



## RESOURCES

### WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS



#### PROMISE & RISK

**P**ope Francis invites us to be courageous and to take a risk for God's promise. He recalls the Gospel account of Jesus calling Simon and Andrew, and James and John (Mk 1:16-20), how they took the risk of accepting the Lord's invitation to follow him. Pope Francis comments that Jesus first invites them to take the risk of leaving everything and following him, and then promises that he will make them 'fishers of men'.

Pope Francis talks about the '*paralysis of routine*' – how we all can get caught up in the routine of life. He says "As with every call, the Gospel speaks of an encounter. Jesus walks by, sees those fishermen, and walks up to them". The same thing happened in our lives, be it our call to priesthood or to married life. "We were surprised by an encounter, and at that moment we glimpsed the promise of a joy capable of bringing fulfilment to our lives". Pope Francis says 'The Lord's call is not an intrusion of God in our freedom ..... on the contrary, it is the loving initiative whereby God encounters us and invites us to be part of a great undertaking. He opens before our eyes the horizon of a greater sea and an abundant catch.' Francis says that there can be no greater joy than to risk one's life for the Lord! He encourages us, especially the young, not to be deaf to the Lord's call. 'If he calls you to follow his path, do not pull your oars into the boat, but trust him. Do not yield to fear, which paralyses us before the great heights to which the Lord points us.

#### RESOURCES FOR VOCATIONS SUNDAY

The following resources have been made available in order to facilitate promotion of Vocations on Vocations Sunday.

- ☐ Message of Pope Francis
- ☐ Insert for Parish Newsletter or Bulletin
- ☐ Homily Thoughts
- ☐ Homily (Fr. Willie Purcell)
- ☐ Sample Prayers of the Faithful

### Prayer for Priests

*St John Vianney (1786-1859)*

*Patron of Priests*

God, please give  
to Your Church today  
many more priests  
after Your own heart.  
May they be  
worthy representatives  
of Christ the Good Shepherd.  
May they wholeheartedly  
devote themselves  
to prayer and penance;  
be examples  
of humility and poverty;  
shining models of holiness;  
tireless and powerful preachers  
of the Word of God;  
zealous dispensers  
of Your grace in the sacraments.  
May their loving devotion  
to Your Son Jesus  
in the Eucharist  
and to Mary his Mother  
be the twin fountains  
of fruitfulness  
for their ministry.  
Amen



*Anastpaul/18*



Dear friends, it is not always easy to discern our vocation and to steer our life in the right direction. For this reason, there needs to be a renewed commitment on the part of the whole Church – priests, religious, pastoral workers and educators – to provide young people in particular with opportunities for listening and discernment. There is a need for a youth ministry and a vocational promotion that can open the way to discovering God’s plan, above all through prayer, meditation on God’s word, eucharistic adoration and spiritual accompaniment.

--Pope Francis. World Day of Prayer for Vocations. 2019.

## **MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 2019 WORLD DAY OF VOCATIONS**

### ***The courage to take a risk for God’s promise***

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

After the lively and fruitful experience of the Synod devoted to young people last October, we recently celebrated the Thirty-fourth World Youth Day in Panama City. These two great events allowed the Church to be attentive both to the voice of the Spirit and to the life of young men and women, their questions and concerns, their problems and their hopes.

Building on what I shared with the young people in Panama, I would like to reflect, on this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, on how the Lord’s call makes us *bearers of a promise* and, at the same time, asks of us the *courage to take a risk*, with him and for him. I will do this by reflecting briefly with you on these two aspects – promise and risk – as they appear in the Gospel account of the calling of the first disciples by the sea of Galilee (Mk 1:16-20).

Two pairs of brothers – Simon and Andrew, and James and John – are going about their daily tasks as fishermen. In this demanding work, they had learned the laws of nature, yet at times, when the winds were adverse and waves shook their boats, they had to defy the elements. On some days, the catch of fish amply repaid their efforts, but on others, an entire night’s work was not sufficient to fill their nets, and they had to return to shore weary and disappointed.

