



VOCATION OFFICE FOR THE
DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
HEED THE CALL

Novena for Vocations in Preparation for the 56th World Day of Prayer for Vocations (May 12, 2019)

Easter Greetings!

On Sunday, May 12, 2019, the universal Catholic Church celebrates the 56th World Day of Prayer. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis' papal message for this year is: *The courage to take a risk for God's promise.* This theme resonates with the Vocation Office theme of '*Living the Gospel with Generosity*'. To live the Gospel with generosity requires one to be courageous in living out the Gospel values and promises each day in our homes, work places, schools, parishes, and communities.

As we anticipate the celebration of the 56th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we invite you to pray with us for increased grace to respond to God's call to the priesthood and religious life throughout the world, but especially in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. In his 2019 Apostolic Exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis tells the People of God that '*Filled with the love of Christ, young people are called to be witnesses of the Gospel wherever they find themselves, by the way they live.*' Quoting Saint Alberto Hurtado, he continued '*Being an apostle does not mean carrying a torch in hand, possessing the light, but being that light... The Gospel, more than a lesson, is an example. A message that becomes a life fully lived*'. (No. 175).

To celebrate this Day of Prayer, we invite you to join the Philadelphia seminarians in praying a Novena for Vocations between May 4th and May 12th. These videos will be placed on our website at heedthecall.org/novena, as well as on our Facebook page at facebook.com/phillypriest.

We thank you for partnering with us to build a culture of vocations in our parishes, schools, communities, and homes. To echo Pope Francis, "***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.***"

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Stephen P. DeLacy
Vocation Director
Vocation Office for the Diocesan Priesthood
Archdiocese of Philadelphia



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Day 1: Saturday, May 4, 2019

“...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.” ~ *Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2019*

We Pray:

Mary, Mother of the Church, Model of Vocations, inspire all who follow Jesus that they may grow in love of the Lord and their response to His call be completely and deeply joyful. Amen.

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name. Thy
kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and
forgive us our trespasses as we
forgive those who trespass against
us; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, Full of Grace,
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now,
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Amen.



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Day Two: Sunday, May 5, 2019

“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.” ~ *Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2019*

We Pray:

Mary, Mother of the Church, Model of Vocations, inspire men and women to be bold in responding fully to Our Lord’s plan for their lives. Amen

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name. Thy
kingdom come, thy will be done,
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Give us this day our daily bread and
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Amen.

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Day Three: Monday, May 6, 2019

“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. 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. 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.” ~*Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2019*

We Pray:

Mary, Mother of the Church, Model of Vocations, inspire our youth with the desire to follow the example of the Apostles to be ‘fishers of men’ and become ardent and generous followers of Your son. Amen.

Our Father

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hallowed be thy name. Thy
kingdom come, thy will be done,
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Give us this day our daily bread and
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Amen.

Hail Mary

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The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

Glory Be

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Day Four: Tuesday, May 7, 2019

“In the heart of the Church, Mary shines forth. She is the supreme model for a youthful Church that seeks to follow Christ with enthusiasm and docility. While still very young, she accepted the message of the angel, yet she was not afraid to ask questions (cf. *Lk* 1:34). With open heart and soul, she replied, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord” (*Lk* 1:38).

“We are always struck by the strength of the young Mary’s ‘yes’, the strength in those words, ‘be it done’, that she spoke to the angel. This was no merely passive or resigned acceptance, or a faint ‘yes’, as if to say, ‘Well, let’s give it a try and see what happens’. Mary did not know the words, ‘Let’s see what happens’. She was determined; she knew what was at stake and she said ‘yes’ without thinking twice. Hers 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. ... She took the risk, and for this reason she is strong, she is an ‘influencer’, the ‘influencer’ of God. Her ‘yes and her desire to serve were stronger than any doubts or difficulties’”. ~*Christus Vivit, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Francis to Young People and the Entire People of God 2019*

We Pray:

Mary, Mother of the Church, Model of Vocations inspire men and women to respond to your invitation to ‘Do Whatever He Tells You’ and to repeat with you the ‘Yes’ of a joyful and irrevocable gift of self. Amen.

Our Father

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hallowed be thy name. Thy
kingdom come, thy will be done,
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Amen.

Hail Mary

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The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

Glory Be

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Day Five: Wednesday, May 8, 2019

“To discern our personal vocation, we have to realize that it is a calling from a friend, who is Jesus. When we give something to our friends, we give them the best we have. It will not necessarily be what is most expensive or hard to obtain, but what we know will make them happy. ... This sort of discernment that takes place among friends is what I suggest you take as a model for trying to discover God’s will for your lives.

I want you to know that, when the Lord thinks of each of you and what he wants to give you, he sees you as his close friend. And if he plans to grant you a grace, a charism that will help you live to the full and become someone who benefits others, someone who leaves a mark in life, it will surely be a gift that will bring you more joy and excitement than anything else in this world.

