



## DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

OFFICE OF CLERGY SUPPORT

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2024



### ***What is Priesthood Sunday?***

Priesthood Sunday is a special day set aside to honor priesthood in the United States. It is a day to reflect upon and affirm the role of the priesthood in the life of the Church as a central one. This nationwide event is coordinated and sponsored by the US Council of Serra International.

### ***When is Priesthood Sunday celebrated?***

Priesthood Sunday is celebrated on the last Sunday of September. Note: Parishes may choose to celebrate Priesthood Sunday on another Sunday when it is convenient for them.

### ***Why is Priesthood Sunday important?***

Catholics are invited to observe Vatican-backed worldwide events, namely, World Day of Prayer for Vocations and World Day for Consecrated Life. In the United States, we also have National Vocation Awareness Week and National Catholic Sisters Week. Priesthood Sunday, however, specifically honors priests, without whom the Mass could not be offered, and Sacraments could not be celebrated.

More than the other events listed above, Priesthood Sunday is a more personal one for parishes and organizations with a chaplain. It is for those who cultivate close working relationships with their priests and therefore could benefit from a special day to express their gratitude. It's a chance to thank and honor priests in unique ways.

It is essential to note that the number of priests and ordinations in the United States has steadily declined in the past 50 years. Meanwhile, the number of parishes without a resident priest pastor has sharply increased in the same period of time. The men who answer the call to priesthood are special indeed, and they are working harder than ever before.

Let us PRAY for all Priests on Priesthood Sunday and every day to see their vocation as a blessing and strive to live out their calling to be CHRIST to all! Do not wait until a priest retires or is transferred to celebrate their service. Like Father's Day, let Priesthood Sunday be the one day a year when we make it a point to make priests feel truly appreciated and special.

### ***PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY PRAYER for parishioners to pray for their priests.***

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of priests. Through them, we experience your presence in the sacraments. Help our priests to be strong in their vocation. Set their soul on fire with love for your people. Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Inspire them with the vision of your Kingdom. Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel. Allow them to experience joy in their ministry. Help them to become instruments of your divine grace. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest. Amen.