



VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2016

Vocations Sunday 2016 will be celebrated on Sunday 17 April on the theme *The Church, Mother of Vocations*. Pope Francis has issued a pastoral message and we have included some of the excerpts from it in this newsletter. You can read the full text of the Pope's message on www.vocations.ie.

We invite you to pray for Vocations to the priesthood and religious life on Vocations Sunday and throughout the year.

For prayers and additional resources please see www.vocations.ie.

“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

ON VOCATIONS

“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**

“The vocational call to priesthood is profoundly countercultural because the primary dominating voices today stress doing one's own thing.” **Archbishop Michael Neary**

“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 Mc Areavey**

BROADCAST OF MASS FOR VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2016

Mass for Vocations Sunday will be broadcast from the RTÉ studios in Donnybrook, Dublin, on Sunday 17 April 2016 at 11.00am. The celebrant and homilist will be Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore and Chair of the Bishops' Council for Vocations.

RESOURCES FOR VOCATIONS SUNDAY FOR PARISHES AND FAMILIES

Resources for Vocations Sunday and every Sunday throughout the year are available on www.vocations.ie where you can also find a list of all diocesan vocations directors.

VOCATIONS SUNDAY ON TWITTER

Join the conversation about Vocations on Twitter @NVocations and using the hashtags: #vocations and #vocationssunday2016.

ON VOCATIONS

“Vocations are born in prayer and from prayer; and only through prayer can they persevere and bear fruit.” **Pope Francis**

“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**

“We, as priests are called to be, like Christ, the Face of mercy to the world. What a wonderful calling! What a challenge, particularly in a world which at times seems everything but merciful.” **Archbishop Eamon Martin**

Pope Francis' Message for Vocations Sunday 2016

Theme: The Church, Mother of Vocations

Vocations are born within the Church: From the moment a vocation begins to become evident, it is necessary to have an adequate “sense” of the Church. No one is called exclusively for a particular region, or for a group or for an ecclesial movement, but rather for the Church and for the world. “A sure sign of the authenticity of a charism is its ecclesial character, its ability to be integrated harmoniously into the life of God’s holy and faithful people for the good of all” (ibid., 130). In responding to God’s call, young people see their own ecclesial horizon expand; they are able to consider various charisms and to undertake a more objective discernment. In this way, the community becomes the home and the family where vocations are born. Candidates gratefully contemplate this mediation of the community as an essential element for their future. They learn to know and to love their brothers and sisters who pursue paths different from their own; and these bonds strengthen in everyone the communion which they share.

Vocations grow within the Church: In the course of formation, candidates for various vocations need to grow in their knowledge of the ecclesial community, overcoming the limited perspectives that we all have at the beginning. To that end, it is helpful to undertake some apostolic experience together with other members of the community, for example: in the company of a good catechist, to communicate the Christian message; together with a religious community, to experience the evangelisation of the peripheries sharing in the life of the cloister, to discover the treasure of contemplation; in contact with missionaries, to know more closely the mission ad gentes; and in the company of diocesan priests, to deepen one’s experience of pastoral life in the parish and in the diocese. For those who are already in formation, the ecclesial community always remains the fundamental formational environment, towards which one should feel a sense of gratitude.

Vocations are sustained by the Church: After definitive commitment, our vocational journey within the Church does not come to an end, but it continues in our willingness to serve, our perseverance and our ongoing formation. The one who has consecrated his life to the Lord is willing to serve the Church wherever it has need. The mission of Paul and Barnabas is a good example of this readiness to serve the Church. Sent on mission by the Holy Spirit and by the community of Antioch (cf. Acts 13, 1-4), they returned to that same community and described what the Lord had worked through them (cf. 14: 27). Missionaries are accompanied and sustained by the Christian community, which always remains a vital point of reference, just as a visible homeland offers security to all who are on pilgrimage towards eternal life.

To read the full message from Pope Francis, please see www.vocations.ie and follow the Vocations Sunday conversation on Twitter @NVocations and using the hashtag #vocationssunday2016.