Vocation Directors Autumn Conference with Fr Stephen Langridge

For our Winder Conference, 19 vocations directors from around the country joined by zoom the Annual National Conference for Diocesan Vocations Directors on Wednesday Oct 20th, 2021.

The conference was facilitated by Fr. Stephen Langridge, Fr. Stephen is a priest of the Diocese of Southwark and for many years was the national vocations coordinator for the Bishops Conference of England and Wales. He was director of the Vocations Discernment in Kent and produced a DVD 'The Calling' on vocations awareness for schools and youth groups.



He also produced a booklet called 'stories of priestly vocations' which was a series of vocations stories from priests. He developed the 'Quo Vadis' programme for young adults discerning their vocation in life.

**“the Covid 19 crisis has accelerated the changes which were already going on under the surface.”**

In his talk Fr. Stephen said: 'The Covid 19 crisis has not as such made fundamental changes in our Church. What has happened is that the Covid 19 crisis has accelerated the changes which were already going on under the surface. What we must be asking ourselves now is- What does the Church today have to offer to people who are looking for meaning and belonging.'

**“What does the Church today have to offer to people who are looking for meaning and belonging**

Fr. Stephen pointed out the challenges of which we are all aware - the challenges of seeking a quick-fix solution, of clericalism, of activism and of

being, as Pope Francis often points out, self-referential and of maintaining church structures just for those who already attend the sacraments.

To anyone hoping to encourage a candidate for priesthood three essentials must be worked on

1. the building of a real relationship with Christ.
2. a real growth in virtue and
3. to be mission-minded and with a heart which seeks to reach out to others.

The creation of parishes which are mission-minded is essential to any promotion of vocations to the priesthood. In Fr. Stephen's own experience, he found that in a former parish of his he saw that while there were very large numbers attending, he felt that they were more consumers than disciples. He entered a short reflection of the definition of a consumer versus a disciple. A consumer has wants and is essentially self-centred. A disciple is Christ-centred. A disciple has stories and seeks to be transformed and to make a difference.

Our focus then should be on transformation and not just information. While we spend a lot of time and resources and energy on imparting knowledge and information in schools and colleges (all of which is needed) the transformation of lives may not be happening at all. Again, the emphasis must be on evangelization.

Some commentators have expressed how in years gone by, speaking in general terms, many people believed, they had the faith. They behaved accordingly and expected their parish to be a place where everyone would naturally belong. The dynamic so to speak was believe, behave, belong.

In our times the trend is quite the reverse. The needs now have changed. In today's culture the need to belong is paramount. If people feel they belong then they may be inspired to seek what faith-filled people possess, namely belief. They will then shape their lives accordingly. So, the dynamic has changed today to belong, believe, and behave.

Therefore, parishes need to offer fellowship. We need to have a welcoming environment where people feel that faith can make a positive difference to life. The new movements in the Church often offer such fellowship. They can be of help in parish life to fill this need.



Fr. Willie Purcell.

National Vocations Coordinator for Diocesan Priesthood.

## Vocation Resources for Advent & Christmas

### General Intercessions

#### First Sunday of Advent

In the Gospel Jesus cautions us to be alert – “stay awake” and the responsorial psalm says “Lord, make me know your ways, teach me your paths”. We pray for those who are discerning their vocations, that they will be alert and responsive to the invitation of Christ, we pray to the Lord

#### Second Sunday of Advent

That the Lord, who is beginning the good work of choosing from among us men and women to follow Him as priests, deacons, religious sisters and brothers, will bring it to completion through our prayers and sacrifices, we pray to the Lord.

#### Third Sunday of Advent

In our second reading, St Paul says “I want you to be happy always happy in the Lord” and assures us that the peace of God will guard us. We pray for those who are called by the Lord to be messengers of salvation as priests, deacons and in the consecrated life, that Christ’s peace will guard their hearts and minds as they proclaim the good news of salvation and that they will be “happy in the Lord”, we pray to the Lord.

#### Fourth Sunday of Advent

That the faithful response, “God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will” will be voiced by each person discerning a call to serve Christ as a priest, deacon, sister or brother, we pray to the Lord.

#### Christmas

That, just as Joseph “did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him,” young men and women will answer the call of the Holy Spirit to vocations in the priesthood and consecrated life, we pray to the Lord.

#### Feast of the Holy Family

For all Catholic families, that they will esteem the grace of each child’s vocation and prayerfully encourage their children to consider being a priest or religious sister or brother, we pray to the Lord.

#### Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

That Mary, the Mother of God and of Vocations will nurture, guide and protect all those called to the priesthood, diaconate and the consecrated life, we pray to the Lord.

