

Spirituality

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Supporting, empowering, and educating members in spirituality, leadership and service; reaching out with Gospel values to meet the needs of Church and society.

August 21, 2018

Greetings to the Parishes of the New Ulm Diocese:

I am including information about our **SHEPHERDS OF THE FIELD** project. The women of each parish are automatically members of the Council of Catholic Women in the Diocese of New Ulm. In September, each parish is assigned a new “Shepherd” to support in the upcoming year. It is our intention to affirm our priests in their ministry to the people of God. In these difficult times for our Church and our priests, it is more important than ever to support them. Our support can be by notes or letters of encouragement; acts of kindness; prayers for our Shepherd; having masses offered for him; simply saying “thank you” for accepting God’s call; remembering them on special occasions (feast days, holidays, ordination and birthday anniversaries); speaking with a positive attitude about all priests and showing our appreciation for their service to the Church.

The NUDCCW (New Ulm Diocese Council of Catholic Women) website has free greeting cards available for your convenience. These greeting cards can be printed on regular computer paper and folded into a card. The cards have beautiful Catholic artwork on the front and a variety of prayers on the back. The inside is blank for your personal message. Of course you can use any card you wish. There are several ways you can opt to get messages to your Shepherd every month. Some ideas are: Take a card along to your CCW monthly meeting and have all the ladies write a note in it and sign their names; or take cards or labels to the meeting and hand them out to have women send them individually. I have never heard a priest complain that they received too many notes of encouragement!!! Do not expect a reply to your cards. Priests are very busy and it is our aim to ease their burdens.

How about adding a prayer for your Shepherd of the Field at the beginning of your monthly meetings? Or put his address in your Sunday bulletin once a month (and especially before his ordination anniversary or birthday)? Add your Shepherd’s name to your daily prayers. Have a mass said for his intention.

Please contact your Shepherd immediately and frequently. God has blessed us with priests that have answered His call. They need OUR support!

The Spirituality Commission is directly responsible for the Shepherd of the Field Project. The lines of communication are set up as: Diocesan Spirituality – Deanery Spirituality – Parish Spirituality – Parish members

I have information on another new program that supports our priests. The program is entitled **SEVEN SISTERS APOSTOLATE**. More information is also available on the web www.sevensistersapostolate.org for this group. If you do not have access to the internet, just ask someone in your parish to get the information for you. This program is an additional way of supporting our priests.

The MISSION of the Seven Sisters Apostolate is: Committed prayerful support toward a parish pastor through the assurance of the offering of at least one Holy Hour every day of any given week for that pastor alone – a ‘holy wasting’, as it were, for the conversion and holiness of that particular priest. (The mission now also serves individual Archbishops, Bishops, associate priests, retired priests, hospital Chaplains, Seminary Rectors, spiritual directors – all priests.)

Seven women commit to offering a Holy Hour exclusively for their parish Pastor – each on a distinct day of the week, thus covering a complete week. The Hour is ideally prayed in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The generous commitment of prayer is ideally for a period of one year. The Hour is offered solely for the intentions of the Pastor. There will be one Seven Sister designated as the organizer and guide for each Seven Sister group. Since we are dealing with a priest shortage in our Diocese, it is very important to offer as much support as possible to these dedicated men.

The program began in St. Paul, Minnesota in 2010 by Janette Howe. By June of 2011, she had seven churches (49 women) taking part in the Apostolate. The guidelines have been read, fine-tuned and approved by Father Johnson. The Apostolate is continuing to grow and mature, and God-willing producing eternal fruit in the hearts of both the intercessors and priests for whom they pray. All glory be to God! Please be instrumental in starting the Seven Sisters Apostolate in your parish.

PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

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 let them belong 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 sinners and to all they meet. Mary, Mother of Jesus, be their Mother, loving them and bring 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, may grow in the likeness of Christ. Dear Mary, make them humble like you and holy like Jesus. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Lord Jesus, You have chosen Your priests from among us and sent them out to proclaim Your word and to act in Your Name. For so great a gift to Your Church, we give You praise and thanksgiving. 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 shine out through their weakness. In their afflictions let them *never be crushed*; in their doubts *never despair*; in temptation *never be destroyed*; 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 Your heavenly Father and pray for poor sinners. By the 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 be Your gift to every priest. Grant that she, who formed You in her human image, may form them in Your divine image, by the power of Your Spirit, to the glory of God the Father. Amen..