Much of life is like that. Each of us tries to realize his or her deepest desires; we engage in activities that we hope will prove enriching, and we put out on a “sea” of possibilities in the hope of steering the right course, one that will satisfy our thirst for happiness. Sometimes we enjoy a good catch, while at others, we need courage to keep our boat from being tossed by the waves, or we are frustrated at seeing our nets come up empty.

As with every call, the Gospel speaks of an encounter. Jesus walks by, sees those fishermen, and walks up to them... The same thing happened when we met the person we wanted to marry, or when we first felt the attraction of a life of consecration: we were surprised by an encounter, and at that moment we glimpsed the promise of a joy capable of bringing fulfilment to our lives.

That day, by the sea of Galilee, Jesus drew near to those fishermen, breaking through the “paralysis of routine” (*Homily for the XXII World Day for Consecrated Life, 2 February 2018*). And he immediately made them a promise: “I will make you fishers of men” (Mk1:17).

The Lord’s call is not an intrusion of God in our freedom; it is not a “cage” or a burden to be borne. On the contrary, it is the loving initiative whereby God encounters us and invites us to be part of a great undertaking. He opens before our eyes the horizon of a greater sea and an abundant catch.



God in fact desires that our lives not become banal and predictable, imprisoned by daily routine, or unresponsive before decisions that could give it meaning. The Lord does not want us to live from day to day, thinking that nothing is worth fighting for, slowly losing our desire to set out on new and exciting paths.

If at times he makes us experience a “miraculous catch”, it is because he wants us to discover that each of us is called – in a variety of ways – to something grand, and that our lives should not grow entangled in the nets of an ennui that dulls the heart.

Every vocation is a summons not to stand on the shore, nets in hand, but to follow Jesus on the path he has marked out for us, for our own happiness and for the good of those around us.

Embracing this promise naturally demands the courage to risk making a decision. The first disciples, called by Jesus to be part of something greater, “immediately left their nets and followed him” (Mk 1:18). Responding to the Lord’s call involves putting ourselves on the line and facing a great challenge. It means being ready to leave behind whatever would keep us tied to our little boat and prevent us from making a definitive choice. We are called to be bold and decisive in seeking God’s plan for our lives. Gazing out at the vast “ocean” of vocation, we cannot remain content to repair our nets on the boat that gives us security, but must trust instead in the Lord’s promise.

I think primarily of the call to the Christian life which all of us received at Baptism. It teaches us that our life is not a fluke but rather a gift: that of being God’s beloved children, gathered in the great family of the Church. It is precisely in the ecclesial community that the Christian life is born and develops, especially through the liturgy. The liturgy introduces us to God’s word and the grace of the sacraments; from an early age, we are taught the art of prayer and fraternal sharing. In the end, the Church is our mother because she brings us to new life and leads us to Christ.

So we must love her, even when we see her face marred by human frailty and sin, and we must help to make her ever more beautiful and radiant, so that she can bear witness to God’s love in the world.

The Christian life thus finds expression in those decisions that, while giving a precise direction to our personal journey, also contribute to the growth of God’s kingdom in our world. I think of the decision to marry in Christ and to form a family, as well as all those other vocations associated with work and professional life, with the commitment to charity and solidarity, with social and political responsibilities, and so forth. These vocations make us bearers of a promise of goodness, love and justice, not only for ourselves but also for our societies and cultures, which need courageous Christians and authentic witnesses of the kingdom of God.

In encountering the Lord, some may feel the attraction of a call to the consecrated life or to the ordained priesthood. It is a discovery that can excite and at the same time frighten us, since we feel called to become “fishers of men” in the barque of the Church by giving totally of ourselves in commitment to faithful service of the

Gospel and our brothers and sisters. Such a decision carries the risk of leaving everything behind to follow the Lord, to devote ourselves completely to him, and to share in his work.

Many kinds of interior resistance can stand in the way of making this decision, especially in highly secularized contexts where there no longer seems to be a place for God and for the Gospel. Places where it is easy to grow discouraged and fall into the “weariness of hope” (*Homily at Mass with Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Movements, Panama, 26 January 2019*).

And yet, there can be no greater joy than to risk one’s life for the Lord! I would like to say this especially to you, the young. Do not be deaf to the Lord’s call. If he calls you to follow this path, do not pull your oars into the boat, but trust him.