A vocation, while a gift, will undoubtedly also be demanding. God’s gifts are interactive; to enjoy them we have to be ready to take risks. Yet the demands they make are not an obligation imposed from without, but an incentive to let that gift grow and develop, and then become a gift for others. When the Lord awakens a vocation, he thinks not only of what you already are, but of what you will one day be, in his company and in that of others. ~*Christus Vivit, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Francis to Young People and the Entire People of God 2019*

We Pray:

Mary, Mother of the Church, Model of Vocations, accompany young people in their journeys that they might grow in faith and friendship with your Son, Our Lord, and hear clearly his invitation to them. Amen

Our Father

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Day Six: Thursday, May 9, 2019

“Where numerous vocations blossom to the ecclesiastical and religious state, there one lives generously according to the Gospel: there is a sign that there are fervent and good parents, who not only do not fear, but feel happy and honored to give their children to Church; there are zealous and faithful priests, for whom the continuity of their priesthood is the first and most important pastoral care program; above all there are generous and open adolescents, pure and courageous who, nourished by Eucharistic life and sensitive to the voice of Christ, know how to nourish in their young hearts the desire to one day serve the Church, and to give themselves to souls throughout the whole, to reproduce in himself the features of the Good Shepherd, and faithfully follow his footsteps.” ~*Message of Pope Paul VI on the First World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 1964*

We Pray:

Mary, Mother of the Church, Model of Vocations, help all those who follow Christ to find life in abundance as they live the Gospel with generosity at the service of God and His kingdom. Amen.

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Day Seven: Friday, May 10, 2019

“I would like to make a special appeal to you: reflect. Understand that I am talking to you about very important things. It is a question of devoting one's entire life to the service of God and the Church. It is a question of devoting it with a deep faith, a mature conviction, a truly free decision, a generosity that is unflinching and without regrets. The words of Jesus: "And I am with you forever, until the end of the world" guarantee the continuity of this "you". There will always be calls from the Lord, and there will always be answers from people available. You too must listen. You must deepen, with your intelligence enlightened by faith, the ultra-terrestrial dimension of the divine plan of universal salvation. I know that too much of this world, too many current events disturb you. It is precisely for this reason that I invite you to think! Open your heart to a joyful encounter with the risen Christ! Allow the strength of the Holy Spirit to act in you and inspire you with the right choices for your life. Ask for advice. The Church of Jesus must continue her mission in the world: she needs you because there is so much work to be done.” ~*Message of Saint Pope John Paul II for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 1980*

We Pray:

Mary, Mother of the Church, Model of Vocations, inspire men and women to be humble and passionate servants of Christ's love, to live out that love in following Him and calling others to do the same. Amen.

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Day Eight: Saturday, May 11, 2019

“Vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life are born out of the experience of a personal encounter with Christ, out of sincere and confident dialogue with him, so as to enter into his will. It is necessary, therefore, to grow in the experience of faith, understood as a profound relationship with Jesus, as inner attentiveness to his voice which is heard deep within us. This process, which enables us to respond positively to God’s call, is possible in Christian communities where the faith is lived intensely, where generous witness is given of adherence to the Gospel, where there is a strong sense of mission which leads people to make the total gift of self for the Kingdom of God, nourished by recourse to the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and by a fervent life of prayer.

Deep and constant prayer brings about growth in the faith of the Christian community, in the unceasingly renewed certainty that God never abandons his people and that he sustains them by raising up particular vocations – to the priesthood and the consecrated life – so that they can be signs of hope for the world.”
~*Message of Pope Benedict XVI for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2013*

We Pray:

Mary, Mother of the Church, Model of Vocations, help youth respond to the faith given to them through the waters of Baptism, so they may continually answer the call of your Son to live out their vocation. Amen

Our Father

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Day Nine: Sunday, May 12, 2019

“The joy of the Gospel, which makes us open to encountering God and our brothers and sisters, does not abide our slowness and our sloth. Vocation is today! The Christian mission is now! Each one of us is called – whether to the lay life in marriage, to the priestly life in the ordained ministry, or to a life of special consecration – in order to become a witness of the Lord, here and now.

This “today” that Jesus proclaimed assures us that God continues to “come down” to save our human family and to make us sharers in his mission. If he lets us realize that he is calling us to consecrate ourselves totally to his kingdom, then we should have no fear! It is beautiful – and a great grace – to be completely and forever consecrated to God and the service of our brothers and sisters.

Today the Lord continues to call others to follow him. We should not wait to be perfect in order to respond with our generous “yes”, nor be fearful of our limitations and sins, but instead open our 3 hearts to the voice of the Lord. To listen to that voice, to discern our personal mission in the Church and the world, and at last to live it in the today that God gives us.” ~*Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2018*

We Pray:

Mary, Mother of the Church, Model of Vocations, accompany young men and women as they follow Our Lord, to not be afraid as they walk the courageous paths of charity and generous commitment.
Amen.

Our Father

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