#### The Epiphany

That all those called to share the promise of the Gospel of Christ Jesus through their vocations as priests, deacons, sisters and brothers, will do so with humble confidence in the commission of God’s grace which has been given to them, we pray to the Lord

These resources can be downloaded in Microsoft Word format from our website – [vocations.ie](http://vocations.ie)

### Newsletter & Social Media Inserts

#### First Sunday of Advent

“Finally, brothers, we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants” (2nd reading) Pray for those who are discerning what life God is calling them to. If that is you, why not contact your Diocesan Vocations Director or contact the National Vocations Office – email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

#### Second Sunday of Advent

Our Gospel tells us that John the Baptist heard God’s call - “The word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.” Do you think God might be inviting you to hear and share his word, perhaps as a priest, a deacon or in consecrated life? Contact your Diocesan Vocations Director, or contact the National Vocations Office – email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

#### Third Sunday of Advent

In our Gospel today the people ask John the Baptist “What must we do?” Perhaps you are seeking advice on what God is asking of you too. Why not speak to your Diocesan Vocations Director or contact the National Vocations Office – email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

#### Fourth Sunday of Advent

“God, hear I am! I am coming to do your will.” (2nd reading) Can you make that offer, to put yourself at the disposal of God’s plan for his people and for the world? Contact your Diocesan Vocations Director or contact the National Vocations Office – email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

#### Christmas Day

“I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people.” If you think you may be called to announce the Good News of Christ’s presence as a priest, deacon or in consecrated life, speak to your Diocesan Vocations Director or contact the National Vocations Office – email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

#### Feast of the Holy Family

“Did you not know I must be busy with my father’s affairs?” Do you find yourself drawn to do God’s work among his people, guiding them in holiness of life? Speak to your local Vocations Director, or contact the National Vocations Office – email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

#### Epiphany of the Lord

Where is God’s light leading you? Or are you called to be a guiding light to others in their search, as a priest or religious? Speak to your Vocations Director or contact the National Vocations Office – email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

#### Baptism of the Lord

“I have taken you by the hand and formed you. I have appointed you.” (1st Reading) For what have you been formed? Where are your gifts and personality needed most? Perhaps as a priest, a deacon or in consecrated life? Speak to your Vocations Director or contact the National Vocations Office – email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

ORDINATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD & DIACONATE 2021

**ORDINATION TO THE  
PERMANENT DIACONATE**



**1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER - ARCHDIOCESE OF TUAM**

Archbishop Michael Neary ordained Cathal Galligan, Julian Drapiewskie and James McLoughlin in the Cathedral of the Assumption, Tuam

**ORDINATION TO THE  
PRIESTHOOD**



**24<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER - WATERFORD & LISMORE**

Bishop Cullinan ordained John McEaney to the priesthood in the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity.

**ORDINATION TO THE  
TRANSITIONAL DIACONATE**



**25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER - CORK & ROSS**

Bishop Fintan Gavin ordained Ronan Sheehan to the Diaconate in the Cathedral of Saint Mary & Saint Anne.

**ORDINATION TO THE  
TRANSITIONAL DIACONATE**



**8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER - KILLALOE**

Bishop Fintan Monahan ordained Antun Pasalic to the Diaconate in the Cathedral of SS Peter & Paul, Ennis.

**ORDINATION TO THE  
PERMANENT DIACONATE**



**15<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST - CLOYNE**

Bishop William Crean ordained Leonard Cleary to the Permanent Diaconate in the Church of the Holy Cross, Charleville.

**ORDINATION TO THE  
PRIESTHOOD**



**AUG - GALWAY, KILMACDUAGH & KILFENORA**

Bishop Brendan Kelly ordained John Gerard Acton to the priesthood in the Cathedral of Our Lady Assumed in Heaven & St Nicholas, Galway.

**ORDINATION TO THE  
TRANSITIONAL DIACONATE**



**3<sup>RD</sup> JULY - ARCHDIOCESE OF DUBLIN**

Archbishop Dermot Farrell ordained Joe Keegan to the Diaconate in the Church of the Immaculate Conception & St Killian, Clondalkin.

**ORDINATION TO THE  
PRIESTHOOD**



**29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE - ARCHDIOCESE OF ARMAGH**

Archbishop Eamon Martin ordained Callum Douglas Young and Juan-Jesus Gonzalez Borrallo to the Priesthood in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh

**ORDINATION TO THE  
TRANSITIONAL DIACONATE**



**9<sup>TH</sup> MAY - ARCHDIOCESE OF ARMAGH**

Archbishop Eamon Martin ordained Stephen Wilson and Colm Hagan to the Diaconate in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh