



Remembering Vocations in your Lenten Devotions—2020

"Prayer itself, born in Catholic families, nurtured by programs of Christian formation, strengthened by the grace of the sacraments, is the first means by which we come to know the Lord's will for our lives. To the extent that we teach young people to pray, and to pray well, we will be cooperating with God's call. Programs, plans and projects have their place; but the discernment of a vocation is above all the fruit of an intimate dialogue between the Lord and his disciples. Young people, if they know how to pray, can be trusted to know what to do with God's call." Pope Benedict XVI

February 26—Ash Wednesday: "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."¹

March 1—First Sunday of Lent: "How can we fail to thank God today for all those missionaries who for five centuries of history were committed to the evangelization of the Continent? ... Many of their names are known to us because they have been raised to the glory of the altars. But most of those missionaries remain unknown, the majority of them Religious, to whom America owes much, not only religiously but also culturally."² A vocation is a gift and a calling from Christ Himself.

March 8—Second Sunday of Lent: "...if we are to promote development in its fullness, our own "gaze" upon mankind has to be measured against that of Christ. In fact, it is quite impossible to separate the response to people's material and social needs from the fulfillment of the profound desires of their hearts."³ As part of his plan for the salvation of humanity; we must accept His call.

March 15—Third Sunday of Lent: "... do not tire of proclaiming to a world hungry for truth the living Christ, our sole salvation. He alone is our peace; he alone is that richness from which we can always receive strength and inner joy."² We pray for priests to lead our celebration.

March 22—Fourth Sunday of Lent: "Lent is a season of intense prayer, fasting and concern for those in need. It offers all Christians an opportunity to prepare for Easter by serious discernment about their lives, with particular attention to the word of God, which enlightens the daily journey of all who believe."⁴

March 29—Fifth Sunday of Lent: "This then is the consecrated life: ... It is a living encounter with the Lord in his people. It is a call to the faithful obedience of daily life and to the unexpected surprises from the Spirit. It is a vision of what we need to embrace in order to experience joy: Jesus."⁵ Through our prayers and sacrifices for vocations, God seeks holy men and women to teach and lead His flock.

April 5—Palm Sunday: "Fasting and almsgiving, which, together with prayer, the Church proposes in a special way during the Lenten Season, are suitable means for us to become conformed to this "gaze". The examples of the saints and the long history of the Church's missionary activity provide invaluable indications of the most effective ways to support development."³ Pray for vocations and support ministries to those who are in need.

April 10—Good Friday: "Christ offers his own example and issues the invitation to follow him. He asks those who hear his voice to give their lives for others. This sacrifice is a source of self-fulfillment and joy, as is seen in the eloquent example of those men and women who, leaving all security behind, have not hesitated to risk their lives as missionaries in different parts of the world."⁴ We must reflect upon the need for enough priests to minister to the needs of the faithful by celebrating the mass."

Prayer for Vocations ⁶

Heavenly Father, Lord of the harvest, call forth vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life from our diocese and our families. Inspire men to imitate Christ, the Eternal High Priest, in sacrificial service to your Church. Move the hearts of men and women to offer themselves wholly to You in poverty, chastity and obedience. Send them as laborers for Your harvest. Inspire the faithful to support them with prayers and sacrifice. Raise up holy families who foster openness to your call. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Amen

For information on vocations, Call Father Michael Isenberg (703) 841-2514, write: michael.isenberg@arlingtondiocese.org

¹ Pope Francis, 2019 World Day of Vocations

² *A New Evangelization*, The Synod of Bishops for America, July 15, 1999

³ *Message of his Holiness Benedict XVI for Lent 2006*

⁴ *Message of His Holiness Pope John-Paul II for Lent 2003*

⁵ Pope Francis, 23rd World Day for Consecrated Life

⁶ Arlington Diocese Prayer for Vocations

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