

LOOKING THROUGH STAINED GLASS



A Column by Fr. Tom

One Small Way to Make a Big Difference

Last year, in our parish, we started a new campaign. It was the inspiration of one of our parishioners. He had seen this special tool for the preservation of the Church used in another parish of which he had been a part, and he thought it might be useful here. With a little fine tuning for our parish, the Vocations Chalice Program was born!

As a former Director of Vocations for the Diocese of Palm Beach, I was excited to have our parish participate in this program. I know that the two greatest factors for increasing vocations are (1) prayer and (2) encouragement from one's family and community. In the parish in Connecticut where I grew up, we would pray for vocations weekly and these prayers were answered with at least 4 men becoming priests or deacons. I believe we also had at least one woman join a religious order. And this from a parish with only a few hundred families. Our parish is four times the size of that parish. Thankfully, we have had a couple vocations from our parish. I truly believe that if we all ardently pray for an increase in vocations to priesthood, diaconate and religious life, we will see an increase.

So here's how the program works. Each week, one family in our parish gets the opportunity to take home a priest's chalice and pray for more people to respond to God's call to be priests, deacons and religious brothers and sisters. The family will be called forward at the end of Mass to receive the Chalice. When they receive the Chalice, the parish will join them in prayer as we all pray the Diocesan Prayer for Vocations. Each day during the week, they follow the prayers contained in Vocations

Chalice Program Book, which will also be given to them at Mass. At the end of the week, they return the materials to the Church, so the Chalice can be given to the next family. So far, the Chalice has been distributed at the 9 AM Mass, but families from every Mass are welcome to be a part of this program. If you would like your family to be a part of this program too, please give your name at the Welcome Desk after Mass, or you can contact the Parish Office.

So far, we have had 25 families in our parish receive the Vocations Chalice. At the end of the week of prayer, they make comments like, "It was such a privilege to have the chalice in our home," "We felt honored to pray for vocations this week," "I really felt the spirit at work, while praying," and "I couldn't help but think about the young people who God is calling to serve Him."

By the way, there are collateral benefits to all these families praying for vocations. First, it helps them to pray together as a family, which is always good for the family. Their prayers also can help them up to see the honor of having a religious vocation in their own family. Finally, these prayers will help us all to look for and encourage vocations from our parish.

Every week, we include a prayer intention in our Prayers of the Faithful for an increase in vocations. Now, we have added the Vocations Chalice Program. However, we encourage everyone to join in prayer for an increase in vocations by praying the Diocesan Prayer for Vocations, which you will find in the bulletin. Your prayers are "one small way to make a big difference" for our Church.

