

Resources for Vocations Sunday 2015

Sunday 26 April 2015 | World Day of Prayer for Vocations | Theme: Exodus, a fundamental experience of vocation



“Wherever there is life, fervour and a desire to bring Christ to others, genuine vocations will arise.”
(Evangelii Gaudium 107)



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Bishop Denis Brennan message

I don't have to tell you what a difficult job it is to foster vocations in Ireland today-you know that better than most!

While it is not in our gift to change the present vocations landscape we do have a choice in how we react to it. The important thing in life is not what happens to us-it's how we react to what happens to us.

If we drop the head and give up the ghost -it's game over.

If, on the other hand we see ourselves as a pilgrim people, with all the uncertainty that that involves, realising that we are sometimes called to go beyond our own

calculations, we will not be dispirited. We have our job to do, our contribution to make, but it's not all about us.

Moses in times of uncertainty had a sense of "being carried by God." (Deut. 1;31)

Why should we not have something of that sense as well? This is what our coming together is meant to encourage, having a sense, despite the challenges facing us, of being carried by God.

We also need to appreciate that while Vocations Directors have a very important role in fostering vocations, the whole Church must be

involved too.

As someone said recently, fostering vocations is the task of some and the responsibility of all.

I pray that this Vocations Sunday will help us return to the critically important job you do in the only way a pilgrim people can-in faith, hope and love.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**+Denis Brennan,
Bishop of Ferns
and Chair of the
Bishops' Council
for Vocations.**

An introduction to the resources

The resources for Vocations Sunday this year have been prepared by the Bishops' Council for Vocations. The Council is made up of people who work to promote vocations and who strive to create a culture of vocations in

the Irish Catholic Church. Members of the Council include priests, religious, seminarians and laity. This year's resources are offered for use in parishes, religious houses, homes and schools. They comprise liturgical materials, the papal

message for Vocations Sunday, articles, prayers, and a new resource for schools (Day in the Life series).

For more information please see www.vocations.ie.

Pope Francis

Message for Vocations Sunday 2015

Theme: *Exodus, a fundamental experience of vocation*



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Fourth Sunday of Easter offers us the figure of the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep: he calls them, he feeds them and he guides them. For over fifty years the universal Church has celebrated this Sunday as the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. In this way she reminds us of our need to pray, as Jesus himself told his disciples, so that “the Lord of the harvest may send out labourers into his harvest” (*Lk 10:2*). Jesus command came in the

context of his sending out missionaries. He called not only the twelve Apostles, but another seventy-two disciples whom he then sent out, two by two, for the mission (cf. *Lk 10:1-6*). Since the Church “is by her very nature missionary” (*Ad Gentes, 2*), the Christian vocation is necessarily born of the experience of mission. Hearing and following the voice of Christ the Good Shepherd, means letting ourselves be attracted and guided by him, in consecration to him; it means allowing the Holy Spirit to draw us into this missionary dynamism, awakening within us the desire, the joy and the courage to offer our own lives in the service of the Kingdom of God.

To offer one’s life in mission is possible only if we are able to leave ourselves behind. On this 52nd World Day of Prayer for Vocations, I would like reflect on that particular “exodus” which is the heart of vocation, or better yet, of our response to the vocation God gives us. When we hear the word “exodus”, we immediately think of the origins of the amazing love story between God and his people, a history which passes through the dramatic period of slavery in Egypt, the calling of Moses, the experience of liberation and the journey toward the Promised Land. The Book of Exodus, the second book of the Bible, which recounts these events is a parable of the entire history of salvation, but also of the inner workings of Christian faith. Passing from the slavery of the old Adam to new life in Christ is a event of redemption which takes place through faith (*Eph 4:22-24*). This passover is a genuine “exodus”; it is the journey of each Christian soul and the entire Church, the decisive turning of our lives towards the Father.

**“From the call of Abraham to that of Moses, from Israel’s pilgrim journey through the desert to the conversion preached by the prophets, up to the missionary journey of Jesus which culminates in his death and resurrection, vocation is always a work of God.”
- Pope Francis**

Pope Francis

Message for Vocations Sunday 2015

At the root of every Christian vocation we find this basic movement, which is part of the experience of faith. Belief means transcending ourselves, leaving behind our comfort and the inflexibility of our ego in order to centre our life in Jesus Christ. It means leaving, like Abraham, our native place and going forward with trust, knowing that God will show us the way to a new land. This “going forward” is not to be viewed as a sign of contempt for one’s life, one’s feelings, one’s own humanity. On the contrary, those who set out to follow Christ find life in abundance by putting themselves completely at the service of God and his kingdom. Jesus says: “Everyone who has left home or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life” (*Mt 19:29*). All of this is profoundly rooted in love. The Christian vocation is first and foremost a call to love, a love which attracts us and draws us out of ourselves, “decentring” us and triggering “an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward-looking self towards its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 6).



The exodus experience is paradigmatic of the Christian life, particularly in the case of those who have embraced a vocation of special dedication to the Gospel. This calls for a constantly renewed attitude of conversion and transformation, an incessant moving forward, a passage from death to life like that celebrated in every liturgy, an experience of passover. From the call of Abraham to that of Moses, from Israel’s pilgrim journey through the desert to the conversion preached by the prophets, up to the missionary journey of Jesus which culminates in his death and resurrection, vocation is always a work of God. He leads us beyond our initial situation, frees us from every enslavement, breaks down our habits and our indifference, and brings us to the joy of communion with him and with our brothers and sisters. Responding to God’s call, then, means allowing him to help us leave ourselves and our false security behind, and to strike out on the path which leads to Jesus Christ, the origin and destiny of our life and our happiness.

This exodus process does not regard individuals alone, but the missionary and evangelizing activity of the whole Church. The Church is faithful to her Master to the extent that she is a Church which “goes forth”, a Church which is less concerned about herself, her structures and successes, and more about her ability to go out and meet God’s children wherever they are, to feel compassion (*com-passio*) for their hurt and pain. God goes forth from himself in a Trinitarian dynamic of love: he hears the cry of his people and he intervenes to set them free (*Ex 3:7*). The Church is called to follow this way of being and acting. She is meant to be a Church which evangelizes, goes out to encounter humanity, proclaims the liberating word of the Gospel, heals people’s spiritual and physical wounds with the grace of God, and offers relief to the poor and the suffering.

