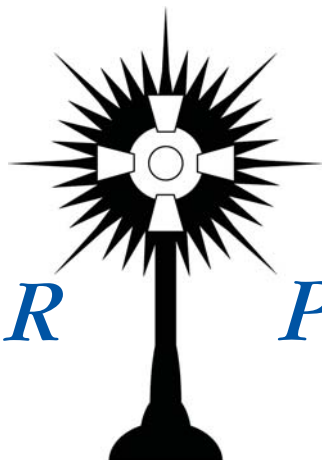


# PRAYER POWER



Winter 2004

Eucharistic Vocation Vigil

## Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
...where there is injury, pardon;  
...where there is doubt, faith;  
...where there is despair, hope;  
...where there is darkness, light;  
...where there is sadness, joy;

Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
...to be consoled as to understand;  
...to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;  
...it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
...and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

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## *Lamplighters*

One dark night, John Ruskin, the 19th century British writer was sitting in front of his window. He stared out into the night, across town, to a distant hillside.

He saw the flaming torch of the town lamplighter igniting street light after street light. He could not see the lamplighter. It was dark. All he could see was the torch and trail of lights he left behind.

Ruskin said to his friend, "That illustrates what I mean by a genuine Christian. You may not know him or ever see him, but his way has been marked by the trail of lights he leaves behind."

You are Christ's lamplighters. Your monthly adoration lights the way for men and women to accept God's call to the religious life. Your faithfulness is the torch that restores Christ to families.

You may not know the families your prayers touch. You may not know the moment when your prayer inspired a man or woman to say, "yes Lord." But, God knows.

## **Isaiah 9: 2-3;6-7**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

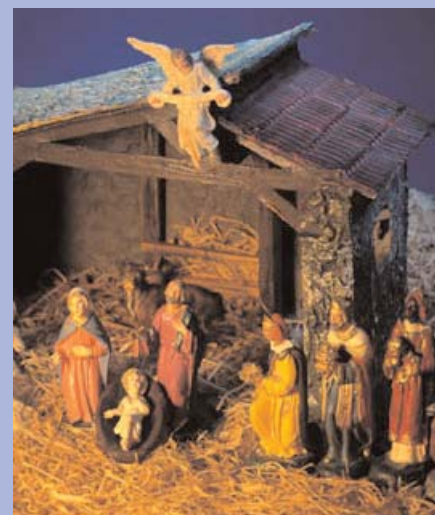
They lived in a land of shadows, but now light is shining on them.

You have given them great joy, Lord;  
you have made them happy.

A child is born to us!  
A son is given to us!  
And he will be our ruler.

He will be called "Wonderful Counsler,"  
"Mighty God," "Eternal Father,"  
"Prince of Peace."

His royal power will continue to grow;  
his kingdom will always be at peace.





## *From the Desk of Peggie O'Neill*

Dear Prayer Power Family,

My prayer for you this Christmas is that the Christ Child's love will reign in your family and in our world. You are the Infant Jesus' gift to the church in Philadelphia. Your loyalty and love for Our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist radiates wherever you go. You are His lamplighters. In honor of Jesus' birthday we picked the wise men as our gift giving example. We associate the wise men's gifts with gold, frankincense and myrrh. But the greatest gift they gave Jesus was their **Hope, Time and Worship**.

When the rest of the world saw darkness, the wise men saw light. These courageous men put their **Hope** in the Messiah. They took the **Time** to set out to find Him. When they found Him they fell on their knees and **Worshiped** Him. I'm sure their friends and family laughed at them, mocked them and called them dreamers. But the wise men knew that somewhere in the darkness of the night was the source and light of their life, the Messiah.

We can see the current events in our world as dark and bleak or like the wise men we can turn to Our Lord with our **Hope, Time and Worship**. Let us look back at one of the darkest moments in our history; the Second World War. Catholics found **Hope** by giving God their **Time and Worship** in daily mass, Eucharistic visits and the rosary. Family rosary was more the norm than the exception. The catholic schools had weekly class masses; chapel visits and school rosary were front and center. Catholic children considered mass, chapel visits and the rosary a badge of honor.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we rekindle the fervor we had during the Second World War? How bright will our lights shine if everyone reading this letter committed to giving God their **Hope, Time and Worship** in daily mass, weekly Eucharistic visits and the family rosary? If we intercede for world peace, families and vocations the world will change. Peace will be restored. Vocations will increase and the church will be healed. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every catholic school for the year of the Eucharist took the children to a weekly visit before the Blessed Sacrament and said the daily rosary for families, peace and vocations?

You are already making a difference. Let us all ask Our Lord this Christmas to show us the way. He wants us to give Him our **Hope, Time and Worship**. "Speak Lord your servant heareth." May this Christmas be the most joyous and peaceful Christmas you and your family ever shared together. God bless, I love you and thank God for you every day.

Love

Peggie O'Neill

## "Planting the Seed for Vocation"

Father Babowitch, the vocation director at Saint Charles Seminary, visits 20 to 30 parishes a year preaching about vocations and stressing the importance of families planting the seed for vocations. "I am convinced that vocations will go on the rise. It is going to take time and effort not only with the priests and sisters, but with the people in the pews."

Father not only relies on the parish priests but feels that school ministers and young seminarians play an integral role in helping young men discern whether to pursue a vocation. "I feel that although my job is to promote vocations, the young men relate to the seminarians because they get to see young people who are happy with what they are doing."

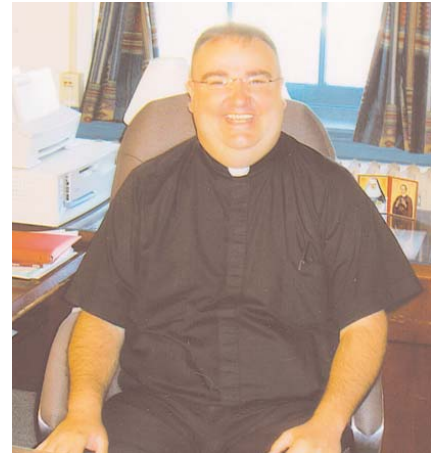
Along with Father's outside work, Saint Charles offers various programs for men to get an inside glimpse of the priesthood. For example, there are evening sessions, retreats and overnights to help men in the discernment process.

On March 13th, Saint Charles will be hosting "A Day at the Seminary." Father is very excited about this event. Each pastor is encouraged to invite two men, ranging from sophomore year in high school to age 45. It will be a memorable day. The men will tour the seminary and hear inspiring vocational stories from the seminarians and the vicars. Cardinal Rigali will celebrate evening prayer and the day will conclude with dinner.

Father's advice to anyone who is thinking about a vocation is to pray. "It is very important to pray that God will bless you and give you direction." Secondly, Father suggests that you get involved in your parish either as a lector, part of a youth group or in a service aspect. Prayer and action should work together. Pray for guidance and give your service to God's people.

It takes a community to support a church but it takes a church community to encourage and foster religious vocations. This is important because it starts at a young age. "It is our baptismal call for all of us to be responsible for going in search of vocations, not to be afraid to say to a young person;

have you ever thought about being a priest? Have you ever thought about being a sister?; You know, I think you would make a good priest; I think you would make a good sister." Father believes this is very possible in a youth friendly parish.



**Father Babowitch**

When people are active in their parish they experience the warmth of a parish community. They realize the value the priest brings to their parish and they support him. They talk openly to their children and friends about vocations. They plant vocation seeds.

### A Prayer For Priests

"Jesus, Mary, I love You, Save Souls."

Keep them, I pray Thee, dearest Lord,  
Keep them, for they are Thine -  
Thy priests whose lives burn out before  
Thy consecrated shrine.  
Keep them, for they are in the world,  
Though from the world apart;  
When earthly pleasures tempt, allure, -  
Shelter them in Thy heart.  
Keep them, and comfort them in hours  
Of loneliness and pain,  
When all their life of sacrifice  
For souls seems but in vain  
Keep them, and O remember, Lord,  
They have no one but Thee  
Yet they have only human hearts,  
With human frailty.  
Keep them as spotless as the Host,  
That daily they caress;  
Their every thought and word and deed,  
Deign, dearest Lord, to bless.

# *The Gift of a Priest in the Family*

**R**osemary and Jim Rodgers are the proud parents of Father Christopher Rodgers.

Father Chris is the eldest of five children. He is a role model and a constant source of inspiration to their family.

Rosemary and Jim believe that their son was born to be a priest. Rosemary recalls him as a young boy playing mass with Neco Wafers, "all his brothers and his sister were his congregation. It just seemed like it was always what he wanted to do." That didn't mean Chris sat at home all the time. He was very social, a very hard worker (he did well in school and always had a job), he was a wonderful brother and friend and he was every parent's dream for a son.

Rosemary and Jim always had a tremendous esteem for the priesthood. Rosemary's twin brother is a catholic priest and his fidelity to his priesthood has had a positive influence on their family. The entire Rodgers family was able to experience first hand how a family priest brings a unique closeness into a family.

Now that their son is a priest they feel closer to him than ever. "Chris brings a specialness and personalness to our family in that he brings the grace of God in a very personal way," said Jim.

Rosemary adds, "it is a special moment when Chris celebrates mass around our dining room table or when he marries or baptizes a family member. It is a real specialness that we never get used to and we never take it for granted. It is a real blessing!"

Rosemary and Jim believe that the priesthood is a gift that is not given to everyone. They definitely saw a piety in Chris that they did not see in their other

children. Jim feels that a religious vocation is a call from God and that it is up to the parent to do everything they can to make this call heard.

"It is very important for a parent to be supportive of their child's decision." Jim continues to explain, "our culture today puts up many obstacles for vocations." He suggests, "One good way to support your son is to bring the family together to pray with him for discernment. Maybe even implement some type of family fast, perhaps a meatless Wednesday or Friday for the grace of discernment." Weekly adoration was already a major part of the Rodgers' spiritual life.

Parents can plant the seed for a vocation by creating a fertile environment for their children to discern the possibility of a vocation. For example, ask them, "have you ever thought about being a priest or religious?" They must do everything they can to encourage and support the boy or girl who is exploring that call.

Rosemary and Jim never discouraged Chris from following his vocation. They encouraged Chris in the same way as they encouraged their other children. With his parent's love and support and with the help of God's grace and really thinking about what he wanted to do and working with it, Chris is able to live out his dream. "It is a job," says Rosemary. "Chris works very hard at being a priest and he enjoys it."

"We are thrilled that Chris is happy because there are so many people who aren't happy in their work, not just priests but other people too. It is a wonderful joy to have a son for a priest." says Rosemary. Rosemary and Jim believe that they have been blessed with the gift of the Eucharist and with the gift of a son as a priest.



**Rosemary, Jim and Father Rodgers**

# A Child's Gift of Hope, Time and Worship

## Changes a Priest's Life Forever

When the communists took over China they closed the churches and imprisoned the priests. They threatened and scared the people into submission. In one small town the priest was imprisoned in his rectory. The church and the rectory were surrounded by heavily armed guards. The holy priest could see the tabernacle in the church from his bedroom window. He was horrified when he watched the communist break into the tabernacle, mock and jeer the consecrated host and throw the hosts on the floor. The priest knew there were exactly thirty-two hosts in the ciborium.

A little girl sat quietly in the back. When the soldiers left, she wanted to make up for their acts of hatred. She snuck into the sanctuary, knelt down and made a holy hour.

Word of what the soldiers did spread throughout the town. Fear and hopelessness overcame everyone but the little girl. While people hid in their homes, the little girl snuck out every night to visit church, make a holy hour and receive Our Lord's body and blood.

When everyone else saw darkness, she saw the light of God's love in the Eucharist. Every evening for thirty-two evenings she took Him her gift of **Hope, Time** and **Worship**. She risked her life to be with Him and worship Him. On the thirty second night, she accidentally made a noise. The guard woke up, ran after her and beat her to death while the priest watched in horror from his bedroom window.

Although the little girl died a martyred death her heroic act of love inspired a young American priest. He promised to make a Holy Hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament every day for the rest of his life. He also promised God he would encourage every priest he met to do the same. This priest, who later became Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, encouraged thousands, maybe millions of priests and others to spend an hour a day worshipping Our Lord in the Eucharist. All because a little girl in China who loved Our Lord in the Eucharist so much she risked her life to give Him her gifts of **Hope, Time** and **Worship**.



## The Value of a Smile at Christmas

It costs nothing, but creates much.

It enriches those who receive, without impoverishing those who give.

It happens in a flash and the memory of it sometimes lasts forever.

None are so rich they can get along without it, and none so poor but are richer for its benefits.

It creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in a business, and is the countersign of friends.

It is rest to the weary, daylight to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and Nature's best antidote for trouble.

Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen, for it is something that is no earthly good to anybody till it is given away.

And if in the last-minute rush of Christmas buying some of our salespeople should be too tired to give you a smile, may we ask you to leave one of yours?

For nobody needs a smile so much as those who have none left to give!



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## ***What's Happening at Prayer Power***

- Peggie O'Neill and her sister, Martie Gillin, were honored for their extraordinary lives as wives and mothers and their remarkable work for the Church and community by the Saint Patrick Pontifical Seminary of Maynooth, Ireland.
- Peg has given talks to 10 parishes about Eucharistic Adoration.
- Prayer Power has added 300 new people for weekly Adoration.
- The Annual Giving Appeal has been changed from December to February.

***Have a Happy and Holy Christmas!!!!***