

St. Petersburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (DCCW), Inc.
Penny a Prayer for Priests (PPP) Vocations Awareness Project

For the women of the St. Petersburg Diocese (Florida), since 2002, the humble penny has become a memory device. We all know that prayers for vocations are important but our awareness and the prayers generated by seeing the penny as a memory device linked to vocations continues to enrich our diocese. Our major seminary is full and a new wing is being planned. Now when we see a stray penny - on the ground, under our husband's chair, at the bottom of our purse, or wherever - we think vocations! And remember to say a simple prayer for vocations to the priesthood. Pool your family's pennies and say a Rosary - that's sixty-five (65) prayers for vocations. All pennies must be accompanied by prayer!

For us "A Penny Saved" is more than a "Penny Earned" because each penny we set aside represents a prayer from the heart for good men to answer the call and persevere to ordination and service as priests in the St. Petersburg Diocese. And, yes, we did collect the pennies that first official year and counted them all through our 2003 Convention - even at night in the hotel room, on the little table between the beds. Now parish affiliates deposit them mailing checks made payable to the DCCW to the current DCCW Treasurer. At our Annual Convention, a Vocations Check is presented to our Bishop. The PPP monies are combined with the Bishop's Vocation Fund (BVF) card donations - In Memory, Get Well, or Celebration. But that's another story.

Our St. Petersburg DCCW *A Penny a Prayer for Priests* Vocations Awareness Project was begun by deceased member, Owana Buttles, who chaired our Church Commission, Family Commission and twice our Legislation Commission. Owana modified the "A Penny and a Prayer" presented by Delores Laska, Omaha ACCW, at the Poster Session of the 1999 National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) Convention in Kansas City, Missouri

How ironic that the penny, the lowest coin, should represent a prayer for a priest, the highest of all vocations. We have seen the number of men considering a vocation and entering our two seminaries grow as *A Penny a Prayer for Priests* has become a permanent DCCW program. There were 16 new seminarians in 2000 and 2001 right after the NCCW Kansas City Convention and an additional 66 through 2012 once the program was diocese-wide. This year we have added two (2) more seminarians.

Our financial records begin in 2006 and, as of April 1st, 2013, there have been 735,596 prayers for vocations reported equaling \$7,355.96 donated through *A Penny a Prayer for Priests*. The lowly penny now has infinite value to the Councilwomen of the St. Petersburg Diocese.

DCCW 1stVP Mary Woltman designed the priestly penny receptacle - a white-capped plastic bottle dressed in a cassock; photography by Alan and Bob Erickson to be provided at a later date

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