



Ideas for encouraging prayer for Returners

For individuals:

Prayer “partnerships”

Randomly pair up people in the Landings group. They agree to pray for each other daily/weekly. Mobile phone alarms can be set as reminders! Praying for each other at the same time of day/week can be powerful.

or

Pair up parishioners with the names of potential returners (see Prayer Basket or Prayer Tree below for sources of these...)

Have (free!) *prayer cards* available for taking home at the back of the church, featuring a ‘prayer for Returners’ such as those overleaf

Couples and Families:

24/7 Prayer

Put up a (weekly/monthly) calendar at the back of the church. One person, couple or family ‘signs up’ to a day and agrees to pray for that intention on that day...

For the parish:

During Advent, have a ‘*Prayer Tree*’ in the Church porch or somewhere appropriate - make cardboard 'baubles' which have a prayer on one side (Children’s liturgy activity? – or maybe the parish Brownies or Guides would do this) and ask parishioners to write the names of those they would like prayers for on the other side - something like 'my brother' or 'a first name' but not something that will identify the person.

The whole congregation is then asked to pray for those who have left the church for whatever reason in the hope that they feel able to return if it is their wish.
(Submitted by Elizabeth Norris, Parish Pastoral Assistant, Livingston)

The Rosary could then be prayed for this intention - or this could be used by the parish Prayer group. Or Mass could be celebrated for these people on a ‘People of the Parish’ intention day...with the intention published in the newsletter.

A *basket for prayer intentions* could be provided, perhaps at the foot of an appropriate statue... Small cards could be provided for names (as in Prayer Tree)

above. Then these could be distributed among people prepared to pray for each person.

The *elderly, sick and housebound* can be ‘powerhouses of prayer’. Maybe they would appreciate an active part in the church’s outreach by being given a prayer request or a prayer partner. (Eucharistic ministers/Hospital Chaplains can be galvanised into action here!)

In addition to being remembered in the bidding prayers regularly, a ‘prayer for a returner’ could be *published on the parish website*, or in the newsletter on special days such as Ash Wednesday.

A Returners’ prayer can be used to *finish parish meetings*, with a word about its significance...

‘Under the wing’ of another ministry

Early Landings groups flourished when ‘adopted’ by another ministry. Perhaps the UCM, Knights of St. Columba or other ministry may agree to pray for the development of ministry in this area - or more!

Prayer of a non churchgoing Catholic

*Lord Jesus Christ,
you are the gentle moon and the joyful stars,
that watch over the darkest night.
You are the source of all rest,
calming troubled hearts
and bringing sleep to the weary.
You are the sweetness that fills our mind with quiet joy,
and can turn us to dream of heaven.
May I* dream of your sweetness,
follow your kindly light
and be led to the fullness of your love
in the family of your Church.*

Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536) (adapted by Fr. James Leachman)

(*To pray this on behalf of someone, substitute his or her name here)

May Christ support us all the day long
Till the shadows lengthen and the evening comes,
The busy world is hushed, the fervour of life is o’er,
And our work is done.
Then, in His mercy, may He give us
A safe harbour, a holy rest and peace at the last. Amen.

Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman