**Archdiocese of Armagh: Year of Faith - Vocations Sunday: 21 April 2013**

*(A short reflection which could be used before a meetin*g)

**Gathering Prayer:** God our Father, you inspire and bring to fulfilment every good intention. As we celebrate this Year of Faith, guide all of us as we live our Christian calling each day. As we strive to follow Christ, may our lives be examples of love for you and for others. We ask this through Christ our Lord, AMEN

**A Reading from the prophet Samuel (3:3 – 10,19)**

Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord where the ark of God was, when the Lord called, “Samuel Samuel!” He answered, “Here I am.” Then he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, since you called me.” Eli said, “I did not call. Go back and lie down.” So he went and lay down. Once again, the Lord called, “Samuel! Samuel!” Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, since you called me.” He replied, “I did not call you, my son, go back and lie down.” Samuel had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. Once again, the Lord called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said: “Here I am since you called me.” Eli then understood that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, “Speak Lord, your servant is listening.” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.The Word of the Lord **All: Thanks be to God**

**Reflection:**

God’s call brings out the best in each person.

A young man or woman who follows God’s call will grow in openness and humanity.

The call of Jesus is for life more abundant.

Do you find a leap of joy in thinking of priesthood or ministry as deacon,

an excitement of giving your life as a religious, a sense of peace about marriage and family life?

Like the sunrise after the darkness, or the sunshine after rain, or the reconciliation after bitterness,

following God’s call brings real joy, change and newness.

It is felt in the joy of the heart, and in the desire to be like Jesus, the Christ in the world.

It’s also felt in deep trust:

God’s faithfulness is like the lighthouse in the fog, like the support of a friend in times that are tough,

like the touch of a hand in the dark. May we all have the courage to follow what is best and right in

our lives, and joy in knowing that real life is life in God’s company, AMEN

**Concluding Prayer:**  God our Father, we have come together to reflect on our call, we pray that you will always live in us, and may you continue to strengthen us by your grace. Help us to remain close to you in prayer and give us a true love for one another. Grant this through Christ our Lord, AMEN

**Archdiocese of Armagh: Year of Faith** - **Vocations Sunday: 21 April 2013**

*(Short Prayer Service which could be used at the end of a meeting)*

**Introduction:**

Gathered together in this year of faith, we’re mindful that all of us have been called to reflect on what it means to be a person of faith. Each one of us has been called to a life of holiness and grace and each of us has been called to give witness to Christ in our world today. We thank God for our calling and we pray that we will continue to live out our calling as best we can. This we pray as always in the name of Jesus the Lord, Amen.

**A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (Mt 4: 18 – 22)**

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew, they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” And they left their nets at once and followed him. Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. At once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him.

**PAUSE**

**Dear friends on the day of our Baptism, we were all called to live a life of holiness and grace. Our parents and godparents made promises on our behalf, to bring us up in the practice of the faith. On the day of our Confirmation, we took on that responsibility ourselves. As we gather this evening, we renew our own commitment to that call and as a community of faith, we promise to turn away from our sin and serve God more faithfully as members of his body.**

P: Do you reject sin **All: I do**

P: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth? **All: I do**

P Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father? **All: I do**

P: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting? **All: I do**

**God, the all powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has called each one of us by name. May he always keep us faithful to him and to one another. We pray this through Christ our Lord, AMEN**

*All are now blessed with holy water which reminds us of the call of baptism.*

**Intercessions:**

 **Loving God, you remind us that you came so that we may have life and have it to the full. You know our needs and those on whose behalf we pray. Listen now to the longings of our hearts.**

We pray for the Church and we pray for Pope Francis and all Church leaders ...that they may be guided as we move into the uncertainties of the future and may they be empowered to lead our Church through the winds and waves of adversity. **Lord hear us**

We remember Monsignor Martin **(who is to be ordained Bishop in the coming days/who has been** **ordained Bishop in recent days.)** May the Lord strengthen him in his faith and may he be blessed and guided in his work and ministry in the years to come. **Lord hear us**

We pray for our diocese and for the Church of Armagh. May all of us be renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit in this Year of Faith, and experience the fullness of life according to our particular call. **Lord hear us**

We pray for all young people...may they be helped in discerning their life’s calling, whether that be to marriage, priesthood, diaconate, religious or single life. **Lord hear us**

For young men whom God is calling to priesthood at this time. May they hear God’s call and be encouraged to answer it through the support of our prayers. We remember those who are in formation at this time, that the Lord may continue to bless and guide them. **Lord hear us**

As we thank God for our own call in life, we pray that each of our families and parish communities may continue to encourage young people to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in the following of their individual and Christian vocation. **Lord hear us**

For those who were examples of Christian living for us and who now share in the joy of heaven. We remember our own deceased family members and friends. **Lord hear us**

We pray for all who struggle with life and we think in a special way of all who are sick. May the Lord be close to them in their suffering and need. **Lord hear us**

**God of life, God of the harvest, we ask you to hear our prayers, those we have spoken and those deep within our hearts. We make them as always in the name of Jesus, AMEN**

**Concluding Prayer**

Lord God, having gathered this evening to reflect on our call, may our faith and hope be strengthened in the One who was born of Mary. May our lives always be examples of faithfulness and love and may we come one day to share in the fullness of eternal joy. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord, AMEN.

**Blessing:**
The Lord be with you **All: And with your spirit**

May almighty God bless you in his mercy, and make you always aware of his saving wisdom.

**All: Amen**

May he strengthen your faith with proofs of his love, so that you will persevere in good works.

**All: Amen**

May he direct your steps to himself and show you how to walk in charity and peace.

**All: Amen**

May almighty God bless you, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. **All: Amen**

VOCATION PRAYER

Lord, make me a better person, more considerate towards others, more honest with myself, more faithful to you. Make me generous enough to want to do your will, whatever it may be. Help me find my true vocation in life and grant that through it, I may find happiness myself and bring happiness to others. We pray through Christ our Lord, AMEN