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Parents Prayer for Vocations

Gracious and loving God you have blessed us with the privilege of becoming Parents.

We ask that you provide us with all that we need in accepting this great responsibility.

We pray that we will be open to your Spirit who is our source of strength as we witness to our children your love for each of them and your desire for them to be happy and to live a full life.

We ask for your help so we may guide and encourage our children to believe that they each have a special calling and to use their gifts and talents for others.

We pray, Heavenly Father, that our children will discover and respond enthusiastically to your desire for them whether it be to the vocation of single, married, ordained or consecrated life.

We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer for Vocations

O Jesus, gentle and good shepherd
You call each of us to follow you in various ways.

Help those whom you call to follow you
in ordained ministry or religious life,
to listen to your voice.

May your Holy Spirit guide them
and help them discern your call,
to give their lives in service of you.

Empower those who hear your call
with the grace and courage to take the first step
and follow the path you have carved for them.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Prayer to Know My Vocation (from Vianney Vocations)

Lord, I want to be happy in this life
and spend eternity with You in the life to come.

From the first moment of my existence,
You knew my vocation.
Please help me discover Your plan for my life.
Help me to know myself.
Help me to overcome my fears.
Help me to want what You want.
Help me to trust You completely.
Send Your Holy Spirit into my mind and heart
so I can see the gifts You have given me
and hear Your call to serve the Church.
Increase my desire to bring others to You
and to help them reach heaven.

A Prayer for Seminarians

Father, thank You for the generosity of our seminarians.
Safeguard them as they prepare for the priesthood.
Keep all evil far from them, so they may become strong Christian men who are
faithful to prayer, diligent in their studies, open to spiritual direction, and docile to
all aspects of seminary formation.
Above all, enflame their hearts with love so they will be ardent and gentle
shepherds for Your Church.
We make this prayer through the great High Priest, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
St. Charles Borromeo, patron of seminarians, pray for us.

NEWSLETTER NOTICE

World Day of Prayer for Vocations, also known as "Good Shepherd Sunday" will be celebrated on Sunday, May 8, 2022. The purpose of this day is to publicly fulfill the Lord's instruction to, "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest" (Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2). Please pray that young men and women hear and respond generously to the Lord's call to the priesthood, diaconate, religious life, societies of apostolic life or secular institutes.

If interested in discerning a vocation to priesthood or religious life, please contact Fr. Tony Gonoude, 044 9373923

UNDERSTANDING VOCATION

All Christians share a common vocation: to grow in holiness and spread the message of Jesus' life and saving work. An important part of our common vocation is responding to God's love throughout our lives.

God may call us to become holy by any path he chooses. How can we know what God is calling us to be and to do? We can hear God in prayer, through the celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments. We can hear God when we reflect on the gifts and talents he has given us which may point to a certain vocation. We can hear God in the wisdom of people of faith who advise and encourage us.

God calls some men to the ordained priesthood. "Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time." (CCC, 1536) There are actually three orders, or degrees, to the Sacrament of Holy Orders: deacons, priests, and bishops.

Some deacons are ordained for the purpose of helping and serving and assisting priests in their role. This is called the permanent diaconate. Others are ordained deacons as a step in the process of becoming a priest. The priest represents Christ and teaches, governs, and sanctifies in his name. The priest grows in holiness as he cares for the Church, the Body of Christ, and is an example of service and compassion. Some priests are called to serve the Church in the role of bishop, receiving the "fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders" (CCC, 1557).

God calls some women and men to the religious life. Religious sisters, brothers, and priests devote themselves to Christ's work through the charism and work of their communities. They often make vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to try to follow Jesus' example of living each day for God.

Although we may have different states in life: single, married, ordained, or vowed religious, all of us are called by God to love and serve him. We answer God's call by the way we live.

Learn more about vocation on www.vocations.ie

(Source: Sadlier)

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

For Vocations

On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we pray for an increase in vocations to ministry in priesthood, the diaconate and religious life. We pray that men and women may be able to quieten the noise in life, so that they may be able to hear the whisper of God's call in their lives. Lord, hear us.

For Discernment

For young men and women; that God may give them the grace to discern their vocation and call to service in the Church and for the gift of courage to follow His call. Lord, hear us.

For Guidance

That our young people may find direction in their lives as they discern God's call to priesthood, consecrated life, married life, single life, or the diaconate. Lord, hear us.

For Leaders and Guides

For those who work with young people, that they will encourage them to listen carefully for God's call. Lord, hear us.

For Gift of The Holy Spirit

For those who are having difficulty discerning their vocations, that the Holy Spirit give them wisdom and peace. Lord, hear us.

For Parents

That parents will happily encourage their children to remain open to the priesthood or consecrated life. Lord, hear us.

For Priests and Religious

For our priests and religious that they may continue to inspire men and women in faith hope and love. Lord, hear us.

For Our Deceased

We pray for our dead, for those who have gone before us, marked with the sign of faith. We pray especially for our deceased priests and religious, that the Good Shepherd will welcome them with open arms and reward them for their service and goodness. Lord, hear us.

(Source: Prayers of the Faithful – vocations.ie)

POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE FOR VOCATION SUNDAY 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

At the time when the cold winds of war and oppression are blowing and when we frequently encounter signs of polarization, we as a Church have undertaken a synodal process: we sense the urgent need to journey together, cultivating the spirit of listening, participation and sharing . Together with all men and women of good will, we want to help build the human family , heal its wounds and guide it to a better future. On this 59th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, I would like to reflect with you on the broader meaning of "vocation" within the context of a synodal Church, a Church that listens to God and to the world.

Called to be protagonists together of the Church's mission

Synodality, journeying together, is a fundamental vocation to the Church. Only against this horizon is it possible to discern and esteem the various vocations, charisms and ministries. We know that the Church exists to evangelize, to go forth and to sow the seed of the Gospel in history. This mission can only be carried out if all areas of pastoral activity work together and, even more importantly, involve all the Lord's disciples. For "in virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 120). We must beware of the mentality that would separate priests and laity, considering the former as protagonists and the latter as executors, and together carry forward the Christian mission as the one People of God, laity and pastors. The Church as a whole is an evangelizing community.

Called to be guardians of one another and of creation

The word "vocation" should not be understood restrictively, as referring simply to those who follow the Lord through a life of special consecration. All of us are called to share in Christ's mission to reunite a fragmented humanity and to reconcile it with God. Each man and woman, even before encountering Christ and embracing the Christian faith, receives with the gift of life a fundamental calling: each of us is a creature willed and loved by God; each of us has a unique and special place in the mind of God. At every moment of our lives, we are called to

foster this divine spark, present in the heart of every man and woman, and thus contribute to the growth of a humanity inspired by love and mutual acceptance. We are called to be guardians of one another, to strengthen the bonds of harmony and sharing, and to heal the wounds of creation lest its beauty be destroyed. In a word, we are called to become a single family in the marvellous common home of creation, in the reconciled diversity of its elements. In this broad sense, not only individuals have a "vocation", but peoples, communities and groups of various kinds as well.

Called to welcome God's gaze

Within this great common vocation, God addresses a particular call to each of us. He touches our lives by his love and directs them to our ultimate goal, to a fulfillment that transcends the very threshold of death. That is how God wanted to see our lives and how he sees them still.

Michelangelo Buonarroti is said to have maintained that every block of stone contains a statue within it, and it is up to the sculptor to uncover it. If that is true of an artist, how much more is it true of God! In the young woman of Nazareth he saw the Mother of God. In Simon the fisherman he saw Peter, the rock on which he would build his Church. In the public Levi he recognized the apostle and evangelist Matthew, and in Saul, a harsh persecutor of Christians, he saw Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. God's loving gaze always meets us, touches us, sets us free and transforms us, making us into new persons.

That is what happens in every vocation: we are met by the gaze of God, who calls us. Vocation, like holiness, is not an extraordinary experience reserved for a few. Just as there is a "holiness of the saints next door" (cf. *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 6-9), so too there is a vocation for everyone, for God's gaze and call is directed to every person.

