



POPE JOHN PAUL II AWARD

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Message from the Bishop of Kerry

I welcome the decision of our diocese to participate in the Pope John Paul II Award. The Award was created in 2006 in commemoration of Pope John Paul II who had such belief and confidence in young people. He died in 2005 and was canonised in 2014. It is worth reading about his life, read it in Wikipedia. Three outstanding aspects of his papacy were:

- Prior to becoming pope, he lived all his life in Poland in Eastern Europe, which at that time was dominated by the Soviet Union. As pope he was a major spiritual influence enabling those nations gain freedom from Soviet domination, largely without war or loss of life, thank God.
- Coming to Western Europe as pope, he challenged the West to ensure that its democratic and economic ways were truly for the happiness and good of all its peoples.
- In his final years, he bore serious ill health with wonderful endurance, courage and faith in Jesus Christ.

The Pope John Paul II Award is designed to encourage young people to be involved in their local community and parish, to discover the contribution they can make in response to the very challenging words of Jesus, "Love God and Love one another, Love your neighbour". The Award invites young people to use their talents and energies in service of local needs in both the church and the community and thus discover the joy of giving and the joy of belonging.

A key insight into education and learning is to see it as involving head, heart and hands. *The head* because adequate knowledge is required for understanding: *the heart* because you need to decide what you believe to be true and what you are committed to: *the hands* because what we believe and what we commit to is confirmed in our actions, by how we live our lives every moment of each day. The Pope John Paul II Award seeks to engage young people at head, heart and hands level.

Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation to Young People and the entire People of God wrote:

"The community has an important role in the accompaniment of young people. It should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging them. All should regard young people with understanding, appreciation and affection, and avoid constantly judging them or demanding of them a perfection beyond their years."
(Pope Francis: Paragraph 243, Christus Vivit, 2019).



+ Ray Browne
Diocese of Kerry
8th September 2026

Pope John Paul II Award

The Pope John Paul II Award encourages you to go beyond your comfort zone on a [journey of self-discovery](#). It challenges you to give your time, your talents, your intellect, and your social skills for the [well-being of others and for the Glory of God](#).

The Award was created to commemorate the late Pope John Paul II who was so committed to young people and who had such belief and confidence in them.

Through the Pope John Paul II Award, young people in the Diocese of Kerry will be enabled to take an active part in the life of their Church, in the life of their community and society, and also become more aware of the teaching and role of the Catholic Church in the world. This will enable young people to engage at a deep level with Christ, whose body the Church is.

It will allow young people to understand that religion and faith are not just for learning, nor are they a list of rules, but that they are for living.



Who is the Award for?

Who is the Award for?

- Students in full-time education who have completed Junior Certificate.
- Anyone between the ages 16 and 18, who is not in post-primary education.
- Members of Spirit Youth Group/Youth Groups aged 15 to 18.
- The award is non-competitive, flexible and voluntary and requires an ongoing commitment

The people involved

- Award Patron - The Bishop of Kerry
Bishop Ray Browne
- Award Making Body - Pope John Paul II
Award Committee
- Award Leaders - Parish Youth Leaders,
Spirit Leaders, Clergy/Deacons, Lay Leaders
- Facilitators - Those persons who will facilitate the
candidates to fulfil individual tasks/activities
- Administrative Centre – The Pastoral Centre,
Killarney is the overall support for parish
administrative centres.



How does the Award work?

How many Awards are there?

There are four Awards: The Papal Cross, Gold, Silver and Bronze.

What is the completion time?

16 months beginning in September.

How do I earn the Award?

You earn your Award by taking part in activities through Parish Involvement and Social Awareness, and preparation of a Reflection. For the Papal Cross Award, which only begins after completing the Gold Award, the Reflection is replaced by a project.

Award Levels:



The Papal Cross Award

Gold Award

Parish Involvement: 1 hr per week for 26 weeks

Social Awareness: 1 hr per week for 26 weeks
Project



Gold Award

Parish Involvement: 1 hr per week for 20 weeks

Social Awareness: 1 hr per week for 20 weeks
Reflection



Silver Award

Parish Involvement: 1 hr per week for 14 weeks

Social Awareness: 1 hr per week for 14 weeks
Reflection



Bronze Award

Parish Involvement: 1 hr per week for 8 weeks

Social Awareness: 1 hr per week for 8 weeks
Reflection

How does the Award work?

How do I enrol in the Award?

Visit www.thepopejohnpauliiaward.com to download the application form and parental consent form (for those who are under 18 years of age). You should then return the completed forms with the enrolment fee to your Award Leader in your parish/youth group.

Is there an enrolment fee?

Yes, to enrol in the Award it costs €20. The Award Leader will collect all money. A cheque will then be sent to Diocese of Kerry Pastoral Centre and made payable to the Pope John Paul II Award.

What happens next?

When your enrolment is processed you will receive your Record Card from your Award Leader. You will decide with your Award Leader what activity or activities you intend to carry out under the sections 'Parish Involvement' and 'Social Awareness'. Please be sure that the named facilitator signs your Record Card each time. The presentation is to be completed at the end of the tasks.



How do I claim my Award?

On completion of the hours and the presentation, you should return your Record Card and presentation to the Award Leader. These are ratified by the appropriate person(s) e.g. Parish Youth Representative, Clergy, and forwarded to:
Pope John Paul II Award Committee
St John Paul II Pastoral Centre
Rock Road
Killarney
Co. Kerry
V93 X6HR

Parish Involvement

Encouraging Parish Involvement

When we are baptised, we become members of the Body of Christ. This means that we are called to be the presence of Christ in the world. As the Body of Christ, we belong to the community of the Church. We live out this belonging in our parish. For the Church, for the Body of Christ to be fully alive everybody needs to be actively involved. There are many things we can do in our parish.

Examples of activities that can be done for the Award in the parish are:

- Reading at Mass
- Altar Server
- Eucharistic Minister
- Member of choir/folk group
- Children's Liturgy of the Word
- Church Decoration
- Collector
- Composing prayers of the faithful
- Faith Development Programmes
- Pastoral Councils
- Preparing articles for the parish bulletin



- Welcoming/handing out leaflets or bulletins
- Attend weekly hour of Adoration

There may be other activities that you are involved in that are not included here but may be relevant, if so please contact the Pope John Paul II Award Committee for approval.

Social Awareness

Encouraging Social Awareness

As members of the Body of Christ, through baptism, we make Christ present by the way we treat others. Our faith is lived out most fully in our actions, that is why it is important to be aware of the needs of others and to minister to their needs. That is why 'Social Awareness' is such an important aspect of this Award.

Examples of activities in the area of Social Awareness that you could do for your Award are:

- Member of St. Vincent de Paul
- Involvement with School Retreats
- Coaching games
- Trócaire
- Youth organisations, example Spirit Youth Group, Youth 2000, Scouts, Guides, etc.
- Children's Rosary
- Helping in Faith Camps
- Ongoing fundraising
- Regular visitation of residential homes
- Peer Mentoring



There may be other activities that you are involved in that are not included here but may be relevant, if so please contact the Pope John Paul II Award Committee for approval.

Reflection

Preparing the Reflection

When the participant completes the Parish Involvement and the Social Awareness sections of the Award he/she prepares a Reflection. This Reflection may be written, or on request it can take the form of an oral presentation which will be recorded and then transcribed.

The Reflection is to include:

- A personal reflection and evaluation on any one activity carried out for the Award.
- The teaching of the Church that is relevant to the activity (e.g. visiting a residential home - teaching of the Church in relation to the care of the elderly and vulnerable. Reading at Mass - teaching of the Church in relation to the Word of God).
- An answer to the question - What does it mean to be a baptised member of the Church?

Through the Reflection, the participant will show a knowledge and understanding of what they did within the context of the Church. Their role within the Church will become more apparent.



Award Top-Ups

Award Top-Ups

Award Top-Ups are given in recognition of the extra activities that young people are already involved in. Top-Ups will go towards the total number of hours an individual has to complete.

Top-Ups can be achieved in a number of ways - see below:

Top-Ups:

Papal Cross	7.5 hours
Gold	6 hours
Silver	4.5 hours
Bronze	3 hours

Pilgrimage

Many parishes organise pilgrimages, either specifically for young people, or for the wider parish community, but open to young people. Participation in this type of activity can be part of the Pope John Paul II Award.

Diocesan Youth Activities/Pilgrimages/Trips

On a number of occasions during the year, the Diocesan Youth Ministry Team will organise youth activities such as participation in Diocesan activities such as Youth Week, Youth Retreat Days, Donal Walsh Live Life Day, Youth 2000 Festival,

Knock Shrine, Lourdes and Medjugorje or other pilgrimage activities. Participation in these activities can be part of the Pope John Paul II Award.

Spirit Youth Groups & other Parish Youth Groups

Spirit Youth Group is a parish-based group which is aimed at TY students. Spirit is a dynamic, exciting and motivational youth group. The framework of the group is devised to encourage teamwork, positive peer support, positive self-development, friendship and a supportive value ethos. Other youth parish groups are also included. Participation in these types of activities can be part of the Pope John Paul II Award.

There may be other activities that you are involved in that are not included here but may be relevant, if so, please contact the Pope John Paul II Award Committee for approval.

Code of Ethics

Participants Code of Ethics

The Pope John Paul II Award values and encourages the participation of young people in activities which allow them to live their faith in Jesus Christ in the community of the Church. The Award is committed to helping young people enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development through participation in school, parish and community activities.

In keeping with this ethos, the Award has drawn up a Code of Ethics for all participants.

Participants will:

- Follow the policies and procedures already in place in their schools, parishes and community groups where the Award activities will take place
- Obtain signed consent from parents/guardians to participate in activities and events associated with the Award, where participants are under 18 years of age
- Treat people with courtesy, dignity and respect
- Avoid inappropriate language and/or sexually suggestive comments/jokes
- Not engage in any behaviour that could be construed as bullying or abusive
- Not engage in any inappropriate physical contact

Code of Ethics

Participants will:

- Respect a person's right to privacy
- Act with particular care if visiting residential homes and ensure all safeguarding requirements are adhered to
- Abide by arrangements and procedures for entering and exiting activity events and venues
- Act according to directions and regulations when carrying out fundraising activities for charities
- Report immediately to the School Principal or designated Child Protection Person for the Diocese of Kerry if they have any concerns about their own safety and well-being, or that of another participant
- Sign up to the Code of Behaviour before beginning the Award
- Not be permitted to smoke whilst engaged in activities associated with the Pope John Paul II Award
- Refrain from alcohol or illegal substances



Participants found to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances during activities will be asked to withdraw immediately from the Award and their continued participation will be reviewed in consultation with the School Principal or the Award Committee.

Offices

Diocese of Kerry:

The Pope John Paul II Award Committee
St Pope John Paul II Pastoral Centre
Rock Road
Killarney
Co. Kerry
V93 X6HR

Tel: 064 6632644

Email: adminpastoralcentre@dioceseofkerry.ie
thepopejohnpauliiaward.com/kerry

Award Central Office Derry:

Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre
The Gate Lodge
2 Francis Street
Derry
BT48 7DS

Tel: 00 44 28 7126 4087

Email: admin@thepopejohnpauliiaward.com
thepopejohnpauliiaward.com



*Trust Christ; listen attentively to his teachings, fix your eyes on his face,
persevere in listening to His word.
Allow Him to focus your search and aspirations,
all your ideals and the desires of your heart.*

Pope John Paul II