

Incline for Vocations updates.

#1 INCLINE FOR VOCATIONS

Since the Manitou Incline is now legal to hike, Bishop Sheridan has given me permission to begin an initiative that I call,

"Incline for Vocations." Beginning Friday, February 15 and continuing every Friday of Lent, I will hike the Incline and pray for more vocations here in our Diocese. I invite you to join me (or select another day of the week to do it and keep track of your efforts). My thought is to grow a number of individuals willing to hike the Incline on a regular basis with the express intention of praying for more vocations here in our Diocese. The Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, and spontaneous prayer for individuals can easily be used as you are hiking.

I ask everyone to keep track of their efforts so that I can compile a list of participants and the amount of Inclines that you offer for vocations.

Of course, it's important to observe the rules of the Incline and remember that everyone hikes at their OWN RISK. It's quite a workout and is not for those with medical issues. Please contact me if you are interested. "Let us persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

#2 INCLINE FOR VOCATIONS - First Friday of Lent

The dark of night turned to the light of day. A thick coat of frost mixed with dirt on every rail. In the early morning light the rails colored like ashes on each forehead on Ash Wednesday. 10 degrees at the bottom. 8 degrees at the top. Snow pack and ice, higher and higher.

As I hiked the Manitou Incline for Vocations this morning, I prayed for a number of young men and women who had been recommended to me for prayer. I thought of the culture that we live in, like the cold snow and ice that make it hard to get a grip on God's foundation of love. As the sun slowly broke through the clouds for a brief moment, I prayed that the rising Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, would melt through the hardness of our times and nourish more vocations in our Diocese.

Thanks to Greg and Cheryl Burrell, long-time parishioners and school family from Corpus Christi, who prayed along the way today. So far, about 20 people expressed an interest in doing the Manitou Incline for Vocations. Feel free to pick a day and time that is convenient for you and spread the word to others who might be interested. I'm going on each Friday of Lent around 6:15 AM. The conditions right now require micro-spikes

or other heavy-duty metal traction on your shoes. Please remember that you hike at your OWN RISK and respect the rules of the Incline.

Yesterday, Pope Benedict spoke to the priests of Rome about the DECLINE in priestly and religious vocations over the last 50 years. Let's begin an INCLINE for new vocations this Lent!

#3 INCLINE FOR VOCATIONS – SECOND FRIDAY IN LENT

2610 steps, 8585 feet. . . in 6 inches of new snow! At least it was 10 degrees warmer than last Friday. 18 degrees!

Thanks to Tom Ghigleri, parishioner of Holy Apostles and long-time school parent at Corpus Christi, for joining us. Any Friday morning of Lent --- or any time that's convenient for you --- pray for more vocations in our Diocese! I have a growing list of 20 people, so far, who have climbed the Incline, or are planning to in the near future. I have a growing list of 12 people, so far, who have been recommended to me for prayer toward a possible priestly or religious vocation.

Save the Date of Sunday, April 21! Following the 11:00 AM Mass here at Corpus Christi, we will carpool to the Incline and pray for vocations together. Sunday, April 21 is ***the World Day of Prayer for Vocations!***

#4 INCLINE FOR VOCATIONS - with soldiers from Fort Carson Friday morning, THIRD FRIDAY IN LENT

0600, I was surrounded by dozens of soldiers from Fort Carson doing the Manitou Incline. Some were smoking at the bottom. Others were vomiting at the top. Half-way, one said to his buddy, "leave my sorry *#! behind." His buddy said, "NEVER!"

Out of 1.2 million active-duty soldiers in the U.S. military, 375,000 are Catholic, and they have around 800,000 dependents. Yet there are just 300 priests currently ministering to them.

Keep praying for more vocations to the priesthood, here in our Diocese, and to serve as Military chaplains around the world.

Should we leave their sorry *#!#* behind?
NEVER!

#5 INCLINE FOR VOCATIONS – FOURTH FRIDAY IN LENT

"I had a beautiful and meditative hike: 50 minutes up and 26 down," wrote Dave Ambuhl this morning after making the Incline for Vocations. Dave's time is really outstanding! Most folks take much longer. . . including me. . . especially on the way down the Barr Trail!

Thanks to everyone who is making the Incline for Vocations this Lent. I've heard from numerous individuals and families that have made the prayer hike throughout this holy time. Praying the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, and meditating on the people recommended for prayer make the entire experience exhilarating! Next Friday, Good Friday, March 29, is our last Friday morning on the Incline for Vocations.

Our next Incline for Vocations event will be Sunday, April 21, following our 11 AM Mass here at Corpus Christi. April 21 is World Day of Prayer for Vocations. We'll carpool from our Church parking lot following that Mass and go to the Incline together. Spread the word and keep praying for more priests, deacons, and consecrated religious to serve the Church in our Diocese.

#6 INCLINE FOR VOCATIONS – FIFTH FRIDAY IN LENT

Good Friday was a Good Friday to Incline for Vocations! The Chaplet of Divine Mercy was timely for each step: "For the sake of His sorrowful passion, have mercy on us, and on the whole world. "The full moon was setting over Manitou Springs, offering enough light --- just before the dawn --- Easter! He is Risen! Alleluia! On this final Friday of the Incline for Vocations, I prayed in a special way for young men and women who are suffering because of their call to be priests, deacons, sisters, or brothers in consecrated religious life. Family, friends, and acquaintances can often discourage and intimidate a real vocation -- even put it in a grave. I remember when I was little. Family and friends would ask me why I wanted to be a priest. I would respond: "I want to pray for sinners." They would either laugh out loud or tell me that I would outgrow it. Mom and Dad would be quiet or say a neutral: "If you're happy, we're happy." The Divine Mercy that Jesus offers all sinners from his Easter victory is celebrated in a special way on April 6-7 this year. Many young men and women want to pray for sinners --- and NEVER outgrow it --- and we're HAPPY!

Easter!

He is Risen!

Alleluia!

#7 INCLINE FOR VOCATIONS - SUNDAY, APRIL 21

Join us for the Incline for Vocations on Sunday, April 21. We will leave for the Manitou Incline from the Corpus Christi Church parking lot at 12:30 PM. Bring water and dress appropriately for the weather. Bring a Rosary! Plan a minimum of two hours (round-trip). We go up the Incline and down the Barr Trail.

A brother priest mentioned that for those not so "inclined" they could ---"Recline for Vocations!" Great idea! If you take a Sunday afternoon siesta, please offer a prayer for more priests, deacons, and religious to serve in our Diocese!

"We need good holy priests and dedicated men and women committed to the consecrated life to help build the Kingdom of God here and now," said Archbishop Robert J. Carlson of St. Louis, who chairs the U.S. bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. "Therefore, we want a stronger culture of vocations in our own nation to help each Catholic realize that we all have a responsibility to invite young people to consider if God is calling them to the priesthood or consecrated life," the archbishop explained. Vocations are part of the Church's "basic mission," which is "to preach the Gospel and help build a civilization of love in our world today," he stressed. Archbishop Carlson's statements reflected the theme for this year's World Day of Prayer for Vocations, which is "Vocations as a sign of hope founded in faith." According to the U.S.

Conference of Catholic Bishops, this theme "underscores the hope that vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life bring to the entire Church."

The U.S. bishops' conference is offering resources on its website to help foster vocations, including video testimonies of priests, religious men and women religious, as well as parents whose children entered the priesthood or religious life. The website also features lesson plans, parish retreat resources and discernment aids. You start at <http://www.usccb.org/> An additional web page specifically on the World Day of Prayer for Vocations features prayers, information on vocations and an October 2012 message from former Pope Benedict XVI on this year's theme and its importance.

Father John Guthrie, associate director of the Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations said that the United States has "seen a slight increase in religious vocations in the U.S. over the past few years." "It is our hope to continue this development by helping every member of the Church to encourage and promote vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life," he explained.