According to a proverb from the Far East, "a wise person, looking at the egg can see an eagle; looking at the seed he glimpses a great tree; looking at the sinner he glimpses a saint". That is how God looks at us: in each of us, he sees a certain potential, at times unknown to ourselves, and throughout our lives he works tirelessly so that we can place this potential at the service of the common good.

Vocation arises in this way, thanks to the art of the divine Sculptor who uses his "hands" to make us go forth from ourselves and become the masterpiece that we are called to be. The word of God, which frees us from self-absorption, is especially able to purify, enlighten and recreate us. So let us listen to that word, in order to become ever more open to the vocation that God entrusts to us! And let

us learn to listen also to our brothers and sisters in the faith, for their advice and example may help disclose the plan of God, who shows us ever new paths to pursue.

Called to respond to God's gaze

God's loving and creative gaze met us in an entirely unique way in Jesus. The evangelist Mark tells us that, speaking with the rich young man, "Jesus looking upon him, loved him" (10:21). This gaze of Jesus, full of love, rests upon each of us. Brothers and sisters, let us allow ourselves to be moved by this gaze to allow him to lead us outside of ourselves! Let us also learn to look at one another in such a way that all those with whom we live and encounter - whoever they may be - will feel welcomed and discover that there is someone who looks at them with love and invites them to develop their full potential.

Our lives change when we welcome this gaze. Everything becomes a vocational dialogue between ourselves and the Lord, but also between ourselves and others. A dialogue that, experienced in depth, makes us become ever more who we are. In the vocation to the ordained priesthood, to be instruments of Christ's grace and mercy. In the vocation to the consecrated life, to be the praise of God and the prophecy of a new humanity. In the vocation to marriage, to be mutual gift and givers and teachers of life. In every ecclesial vocation and ministry that calls us to see others and the world through God's eyes, to serve goodness and to spread love with our works and words.

Here I would like to mention the experience of Dr José Gregorio Hernández Cisneros. While working as a physician in Caracas, Venezuela, he wanted to become a Third Order Franciscan. Later, he thought of becoming a monk and a priest, but his health did not allow it. He came to understand that his calling was the medical profession, in which he spent himself above all in service to the poor. He devoted himself unreservedly to those who had contracted the worldwide epidemic known as the "Spanish flu". He died, hit by a car, as he was leaving a pharmacy after purchasing medicine for one of his elderly patients. An exemplary witness of what it means to accept the call of the Lord and embrace it fully, he was beatified a year ago.

Called to build a fraternal world

As Christians, we do not only receive a vocation individually; we are also called together. We are like the tiles of a mosaic. Each is lovely in itself, but only when they are put together do they form a picture. Each of us shines like a star in the heart of God and in the firmament of the universe. At the same time, though, we

are called to form constellations that can guide and light up the path of humanity, beginning with the places in which we live. This is the mystery of the Church: a celebration of differences, a sign and instrument of all that humanity is called to be. For this reason, the Church must become increasingly synodal: capable of walking together, united in harmonious diversity, where everyone can actively participate and where everyone has something to contribute.

When we speak of "vocation", then, it is not just about choosing this or that way of life, devoting one's life to a certain ministry or being attracted by the charism of a religious family, movement or ecclesial community. It is about making God's dream come true, the great vision of fraternity that Jesus cherished when he prayed to the Father "that they may all be one" (Jn17:21). Each vocation in the Church, and in a broader sense in society, contributes to a common objective: to celebrate among men and women that harmony of manifold gifts that can only be brought about by the Holy Spirit. Priests, consecrated men and women, lay faithful: let us journey and work together in bearing witness to the truth that one great human family united in love is no utopian vision, but the very purpose for which God created us.

Let us pray, brothers and sisters, that the People of God, amid the dramatic events of history, may increasingly respond to this call. Let us implore the light of the Holy Spirit, so that all of us may find our proper place and give the very best of ourselves in this great divine plan!

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 8 May 2022, Fourth Sunday of Easter.