Do not yield to fear, which paralyzes us before the great heights to which the Lord points us. Always remember that to those who leave their nets and boat behind, and follow him, the Lord promises the joy of a new life that can fill our hearts and enliven our journey.

“The Lord’s call is not an intrusion of God in our freedom; it is not a “cage” or a burden to be borne. On the contrary, it is the loving initiative whereby God encounters us and invites us to be part of a great undertaking. He opens before our eyes the horizon of a greater sea and an abundant catch.”

Dear friends, it is not always easy to discern our vocation and to steer our life in the right direction. For this reason, there needs to be a renewed commitment on the part of the whole Church – priests, religious, pastoral workers and educators – to provide young people in particular with opportunities for listening and discernment. There is a need for a youth ministry and a vocational promotion that can open the way to discovering God’s plan, above all through prayer, meditation on God’s word, eucharistic adoration and spiritual accompaniment.

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As was made clear several times during the World Youth Day in Panama, we should always look to Mary. Also in the story of this young woman, vocation was both a promise and a risk. Her mission was not easy, yet she did not allow fear to prevail. “It was the ‘yes’ of someone prepared to be committed, someone willing to take a risk, ready to stake everything she had, with no more security than the certainty of knowing that she was the bearer of a promise. I ask each one of you: Do you see yourselves as bearers of a promise? What promise do I bear within my heart to take forward? Mary’s would undoubtedly be a difficult mission, but the challenges that lay ahead were no reason to say ‘no’. Things would get complicated, of course, but not in the same way as happens when cowardice paralyzes us because things are not clear or sure in advance” (*Vigil with Young People, Panama, 26 January 2019*).

On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, let us join in prayer and ask the Lord to help us discover his plan of love for our lives, and to grant us the courage to walk in the path that, from the beginning, he has chosen for each of us.

*From the Vatican, 31 January 2019  
Memorial of Saint John Bosco*



### NEWSLETTER / BULLETIN INSERT

World Day of Prayer will be observed on Sunday, May 12, 2019, also known as "Good Shepherd Sunday." The purpose of this day is to publicly fulfil 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 and religious life. You can find many resources to promote a culture of vocations on the website of the National Vocation Office – [www.vocations.ie](http://www.vocations.ie)

### FOR USE SUNDAY, 12<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019

Today, the Fourth Sunday of Easter or Good Shepherd Sunday is a special day for everyone in our parish. We celebrate World Day of Prayer for Vocations. We ask that we may be filled with joy and the Holy Spirit as we carry on the mission of Jesus, our Good Shepherd. Let us pray for one another that we may be strengthened in our Christian vocations as married and single people, priests, deacons, and religious. May our youth listen to God's call and be encouraged to respond generously.

### HOMILY THOUGHTS

FIRST READING: ACTS 13:14, 43-52

**Theme:** The Jews, prompted by jealousy contradict all that Paul and Barnabas said. Paul and Barnabas turn to the pagans and preach to them, who accept their message.

**Reflection:** Today, just as in times past, preaching the Gospel can be met with resistance and ridicule. But society more than ever needs men and women who can enthusiastically proclaim the Gospel, nourishing those who hunger for meaning and a relationship with God.

PSALM 99 (100) 1-3, 5

**Theme:** The responsorial psalm reminds us that we belong to God "He made us, we belong to him, we are his people, the sheep of his flock"

GOSPEL: JOHN 10:27-30

**Theme:** Using the imagery of the responsorial psalm, Jesus describes himself as the 'Good Shepherd' and just as the sheep know their shepherd by the sound of his voice, so too we receive the same care and protection by listening to the voice of Jesus. Those who follow him will never be lost.

**Reflection:** We are all called to listen to his voice, to develop that relationship with The Word. We need to encourage in particular those whom the Lord is calling, that they can quieten the noise in life, so that they may hear the whisper of his voice in their hearts. This can only be done by making time for daily prayer and reflection in quiet prayer.

### TEN SIGNS YOU'RE BEING CALLED BY GOD



1. You have inherent desire to explore a vocation
2. You cannot shake the feeling that you are being called to be a diocesan priest.
3. Those you trust see you have a calling to the diocesan priesthood.
4. You don't feel like a vocation is a place to hide, but a place to truly be yourself.
5. You initially experience extreme unease when thinking about a vocation to the priesthood.
6. You eventually experience extreme peace when thinking about a vocation
7. Actions beyond your control seem to keep guiding you towards a vocation
8. The thought of answering a vocation becomes clearer and clearer.
9. You know your heart would be uneasy doing anything else.
10. The thought of giving control to God is freeing, not confining.

## HOMILY



By Fr. Willie Purcell  
National Vocations Coordinator

We are all aware that we are living in a country and world of many problems, war, violence, terrorism, homelessness, human trafficking, famine, hurt, abuse, pain, depression. There are many false shepherds who desire to lead us away from God, but in the midst of all this God is still calling men and women to live the joy of the gospel, men and women who give their lives to Him in the service of their brothers and sisters as priests, permanent deacons, religious sisters and brothers.

Despite the distractions, noise and clamour of the world the Word of God is still being heard as a voice of hope, encouragement, love and friendship. The world cannot silence the call of God. Jesus the Good Shepherd is leading His people to pastures of peace and safety. To do this Jesus the Good shepherd needs men and women of prayer and courage to leave their familiar lives and give themselves in love to proclaim the Gospel with their lives. In his message for Vocations Sunday or Good Shepherd Sunday, Pope Francis tells us that:

*'The Lord's call is not an intrusion of God in our freedom; it is not a "cage" or a burden to be borne. On the contrary, it is the loving initiative whereby God encounters us and invites us to be part of a great undertaking. God in fact desires that our lives not become banal and predictable, imprisoned by daily routine, or unresponsive before decisions that could give it meaning. The Lord does not want us to live from day to day, thinking that nothing is worth fighting for, slowly losing our desire to set out*

*on new and exciting paths. If at times he makes us experience a "miraculous catch", it is because he wants us to discover that each of us is called – in a variety of ways – to something grand, and that our lives should not grow entangled in the nets of an ennui that dulls the heart. Every vocation is a summons not to stand on the shore, nets in hand, but to follow Jesus on the path he has marked out for us, for our own happiness and for the good of those around us.'*

It's not easy to be a prophet of His word and a witness of His love in the world we are living in, there are many obstacles, much criticism, condemnations on every side and still there are priests, sisters, brothers, permanent deacons, seminarians, novices and contemplatives who in unity with their married and single family members and friends are living courageously and selflessly in bringing the Word of healing, reconciliation, compassion and care to others.

These men and women of our families, our parishes, our dioceses, our communities, our schools, our colleges, our hospitals, our prisons, and our missionaries are true witnesses of His love and prophets of His Word. Jesus the Good shepherd never abandons his flock, never leaves his people unattended, and never walks away even when they walk away from Him. Jesus the Good Shepherd will always take care of his flock, will always call and send other shepherds to look after His flock.

This Vocations Sunday has a twofold prayer request:

Firstly it is an invitation to pray in thanksgiving for all those who generously have answered the call to serve in ministry in our Church;

Secondly it is a request to ask the Lord of the Harvest to send more labourers into His harvest which as the prayer of the St. Josephs

Young Priests Society prays for saintly priests, heroic missionaries and dedicated sisters and brothers.

We need your prayers to support us in the vocation we are called to live; we need your prayers for the men and women who are being called to priesthood and religious life that like Mary the Mother of God they too will say Yes with trust and confidence in God. We need you to pray with us that Christian families will give to the Church helpers in the work of tomorrow.

In concluding his message for Vocations Sunday Pope Francis says:

*"As was made clear several times during the World Youth Day in Panama, we should always look to Mary. Also in the story of this young woman, vocation was both a promise and a risk. Her mission was not easy, yet she did not allow fear to prevail. "It was the 'yes' of someone prepared to be committed, someone willing to take a risk, ready to stake everything she had, with no more security than the certainty of knowing that she was the bearer of a promise. I ask each one of you: Do you see yourselves as bearers of a promise? What promise do I bear within my heart to take forward? Mary's would undoubtedly be a difficult mission, but the challenges that lay ahead were no reason to say 'no'. Things would get complicated, of course, but not in the same way as happens when cowardice paralyzes us because things are not clear or sure in advance"*

On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, let us join in prayer and ask the Lord to help us discover his plan of love for our lives, and to grant us the courage to walk in the path that, from the beginning, he has chosen for each of us.'

May Jesus the Good Shepherd give us, diocesan priests, permanent deacons, religious men and women close to all their brothers and sisters, living signs of God's merciful love and hope.



# INTERCESSION

**Presider:** Loving God, we know of your gentle care for us. We trust that you will give us what we need. Shepherd us to follow in your ways now and forever. Amen.

**Reader:** After each prayer, please respond: Lord, hear our prayer.

- ☐ That Jesus the Good Shepherd may open the hearts of our young people to the possibility of a life in priesthood or religious life, that they can quieten the noise in their lives, to recognise the voice of the Good Shepherd calling them to follow him. We Pray to the Lord.
- ☐ For those called to a Vocation by the power of the Holy Spirit, that they will be filled with the courage and faith to respond to a life of service. We pray to the Lord.
- ☐ For all families, that they may have a positive regard for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and provide encouragement, not discouragement. We pray to the Lord.
- ☐ For an increase in vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, especially in our Dioceses and country. We pray to the Lord.
- ☐ For our Holy Father Pope Francis, and his efforts to call youth to their Christian calling. We pray to the Lord.
- ☐ For all who support the work of vocation promotion through their prayers and Christian witness. We pray to the Lord.
- ☐ We pray for our priests, that they will seek the opportunity to encourage and invite other men to join them in the priesthood. We pray to the Lord.
- ☐ For all those called as priests, deacons, and religious, that they will be faithful witnesses to the Good Shepherd in our midst. We pray to the Lord.

**Presider:** Loving God, we know of your gentle care for us. We trust that you will give us what we need. Shepherd us to follow in your ways now and forever.

**All: Amen.**

## VOCATION BULLETING BLURBS

### Second Sunday of Easter Divine Mercy Sunday (28<sup>th</sup> April 2019)

I sometimes think the nick name given to Thomas (Doubting Thomas) is a bit unfair. He had the courage to be open and express his doubt – but he had even greater faith than all of the other disciples at the time. He was the first to exclaim the wonderful procession of Faith in Jesus “My Lord and My God” Pray for those who hear the call of the Lord in their hearts to be able to proclaim their faith as Thomas did. Is God calling you to serve as a priest, deacon or in the consecrated life? Contact your local vocations director or the National Vocations Office. Email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

### Third Sunday of Easter (5<sup>th</sup> May 2019)

The post resurrection experience of Peter with Jesus that is described in today’s Gospel – where Jesus asks Peter if he loves him, re-affirms Peter, “Feed my Lambs”. Perhaps you hear Jesus asking you those same words – “Feed my Lambs”. Is God calling you to serve as a priest, deacon or in the consecrated life? Contact your local vocations director or the National Vocations Office. Email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

### Fourth Sunday of Easter (12<sup>th</sup> May 2019)

“The sheep that belong to me, listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me.” Who will shepherd God’s people as priest, deacons or in the consecrated life? Pray that good leaders, filled with joy and the Holy Spirit, will serve our Church. Is God calling you? Contact your local vocations director or the National Vocations Office. Email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

### Fifth Sunday of Easter (19<sup>th</sup> May 2019)

“Love one another as I have loved you ... By this everyone will know that you are my disciples” Is God calling you to be disciple as a priest, deacon or in consecrated life? Contact your local vocations director or the National Vocations Office. Email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

### Sixth Sunday of Easter (26<sup>th</sup> May 2019)

“If anyone loves me they will keep my word and my Father will love them.” Do you feel these words addressed to you to deepen your relationship with the Lord as a Priest, Deacon or in the Consecrated life? If you do, contact your local vocations director or the National Vocations Office. Email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)

### Seventh Sunday of Easter - Feast of the Ascension (2<sup>nd</sup> June)

“Holy Father, I pray not only for these, but for those also who through their words will believe in me.” Is your love for the Lord leading you to serve him as a priest, deacon or in consecrated life? Contact your local vocations director or the National Vocations Office. Email: [info@vocations.ie](mailto:info@vocations.ie)