Pope Francis

Message for Vocations Sunday 2015

Dear brothers and sisters, this liberating exodus towards Christ and our brothers and sisters also represents the way for us to fully understand our common humanity and to foster the historical development of individuals and societies. To hear and answer the Lord's call is not a private and completely personal matter fraught with momentary emotion. Rather, it is a specific, real and total commitment which embraces the whole of our existence and sets it at the service of the growth of God's Kingdom on earth. The Christian vocation, rooted in the contemplation of the Father's heart, thus inspires us to solidarity in bringing liberation to our brothers and sisters, especially the poorest. A disciple of Jesus has a heart open to his unlimited horizons, and friendship with the Lord never means flight from this life or from the world. On the contrary, it involves a profound interplay between communion and mission (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 23).

This exodus towards God and others fills our lives with joy and meaning. I wish to state this clearly to the young, whose youth and openness to the future makes them open-hearted and generous. At times uncertainty, worries about the future and the problems they daily encounter can risk paralyzing their youthful enthusiasm and shattering their dreams, to the point where they can think that it is not worth the effort to get involved, that the God of the Christian faith is somehow a limit on their freedom. Dear young friends, never be afraid to go out from yourselves and begin the journey! The Gospel is the message which brings freedom to our lives; it transforms them and makes them all the more beautiful. How wonderful it is to be surprised by God's call, to embrace his word, and to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, in adoration of the divine mystery and in generous service to our neighbours! Your life will become richer and more joyful each day!

The Virgin Mary, model of every vocation, did not fear to utter her "*fiat*" in response to the Lord's call. She is at our side and she guides us. With the generous courage born of faith, Mary sang of the joy of leaving herself behind and entrusting to God the plans she had for her life. Let us turn to her, so that we may be completely open to what God has planned for each one of us, so that we can grow in the desire to go out with tender concern towards others (cf. *Lk* 1:39). May the Virgin Mary protect and intercede for us all.

*From the Vatican, 29 March 2015
Palm Sunday*

FRANCIS



The Words of Pope Francis on Priesthood and Vocation

“Behind and before every vocation to the priesthood or to the consecrated life there is always the strong and intense prayer of someone: a grandmother, a grandfather, a mother, a father, a community.... This is why Jesus said: “Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest,” that is, God the Father, “to send out laborers into his harvest” (Mt 9:38). Vocations are born in prayer and from prayer; and only through prayer can they persevere and bear fruit. I am pleased to stress this today, which is the “World Day of Prayer for Vocations.” Let us invoke the intercession of Mary who is the Woman of the “yes”. Mary said “yes” throughout her life! She learned to recognize Jesus’ voice from the time when she carried him in her womb. May Mary, our Mother, help us to know Jesus’ voice better and better and to follow it, so as to walk on the path of life!” - Regina Caeli Message, Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 21, 2013



“Wherever there is life, fervour and a desire to bring Christ to others, genuine vocations will arise.”
Evangeli Gaudium 107

The tiredness of priests! Do you know how often I think about this weariness which all of you experience? I think about it and I pray about it, often, especially when I am

tired myself. I pray for you as you labour amid the people of God entrusted to your care, many of you in lonely and dangerous places. Our weariness, dear priests, is like incense which silently rises up to heaven (cf Ps 141:2; Rev 8:3-4). Our weariness goes straight to the heart of the Father.

Know that the Blessed Virgin Mary is well aware of this tiredness and she brings it straight to the Lord. As our Mother, she knows when her children are weary, and this is her greatest concern. “Welcome! Rest, my child. We will speak afterwards...”. - Chrism Mass homily 2015

“Vocations are born in prayer and prayer, and only in prayer can they persevere and bear fruit....” - Pope Francis

Pope Francis on the Year of Consecrated Life

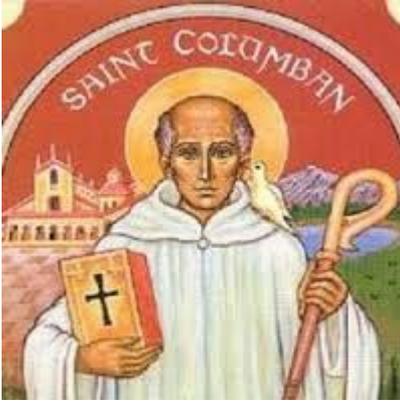
- Together let us thank the Father, who called us to follow Jesus by fully embracing the Gospel and serving the Church, and poured into our hearts the Holy Spirit, the source of our joy and our witness to God's love and mercy before the world.
- All our Institutes are heir to a history rich in charisms. At their origins we see the hand of God who, in his Spirit, calls certain individuals to follow Christ more closely, to translate the Gospel into a particular way of life, to read the signs of the times with the eyes of faith and to respond creatively to the needs of the Church.
- May this Year of Consecrated Life also be an occasion for confessing humbly, with immense confidence in the God who is Love (cf. 1 Jn 4:8), our own weakness and, in it, to experience the Lord's merciful love. May this Year likewise be an occasion for bearing vigorous and joyful witness before the world to the holiness and vitality present in so many of those called to follow Jesus in the consecrated life.
- Once again, we have to ask ourselves: Is Jesus really our first and only love, as we promised he would be when we professed our vows? Only if he is, will we be empowered to love, in truth and mercy, every person who crosses our path. For we will have learned from Jesus the meaning and practice of love. We will be able to love because we have his own heart.
- The Year of Consecrated Life challenges us to examine our fidelity to the mission entrusted to us. Are our ministries, our works and our presence consonant with what the Spirit asked of our founders and foundresses? Are they suitable for carrying out today, in society and the Church, those same ministries and works? Do we have the same passion for our people, are we close to them to the point of sharing in their joys and sorrows, thus truly understanding their needs and helping to respond to them? "The same generosity and self-sacrifice which guided your founders – Saint John Paul II once said – must now inspire you, their spiritual children, to keep alive the charisms which, by the power of the same Spirit who awakened them, are constantly being enriched and adapted, while losing none of their unique character. It is up to you to place those charisms at the service of the Church and to work for the coming of Christ's Kingdom in its fullness".
- So, be men and women of communion! Have the courage to be present in the midst of conflict and tension, as a credible sign of the presence of the Spirit who inspires in human hearts a passion for all to be one (cf. Jn 17:21). Live the *mysticism of encounter*, which entails "the ability to hear, to listen to other people; the ability to seek together ways and means". [3] Live in the light of the loving relationship of the three divine Persons (cf. 1 Jn 4:8), the model for all interpersonal relationships.



To read the full text of the Year of Consecrated Life Apostolic Letter see www.vatican.va.

Saint Columbanus

Live in Christ, that Christ may live in you



The Bishops of Ireland have designated 2015 as a celebratory year to mark the 1400th anniversary of the death in Bobbio, Italy, of the extraordinary Saint Columban, also known as Saint Columbanus.

Born around 543AD in Leinster, Saint Columbanus studied in the monastery on Cleenish Island, Co Fermanagh, after which he then entered the monastery in Bangor, Co Down. He became a monk at Bangor and later principal teacher there. In 591, desiring to go on a pilgrimage for Christ, he set out with twelve companions and came to Burgundy. He established monasteries at Annegray, Luxeuil and Fontaine.

Later he worked in Bregenz in Austria. His greatest foundation is at Bobbio, near Genoa, where he died in 615. He is remembered as one of the greatest of all Irish missionaries who dedicated his life to preaching the Gospel and to establishing monasteries in Europe.

His words are as relevant today as they were in the sixth century and we share some of them below:

- We ourselves know that we have received the Lord's word with gladness and enthusiasm; let us beware now lest we be short-lived. Patience is needful for us, that the proof of our faith, as it is written, may be more precious than gold. (Letter 4.2)
- Let us plant above all to root out the vices and plant the virtues; let us root our pride and sow humility, let us pluck up wrath and lay down patience, let us prune envy and plant goodwill. (Sermon 2.2)
- It is no God dwelling far off from us that we seek, Whom if we merit it we must have within us. For He resides in us like soul in body. (Sermon 1.3)
- When shall I come and appear before the face of my God? For my soul thirsts for the mighty and living god, and, My soul is like a waterless land before You. (Sermon 8.2)
- Live in Christ, that Christ may live in you. (Sermon 10.2)
- If you thirst, drink the Fountain of life; if you hunger, eat the Bread of life. Blessed are they who hunger for this Bread and thirst for this Fountain. (Sermon 13.2)

**May no one and nothing separate us from the love of Christ,
No trial, no difficulty, no persecution,
No hunger, no nakedness, no danger,
No death by sword, fire, cross, or murder,
Nothing sad, nothing sweet, nothing hard, nothing fair,
May none of the world's vanities separate us from Christ. (Sermon 4.3)**

Liturgical Resources for Vocations Sunday 2015

Reading 1 Acts 4:8-12

Here we have an innocent man who has been accused of lying and misleading people. The truth is that he has cured a paralysed man simply by praying for him in the name of Jesus Christ. The Jewish leaders refuse to believe him because they have rejected Jesus as the Messiah. He courageously insists that Jesus is the Saviour of the entire human race, Jews and Gentiles alike.

Reading 2 1 John 3:1-2

Our deepest desire is to be like God, to be God-like, to be good. We cannot achieve this thirst or hunger by relying on ourselves. We need the grace of God. The love of God has been poured into our hearts in Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord. Through Him, we have become children of God. We become children of God by following Jesus, by becoming like Him – Christ like people.

Music for Vocations Sunday

Shepherd Me O God - *Hosanna/Laudate/Gather*

You Are Mine - *Gather/Laudate/In Caelo*

If God Is For Us - *Glory & Praise/Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal*

Like a Shepherd - *Glory & Praise/Laudate/Liturgical/Celebration Hymnal*

At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing - *Veritas Hymnal/Hosanna/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal*

Take and Eat - *Hosanna/Gather/Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal/Seinn Alleluia/In Caelo*

Sr Moira Bergin, National Centre for Liturgy

Mass for Vocations Sunday will be broadcast by RTÉ One Television on Sunday 26 April 2015 from the RTÉ studios in Donnybrook, Dublin 4. The Principal Celebrant and homilist will be Bishop Denis Brennan, Chair of the Council for Vocations. The Mass is being coordinated by Sister Moira Bergin, National Centre for Liturgy and the Council for Vocations of the Bishops' Conference. For more information see www.vocations.ie.

On Vocation

“Each of you has a personal vocation which He has given you for your own joy and sanctity. When a person is conquered by the fire of His gaze, no sacrifice seems too great to follow Him and give Him the best of ourselves. This is what the saints have always done, spreading the light of the Lord ... and transforming the world into a welcoming home for everyone.”

Pope Benedict XVI

Liturgical Resources for Vocations Sunday 2015

Gospel John 10:11 -18

Jesus describes Himself not as a magnificent king or a powerful ruler. He said, "I am the good shepherd." His listeners knew immediately that he was speaking of a humble caretaker of the flock that depended on him for survival. The good shepherd lays down his life to save and protect his flock. No one forces him to do so. He chooses to give his life for the sheep he knows by name and loves unconditionally. The Good Shepherd looks forward to the day when all people will "be one flock." They will recognize his voice and be gathered into his fold.

Homily

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday and World Day of Prayer for Vocations, a day when all of us are invited to reflect on the meaning of God's call and to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He laid down his life for the flock, that is, you and me, the Church. In a general way he invites everyone in the church to share in the work of caring for the flock in our own place and in our own time. But he also calls some from among us to a life-long commitment as priests and religious. Called to be Shepherds of the flock of God. Priests and religious are called to share in the life and work of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

If today you should hear God's voice calling you to be a Diocesan priest or religious, harden not your hearts. And if you do not hear God calling you to this way of life, then do everything in your power to encourage those who are called to it and who struggle even with faltering steps to follow the footsteps of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

The vocation to priesthood and religious life is one of hearing the voice of Jesus and responding to that call. It is a way of serving God, one that brings with it the joy of the Gospel. The reality of priesthood and religious life is that expectations are not always realistic. The priest or religious is no super hero Christian who has overcome all their failings and reconciled all their flaws and stands above the people rather than with them. Priests and religious are people called to trust in the power of Christ working with them, to help sow the seeds of the Kingdom of God who manages to bring about the gospel in spite of their weaknesses, it is a relationship of love, trust and confidence in Jesus the Good Shepherd. It is that relationship with Christ that motivates the priest and those called to religious life in their work as shepherds and friends of all.

Father Willie Purcell

"The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus. When you see a priest, think of our Lord Jesus Christ." - **Saint John Marie Vianney**

Liturgical Resources for Vocations Sunday 2015



In a word, no matter what the situation is, God is calling us.

Our part is to respond generously to that step he is inviting us to take at this stage of our lives.

It's important to listen to, and tune our lives according to, the inner voice of God speaking in our hearts.

Bishop Brendan Leahy, Bishop of Limerick

Prayer of the Faithful

Presider: Let us seek the loving care of our Good Shepherd as we present the needs of our Church and world.

Reader: After each prayer, please respond: Lord, Hear Our Prayer.

For all young people of our parish and diocese who are making lifetime choices at this time, we pray to the Lord.

For all families, that they may have a positive regard for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, 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.

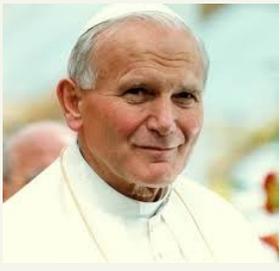
For all who support the work of vocation promotion through their prayers and Christian witness, we pray to the Lord.

On Vocation

“Many people mistake our work for our vocation. Our vocation is the love of Jesus.”

Mother Teresa

Liturgical Resources for Vocations Sunday 2015



“The world looks to the priest, because it looks to Jesus!

No one can see Christ; but everyone sees the priest, and through him they wish to catch a glimpse of the Lord!

Immense is the grandeur of the Lord!

Immense is the grandeur and dignity of the priest!”

Blessed John Paul II

*(Rome, Italy,
October 13, 1979)*

Prayer of the Faithful (continued)

For our newly ordained priests, in thanksgiving for their ordination and that their first year of service will be fruitful, we pray to the Lord.

For all parents of our parish, that they may instill a positive regard for the priesthood and religious life as lifetime paths for their sons and daughters, we pray to the Lord.

For those called to a Church 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 priests, that they will invite other men to join them in the priesthood, we pray to the Lord.

That Jesus the Good Shepherd may open the hearts of our young people to the possibility of a life in priesthood or religious life, 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.

"Prayer is to our soul what rain is to the soil. Fertilize the soil ever so richly, it will remain barren unless fed by frequent rains."

Saint John Marie Vianney

Liturgical Resources for Vocations Sunday 2014

In the first place vocation does not begin when people are teenagers or young adults. It begins when God calls us into life and when, through Baptism He invites us to be members of his family. It makes no sense to expect that people can be ready to commit to any Christian vocation, marriage, priesthood, religious life, or diaconate, if they have not first of all been helped to recognise God's invitation in Baptism and to respond to it. This is what needs to happen in our families and our parish communities, just so that young people can grow to maturity as Christians, recognising their responsibilities within the community. Then, gradually and with the encouragement of those around them they can begin to discern how God wants them to live this gift of faith that they have been given.

**Bishop Kevin Doran,
Bishop of Elphin**

Reflection for Vocations Sunday

Every single person has a vocation, a calling, a dream held for us by God as to who God would have us be and what God would have us do with our lives. When we speak of "praying for vocations" it is somewhat inaccurate. Vocations are freely given by God. What we are really praying for is God's help to find and follow our own particular call.

At this time in our part of the world, the call to a life of service and ministry in the Church is not very popular, for a variety of reasons. It's not so much that God is not calling, so much as people might not be tuned in too well to listening! Another element is that whilst God does the calling, it is up to us to do the informing and inviting; that is telling people about religious life and priesthood – the fulfillment and joy it can bring – and actively inviting/encouraging them to think about it as a possible choice.

Imagine if, in every parish and faith community, people were encouraged to spend a few minutes discerning who in their midst might be a possible candidate for religious life/priesthood? Then, if they gently and sensitively shared the fruit of their reflection with that person, saying what they saw in the person and then left it for him/her to think and pray about it? What would happen? Only God knows!

As well as full time ministry, every community has a need for willing people to serve as readers, ministers of the Eucharist, Mass servers, catechists or members of various committees. God's Kingdom needs people willing to say yes and give their hands, feet and hearts.

God is saying, "Whom shall I send?"

What are you saying in reply?

On Vocation

"The world looks to the priest, because it looks to Jesus! No one can see Christ; but everyone sees the priest, and through him they wish to catch a glimpse of the Lord! Immense is the grandeur of the Lord! Immense is the grandeur and dignity of the priest!"
(Rome, Italy, October 13, 1979)

Pope John Paul II

Liturgical Resources for Vocations Sunday 2015



“I invite you to listen to and follow Jesus, and to allow yourselves to be transformed interiorly by his words, which 'are spirit and life' (Jn 6:62).”

“Let us dispose our hearts therefore to being 'good soil', by listening, receiving and living out the word, and thus bearing fruit.”

“Today too, Jesus lives and walks along the paths of ordinary life in order to draw near to everyone..... I turn now to those who are well disposed to listen to the voice of Christ that rings out in the Church and to understand what their own vocation is.”

- **Pope Francis**

Family Prayer Service

Gather in a comfortable space. Choose a song. Light a vocation candle.

Call to Prayer

As we gather, let us remember:

The light of Christ surrounds us.

The love of Christ enfolds us.

The power of Christ protects us.

The presence of Christ watches over us.

And wherever we are, God is with us.

And all is well!



Reading 1 John 3:1–2 (Take from the feast of the Good Shepherd)

Reflect and Share: What does it mean to you to be a “Child of God?”

Blessing (Bless each other with the sign of the cross on the forehead.)

Prayers of Intercession (Offer personal prayers)

Our Father

On Vocation

“If we had faith, we would see God hidden in the priest like a light behind glass, like wine mixed with water.”

Saint John Marie Vianney

Liturgical Resources for Vocations Sunday 2015



“Contemplative communities are power houses of prayer, drawing down many graces on our troubled world. In their own silent but effective way they contribute enormously to the work of re-evangelisation of our secularised world.”

Bishop Philip Boyce, Bishop of Raphoe



Family Prayer Service (continued)

Conversation Starters

Take time to share with your family about the Christian vocation. These open-ended sentences can be used as conversation starters.

- A person I really admire is. . .because. . .
- My baptism means a lot to me because. . .
- Married couples live a Christian vocation by. . .
- Single people make a difference in the Church by. . .
- If God calls me to be a (priest, brother, sister, deacon) I would. . .

Called by Name

There is a Catholic custom for parents to choose a religious name for their children. Sometimes people also choose a Biblical or saint's name for confirmation. Take time to find out about the saints after whom family members are named. Check on the internet and/or in books with the lives of saints. Talk about how the saint's lives give witness to the Christian vocation. What qualities of that person do you want to live out also?

Invitation

Invite your priest, sister, brother, deacon to dinner and talk about his/her vocation choice. Write a letter of appreciation to someone (priest, sister, brother, deacon, youth minister, parents, neighbour, teacher), thanking him/her for being a witness of Jesus.

On Vocation

“The Christian must be a luminous person, who brings light, who always gives light! ... A light that is not his or hers, but rather a gift from God, and a gift from Jesus. And we bring this light. If the Christian allows this light to be extinguished, his life no longer has meaning; he is a Christian by name only. It is God himself who gives us this light, and we offer it to others. Shining lamps! This is the Christian vocation”.

Pope Francis

Parish Rosary for Vocations

JOYFUL MYSTERIES

The Annunciation

The Angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will become the Mother of God, Word made Flesh. For all centuries to come, Jesus will become flesh in the Holy Eucharist to nourish us in a most intimate union with Him.

We pray for all future generations of priests and religious.

The Visitation

Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth, who recognises Mary as the living tabernacle of their Divine Lord.

We pray especially for priests and religious who bring Holy Communion to the sick, the house bound, and Viaticum to the dying.

The Nativity of Jesus

Jesus is born in Bethlehem. The angels announce His birth; kings and shepherds come to adore Him.

We pray especially for those who will be ordained, that they may remain faithful all their lives to the privilege of being "other Christ's among us.



The Presentation in the Temple

Mary and Joseph, in obedience to the Law, bring Jesus to the temple to be dedicated to God. Simeon expresses his gratitude to God for revealing the Messiah to him before he dies.

We thank God for all priests and religious who, like Simeon, have given us decades of faithful service. We pray that they may be rewarded for their generosity and self-sacrifice.

Finding Jesus in the Temple

Jesus is found, among the teachers in the temple; He returns home and is obedient to Mary and Joseph.

We pray that priests and religious will always be found going about their Father's business, and will be obedient to the teaching magisterium of the Church, our Holy Father, and the bishops in communion with Him.

Parish Rosary for Vocations

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

The Agony in the Garden

The Apostles fall asleep; Jesus sweats blood at the thought of His coming passion and death; angels come to comfort Him.

We pray that all priests and religious who are suffering and on the way to Calvary, may be comforted by God's presence.

Jesus is Scourged

Jesus scourged and beaten by the soldiers.

We pray for priests and religious who are persecuted, physically or mentally abused; those who are imprisoned or prevented from serving the Lord.

Jesus is Crowned with Thorns

Jesus is mocked as king and His Head is pierced by thorns.

We pray for priests and religious who suffer for defending the faith. We pray that all church leaders will uphold the true teachings of the Catholic Church, and resist temptations to compromise doctrine in the face of cultural and social pressures.

Jesus Carries His Cross

Bruised, bleeding, and exhausted, Jesus is forced to drag Himself and His cross up the hill of Calvary.

We pray for all with heavy crosses; those who are weak, lonely, or have fallen from God's grace in some way.

Jesus Dies on the Cross

Jesus sheds His last drops of Precious Blood to redeem us from sin and death.

We pray for all priests and religious who are dying and those who will die today. We pray for those who thirst for the salvation of souls.



Parish Rosary for Vocations

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

The Resurrection

Jesus arises from the dead and appears to the Apostles.

At times, priests and religious may suffer from despair that plagues them when they see so little from their labours. We pray that they will remember that the Crucifixion is followed by the Resurrection; darkness is always followed by Light.



The Ascension

Jesus instructs His Apostles and returns to His Father in Heaven.

We pray that priests may carry out Jesus' instructions to evangelise the whole world, instructing and baptising countless souls.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit comes down upon the Apostles, who are gathered with Mary.

We pray that priests and religious may be open to the graces of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen them for the task of bringing people to God and God to people.

The Assumption

After many years of nourishing the infant Church, Mary dies, not of bodily infirmity, but is overcome by the rapture of divine love. Her body as well as her soul is taken up into heaven.

We pray that priests and religious will be devoted to Mary, and find in her the love and comfort of a mother, the most powerful intercession of our greatest Saint, and the surest refuge against Satan and his cohorts who seek destruction of their service.

The Coronation

Mary is crowned Queen of Heaven and earth; she is rewarded for her faithfulness to God.

We pray that Mary, Queen of the Priests and Religious, will be their model of faith and joy, and constant guide until they reach Heaven where a crown, jewelled with the many souls entrusted to them on the day of their commitment, will be their reward for faithful and loving service.



Encouraging priestly vocations in the parish

Every parish needs to have a concern for encouraging and fostering vocations. Fostering vocations is the responsibility of the whole Church.

Crucial to fostering vocations is prayer. Vocational work is very much the work of the Holy Spirit. We can all pray to the 'Lord of the harvest' that he will continue to call men and

women to serve the Church through the Priesthood and religious life in our diocese and in the wider Church. "The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, pray the Lord of the harvest will send out labourers into his harvest." (Mt. 9:38)

Daily prayer is the best way to obtain vocations. The need to pray is as urgent as the need for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

What to pray for?

- ◆ We pray for the family, the first seminary.
- ◆ For an increase in vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life.
- ◆ For young men and women in your parish to assist them to discern their vocation and to use their names when praying for them.
- ◆ For seminarians for our diocese, and other seminarians of the other dioceses in Ireland.
- ◆ For the seminary staff and those who are involved with the formation of future priests.
- ◆ For the priests and religious of our diocese and especially your own Bishop.
- ◆ For all the faithful, who have the responsibility to foster and encourage vocations in the parish and in the family.



Prayers of the Faithful

We can pray for vocations during the Prayers of the Faithful every Sunday, We can also pray for vocations during the weekday Masses, again during the Prayers of the Faithful.

Encouraging priestly vocations in the parish

Prayer Cards

Prayer cards are provided by the Vocations Director praying for the family and for vocations. Prayer cards are a good reminder to pray daily for vocations. They are a wonderful resource that can also be given to the homebound, the sick and elderly, those who may not be able to attend Mass but do want to pray. Contact the Vocations Director to supply prayer cards so you can have them available.

Parishes can always produce their own prayer cards and offer their suggestions to the Vocations Director who is always searching for vocation prayers.

Adoration

Key to fostering vocations is time spent praying for them in Adoration. Many have discovered their vocation during adoration or they have become aware of their calling, because of their close relationship with the Eucharistic Lord.

It would be wonderful if every parish had a set time for adoration for vocations. This would become a very fruitful devotion for our diocese.

Some parishes have the practice of the 40 hours devotions, once a year on the feast of Christ the King, another highly recommended practice.

Novena

The Diocesan Novena Masses for priestly vocations concludes on or around the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. A different group from the parish each week can be responsible for the preparation of the Mass. It can involve the whole parish as well as the schools. It is a wonderful opportunity for the Celebrant of the Mass to focus on vocations and to talk about his own calling, which is such a powerful thing to do.

The Novena of Masses can be done very simply with every Mass having a Mass intention. Why not offer nine Masses for vocations to the priesthood?

The faithful can also offer their own intentions during the Mass, another effective way of praying for vocations.

Children

Encourage children to pray for vocations, this is a most worthwhile practice. Children's prayers are powerful and it teaches them about the call that God gives to each person.



Encouraging priestly vocations in the parish

Parish Involvement

We can all do our part in planting seeds, by encouraging men and women to explore the possibility of a vocation to the priesthood and religious life. Many vocations have grown from a tap on the shoulder, an encouraging word or a question to a man or woman who you see has the qualities of a vocation.



Priests

Get a priest or a religious to talk to the groups in the parish, (St Vincent de Paul, St Josephs Young Priests Society, John Paul II groups) asking them to talk about their call and why they became a priest or religious. Every person has an unique calling from God. Testimonies are powerful examples showing how God works in our lives.

Vocations Director

Invite the Vocations Director to talk to your parish council or any group in the parish. Each group in the parish can have an interest in promoting vocations. Vocations could be on the agenda of every meeting. The Vocations Director can talk about ways of encouraging vocational work in the parish, prayer initiatives, the process for discerning a vocation and the formation of future priests in the seminary.

Opportunities

There are many wonderful opportunities prepared by the Church and the local Church to encourage vocations. Parishes can use these opportunities to encourage their young people to attend.

Many people have been touched by attending World Youth Day. Besides the blessing of being present with the Pope at Mass and devotions, World Youth Day is a superb opportunity to grow in your Catholic faith and to discover your own particular vocation and calling.



Vocations Website

The Vocations website provides information and resources to encourage and foster vocations for the diocesan priesthood. Vocational work is very much about the Holy Spirit, who moves men's hearts to serve the Church in a special way in every age so we can all become instruments for the Holy Spirit. (See www.vocations.ie for more information).

You

Men and women of all ages are being called to the priesthood and religious life. The wonder of a 'call' is in the hands of God.

Prepared by Fr. Willie Purcell, National Vocations Coordinator and the Serra International Vocations Promotion organisation.

On Contemplative Life

Bishop Philip Boyce

They may well be separated from the busy world, with all its interests and pleasures, but contemplative monasteries remain very near to us with their prayers. They pray for us but we are normally unaware of the graces we receive through their lives of quiet dedication to the Lord. Although they are hidden from society, people of faith have trust in the prayers of nuns and monks and friars. It is sufficient to visit any contemplative monastery to become aware of the constant stream of people who come with prayer intentions, trusting in the intercession of those who have completely dedicated their lives to God in continuous prayer and penance.



The busy world often passes by our contemplative monasteries, heedlessly unaware of their existence or of the spiritual influence they exert on society. Parishes, especially those who have such communities near at hand, could draw attention to their presence by placing a notice in their parish bulletins and on their online and digital platforms. Catechists could mention this way of life, to which some young girls or boys might be called, and even take a school class to visit them and spend an hour with some of the enclosed women or men whose life always fascinates young people. Although not a very common vocation in life, the Lord does call some, and will continue to do so, to this type of dedicated life on behalf of the Church.

The Church is well aware of the importance of the contemplative life. The Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965) acknowledged the important role of contemplative communities in the Church. It said they were “a fount of heavenly blessings” and that they “lend lustre to God’s people with abundant fruits of holiness, sway them by their example and enlarge the Church by their hidden apostolic fruitfulness” (*Perfectae Caritatis*, 7).

All popes in recent times have expressed their appreciation for this way of life. Perhaps the most striking witness to the whole world on the value of a hidden life of prayer was given by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who, on account of advanced age and diminished physical strength, retired from the Petrine ministry on 11 February 2013 and chose “to devote himself even more to prayer and meditation” in a secluded monastery in the Vatican gardens. This is an important reminder to us all of the apostolic value of a life completely dedicated to God.



Contemplative communities are power houses of prayer, drawing down many graces on our troubled world. In their own silent but effective way they contribute enormously to the work of re-evangelisation of our secularised world.



Bishop Philip Boyce OCD (Order of Discalced Carmelites) is Bishop of Raphoe and Chairman of the Council for Clergy of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference. This article was prepared originally for *Pro Orantibus Day*.

The Work of a Vocations Director

Father Willie Purcell

In Canon 385 we are told that the bishop is required to foster all vocations to ministry and religious life though with “a special care for priestly and missionary vocations”. Importantly the task of fostering vocations is not just the responsibility of the bishop but of the whole Christian community (Canon 233). In these two canons we see that the office of Vocations Director is a reflection of the bishop’s commitment to encouraging the growth of all vocations.

The 1997 document *In Verbo Tuo* which came out of The Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and to Consecrated Life in Europe reinforces the need for the community to foster a culture of vocations. This document encourages the support by dioceses of all vocations whether ordained or lay, but that this should include a particular support for priesthood and consecrated life.



So what does a vocations director do? It is the responsibility of the Vocations Director to recruit the next generation of priests for his diocese. Easier said than done. Some of the key areas are going around different parishes, youth groups, ecclesial youth movements and schools, talking to young people about vocations and the possibility that God indeed might be calling one of them to a vocation to the priesthood.

If a man expresses an interest in the priesthood, the vocations director meets with him personally to help him discern whether or not God may be calling him to the priesthood. In my diocese we have a monthly discernment group meeting where young men gather who have thought about the priesthood. The group meets at 7pm on the first Friday of each month for a Holy Hour with the diocesan community and then meets to reflect on different areas of priesthood and discernment.

Careers fairs in both secondary and third level colleges are also an opportunity to distribute literature and prayer cards for discernment. The vocations director also plans different diocesan events throughout the year to motivate young people to think about vocations.

Once a man decides to apply for seminary, it is the job of the vocations director to guide him through the application process, which includes an application form, a biography and an interview with the vocations board. If he’s accepted by the bishop to be a seminarian, then the process of formation begins and the journey towards priesthood gets underway. On ordination day, it is the role of the vocations director to formally present the candidate(s), in the name of God’s people, to the bishop for ordination to the priesthood.

The vocations director needs the help and prayers of all to pray for vocations and for our seminarians so that God may send us good and holy priests. For every vocations director it is a privilege to witness the formation of the future priests of our dioceses.

Father Willie Purcell, National Coordinator for Diocesan Vocations

Social Media and Vocations Sunday



“The Christian must be a luminous person, who brings light, who always gives light! ... A light that is not his or hers, but rather a gift from God, and a gift from Jesus. And we bring this light.

If the Christian allows this light to be extinguished, his life no longer has meaning; he is a Christian by name only.

It is God himself who gives us this light, and we offer it to others.

Shining lamps!
This is the Christian vocation”

Pope Francis

Suggested Tweets

Follow us on Twitter @NVocations

We have prepared a series of tweets which can be used for Vocations Sunday 2015 and we are suggesting the hashtag #vocations2015

Tweet 1:

Message for Vocations Sunday 2015 on the theme: Exodus, a fundamental experience of vocation.
#vocations2015

Tweet 2:

The harvest indeed is great but the labourers are

few - pray the Lord of the harvest to send more labourers to his field.
#vocations2015

Tweet 3:

We are praying for our Holy Father Pope Francis and that young people will be inspired by him to say yes to God!
#vocations2015

Tweet 4:

Today is the 52nd World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

[#vocations2015](#)

Tweet 5:

Jesus continues to call people today. He continues to say "Come, follow me" (Mk 10:21)
#vocations2015

Tweet 6:

Find your local vocations director on www.vocations.ie
#vocations2015

All these tweets have been checked and they are either exactly at or just under the Twitter

On Vocation

“We need young men too, especially young men who will have the courage to say ‘yes’ to the call of Christ, and follow him as priests.”

Archbishop Charles J Brown,
Papal Nuncio to Ireland

Prayers for Vocations



“Always remember the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve, and to seek out and rescue those who were lost”

**Bishop John McAreevey,
Bishop of Dromore**

Prayer for Vocations

God, Our Father,

Thank you for your son, Jesus, our Good Shepherd, who leads us to fullness of life.

By our baptism, we are called by name to continue the mission of Jesus.

Give us the grace to listen with an open heart to the voice of Jesus and to respond generously with a joyful spirit.

Strengthen the men and women you called to serve through marriage, the single life, the diaconate, priesthood, and consecrated life.

Guide all who are discerning their Christian vocation.

In gratitude we offer this prayer through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, united with you forever.

Amen.

Christ Has No Body

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks

Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,

Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,

Yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now but yours,

No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which he looks

compassion on this world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Saint Teresa of Avila

(1515-1582)

On Vocation

“It is not a time to be lamenting; it is a time to be rising to the challenge with courage and Christian enthusiasm.”

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin

Prayers for Vocations



The Virgin Mary, model of every vocation, did not fear to utter her “*fiat*” in response to the Lord’s call. She is at our side and she guides us. With the generous courage born of faith, Mary sang of the joy of leaving herself behind and entrusting to God the plans she had for her life. Let us turn to her, so that we may be completely open to what God has planned for each one of us, so that we can grow in the desire to go out with tender concern towards others (cf. *Lk 1:39*). May the Virgin Mary protect and intercede for us all.

**Pope Francis
Message for
Vocations Sunday
2015**

Prayer for Guidance for young people

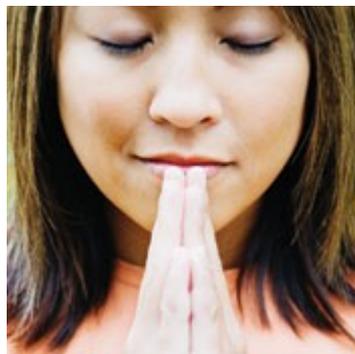
Lord, I know you love me and have great plans for me.

But sometimes I am overwhelmed by the thought of my future.

Show me how to walk forward one day at a time.

May I hear your call to a life which will allow me to love as only I can, and allow me to serve others with the special gifts you have given me.

Amen



Prayer for a generous heart

Father in Heaven, you have blessed us with many gifts.

You chose us before the world began,

To be your adopted sons and daughters,

And to live through love in your presence.

Give us wisdom and insight to know your purpose;

Give us courage to follow where your Spirit leads us,

Give us generosity to serve you in our brothers and sisters.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Based on Ephesians 1:3 ff.

On Vocation

“Wherever there is life, fervour and a desire to bring Christ to others, genuine vocations will arise.” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 107)

Pope Francis

Prayers for Vocations

A prayer for guidance for young people

Loving Father, I know you love me and have great plans for me. Help me to walk in your love every day.

Show me and all your people your way and help us to listen to you.

I pray for all those you are calling to be priests, religious sisters and brothers. May they respond in love to your call.

Please make my heart always ready to do what you want.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

“Teach a child to choose the right path, and when he is older he will remain on it.”
Proverbs 22:6

Meileann muilté Dé go mall ach

Meileann siad go mion.

Mílaois is mílaois aríst a mheil muilté Dé

Teachtairí groíúla le hanamacha spreagúla.

Casadh an rotha is scaipeadh scéil Chríost

Creideamh a Ghaois i gcéin is i gcóngar.

Tá meitheal de dhíth do rothaí an mhuilinn,

Tríú mílaois, maidí an rotha ceal chúnamh.

Sín chugam Do lámha is glac leis an uain

Muilté Dé a chasadh is d'anam a shásamh.

Meileann muidne na muilté go mall ach go mion

Meil linn, a chara cléibh.

Éamonn Ó Loingsigh

Feachtas Árd-deoise Thuama – Gairmeacha

www.tuamarchdiocese.org

On Vocation

“We should never lose faith in God’s power to raise up women and men in every age who are living and courageous witnesses to his love. Our challenge is to have the courage and the faith to invite those we believe and who may have received that call to come forward and to discern with the Church what the Lord asks of them.”

Cardinal Seán Brady

Quotes and Tweets on vocation for Parish Newsletters

Pope Francis Tweets:

- The world makes us look towards ourselves, our possessions, our desires. The Gospel invites us to be open to others, to share with the poor.
- No one saves oneself. The community is essential.
- I cannot imagine a Christian who does not know how to smile. May we joyfully witness to our faith.
- Dear young people, let us not be satisfied with a mediocre life. Be amazed by what is true and beautiful, what is of God!
- We are called to live our baptism every day, as new creatures, clothed in Christ.
- How powerful prayer is! May we never lose the courage to say: Lord, give us your peace.
- This is Christian hope: that the future is in God's hands.

Archbishop Eamon Martin:

“May the Holy Spirit ‘fall afresh on us’ during this Year of Consecrated Life, blowing where God wills through our parishes, convents, monasteries and religious houses. Let the winds of the Holy Spirit inspire consecrated women and men to ‘wake up the world’. Perhaps the Holy Spirit has new plans for Consecrated Life in Ireland. We must be open to this, asking ourselves what are the charisms and apostolates that the Spirit desires for the renewal of faith in Ireland. I am confident that this renewal will be nourished and multiplied by the prayers and witness of consecrated women and men. Religious congregations – some old, some new- will continue to quietly inspire the people of Ireland by selfless lives of poverty, chastity and obedience, offering a humble, yet powerful, counter-witness to the emptiness that so often surrounds us. If we are to ‘wake up the world’, there is much work to be done, but we need not fear. “With God all things are possible”. With joy and love in our hearts we will find ways of singing a new song to the Lord and “bringing the newness of the Gospel” to all our people.” – Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh

Bishop Denis Nulty:

“Alongside priests promoting vocations to the priesthood is the essential presence of good men and women, especially parents, who believe firmly in the critical role which priests play in parish life.” – Bishop Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin

Books on Priesthood and Religious Life

PARISH BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

For use on Sunday 19 April 2015

Next Sunday, April 26, the Fourth Sunday of Easter is also known as Good Shepherd Sunday. In 1963 Pope Paul VI designated this day as World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Our parish will join with the universal church to ask for God's blessings that we may be strengthened in our Christian vocation.

(Add details about your parish vocations initiatives)

Veritas Publications

Priesthood Today: Ministry in a Changing Church - Edited by Eamonn Conway

Deacons: Ministers of Christ and of God's Mysteries - Gearóid Dullea

Ministry Now: New Approaches for a Changing Church - Martin Kennedy

I Will Come Myself - Kevin Scallan

Heaven Sent: My Life Through the Rosary - Gabriel Harty

A Fire in the Forest: Religious Life in Ireland - Edited by Michael J. Breen

VERITAS

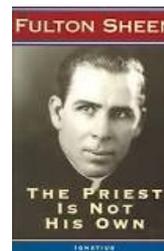
Other Publishers

On Shepherding: Reflections on the Priesthood - Edited by Gearóid Dullea (Columba Press)

Led by a Thread: Following God's Call to Priesthood - David Forrester (Redemptorist Publications)

Vocation: Singing the Lord's Song - Stephen Platten (SPCK Publishing)

The Priest is not his Own - Fulton Sheen (Ignatius Press)



On Vocation

“Vocations are born in prayer and prayer, and only in prayer can they persevere and bear fruit....”

Pope Francis

Contact Information

PARISH BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

**For use on
Sunday 26 April
2015**

Today, the Fourth Sunday of Easter: Good Shepherd Sunday is a special celebration of World Day of Prayer for Vocations. The worldwide Church honours all Christian vocations. Christ Jesus gives his life for us that we might know fullness of life. We pray for openness to God's call and to accept the gift of our Christian vocation. Christ Jesus, the Good Shepherd is with us to guide and protect us on our life journey and is calling some among us to priesthood and religious life. Answer the call.

Diocesan Vocations

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St Joseph's Young Priests Society

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Website:
www.stjosephsyoungpriestssociety.com

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Resource Credits

These resources have been compiled and edited by Father Willie Purcell, National Coordinator for Diocesan Vocations and Ms Brenda Drumm, Communications Officer with the Catholic Communications Office on behalf of the Bishops' Council for Vocations. Additional audio and video resources for Vocations Sunday are available on www.vocations.ie and also on www.catholicbishops.ie.

All queries about these resources to 087 310 4444.
Follow us on Twitter @NVocations

Pope Francis:

“Dear young people, do not bury your talents, the gifts that God has given you! Do not be afraid to dream of great things!”

