



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

Novena for Vocations in Preparation for the 58th World Day of Prayer for Vocations (April 25, 2021)

Easter Greetings!

On Good Shepherd Sunday, April 25, 2021, the universal Catholic Church celebrates the 58th World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis' papal message for this year focuses on Saint Joseph and our love for this great saint "next door" with three key words that mark each person's vocation - dream, service, and fidelity. With the Year of Saint Joseph as the foundation for this year's message from the Holy Father ([Patris Corde](#)), we invite you to pray with us for an increase in grace in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and throughout the whole world to respond to God's call to the priesthood and religious life.

The word Novena comes from the Latin *novem* meaning 'nine'. A novena is a devotion consisting of prayer said on nine successive days, asking to obtain special grace. The practice of saying novenas is derived from Scripture. After Jesus' ascension into heaven, he told his disciples to pray together in the upper room and devote themselves to constant prayer (*Acts 1:14*). The Apostles, Blessed Virgin Mary, and other followers of Jesus prayed together for nine consecutive days, concluding in the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

To celebrate this World Day of Prayer, we invite you to join our current and incoming Vocation Directors, Fr. Stephen DeLacy and Fr. David Friel, respectively, and seminarians from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in praying a Novena for Vocations between April 17th and April 25th. These videotaped reflection/prayers for each day of the Novena will be uploaded each morning to our website (<https://heedthecall.org/novena>) and Facebook ([@PhillyPriest](#)) and Instagram ([@PhillyPriest](#)) pages.

We thank you for partnering with us to build a culture of vocations in our parishes, schools, communities, and homes. As Pope Francis reminds us in this year's Papal Message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, ***"Every true vocation is born of the gift of oneself, which is the fruit of mature sacrifice. The priesthood and consecrated life likewise require this kind of maturity. Whatever our vocation, whether to marriage, celibacy or virginity, our gift of self will not come to fulfillment if it stops at sacrifice; were that the case, instead of becoming a sign of the beauty and joy of love, the gift of self would risk being an expression of unhappiness, sadness and frustration"*** (*Patris Corde*, 7)."

Sincerely in Christ,

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



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Day One: Saturday, April 17, 2021

We Reflect:

“God looks on the heart (cf. 1 Sam 16:7), and in Saint Joseph he recognized the heart of a father, able to give and generate life in the midst of daily routines. Vocations have this same goal: to beget and renew lives every day. The Lord desires to shape the hearts of fathers and mothers: hearts that are open, capable of great initiatives, generous in self-giving, compassionate in comforting anxieties and steadfast in strengthening hopes. The priesthood and the consecrated life greatly need these qualities nowadays, in times marked by fragility but also by the sufferings due to the pandemic, which has spawned uncertainties and fears about the future and the very meaning of life. Saint Joseph comes to meet us in his gentle way, as one of “the saints next door”. At the same time, his strong witness can guide us on the journey.” *(Pope Francis’ Message for the 2021 World Day of Prayer for Vocations)*

We Pray:

O Great Saint Joseph, you were completely obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Obtain for me the grace to know the state of life that God in His providence has chosen for me. Since my happiness on earth, and perhaps even my final happiness in heaven, depends on this choice, let me not be deceived in making it. Obtain for me the light to know God's Will, to carry it out faithfully, and to choose the vocation which will lead me to a happy eternity. Amen.

Saint Joseph, protector of vocations, may your witness of a heart that is open, generous, compassionate and steadfast be an example to men and women as they discern their vocation. 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, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen



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Day Two: Sunday, April 18, 2021

We Reflect:

“Saint Joseph suggests to us three key words for each individual’s vocation. The first is dream. Everyone dreams of finding fulfilment in life. We rightly nurture great hopes, lofty aspirations that ephemeral goals – like success, money and entertainment – cannot satisfy. If we were to ask people to express in one word their life’s dream, it would not be difficult to imagine the answer: “to be loved”. It is love that gives meaning to life, because it reveals life’s mystery. Indeed, we only have life if we give it; we truly possess it only if we generously give it away. Saint Joseph has much to tell us in this regard, because, through the dreams that God inspired in him, he made of his life a gift.” (*Pope Francis’ Message for the 2021 World Day of Prayer for Vocations*)

We Pray:

O Great Saint Joseph, you were completely obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Obtain for me the grace to know the state of life that God in His providence has chosen for me. Since my happiness on earth, and perhaps even my final happiness in heaven, depends on this choice, let me not be deceived in making it. Obtain for me the light to know God's Will, to carry it out faithfully, and to choose the vocation which will lead me to a happy eternity. Amen.

St. Joseph, protector of vocations, help young people who are discerning to respond generously to God's dreams for them. Inspire in them the courage to say “yes” to the Lord who always surprises and never disappoints. 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

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Day Three: Monday, April 19, 2021

We Reflect:

“The Gospels tell us of four dreams (cf. Mt 1:20; 2:13.19.22). They were calls from God, but they were not easy to accept. After each dream, Joseph had to change his plans and take a risk, sacrificing his own plans in order to follow the mysterious designs of God, whom he trusted completely. Saint Joseph let himself be guided by his dreams without hesitation. Why? Because his heart was directed to God; it was already inclined towards him. A small indication was enough for his watchful “inner ear” to recognize God’s voice.

This applies also to our calling: God does not like to reveal himself in a spectacular way, pressuring our freedom. He conveys his plans to us with gentleness. He does not overwhelm us with dazzling visions but quietly speaks in the depths of our heart, drawing near to us and speaking to us through our thoughts and feelings. In this way, as he did with Saint Joseph, he sets before us profound and unexpected horizons.

Indeed, Joseph’s dreams led him into experiences he would never have imagined. ... Amid all these upheavals, he found the courage to follow God’s will. So too in a vocation: God’s call always urges us to take a first step, to give ourselves, to press forward. There can be no faith without risk. Only by abandoning ourselves confidently to grace, setting aside our own programs and comforts, can we truly say “yes” to God. And every “yes” bears fruit because it becomes part of a larger design, of which we glimpse only details, but which the divine Artist knows and carries out, making of every life a masterpiece.” (*Pope Francis’ Message for the 2021 World Day of Prayer for Vocations*)

We Pray:

O Great Saint Joseph, you were completely obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Obtain for me the grace to know the state of life that God in His providence has chosen for me. Since my happiness on earth, and perhaps even my final happiness in heaven, depends on this choice, let me not be deceived in making it. Obtain for me the light to know God's Will, to carry it out faithfully, and to choose the vocation which will lead me to a happy eternity. Amen.

St. Joseph, protector of vocations, inspire men and women to respond courageously, to say ‘yes’ to God and to make of their life a masterpiece. 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, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen



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Day Four: Tuesday, April 20, 2021

We Reflect:

“A second word marks the journey of Saint Joseph and that of vocation: service. The Gospels show how Joseph lived entirely for others and never for himself. The holy people of God invoke him as the most chaste spouse, based on his ability to love unreservedly. By freeing love from all possessiveness, he became open to an even more fruitful service. His loving care has spanned generations; his attentive guardianship has made him patron of the Church. ... His service and sacrifices were only possible, however, because they were sustained by a greater love: “Every true vocation is born of the gift of oneself, which is the fruit of mature sacrifice. The priesthood and consecrated life likewise require this kind of maturity. Whatever our vocation, whether to marriage, celibacy or virginity, our gift of self will not come to fulfillment if it stops at sacrifice; were that the case, instead of becoming a sign of the beauty and joy of love, the gift of self would risk being an expression of unhappiness, sadness and frustration” (*Patris Corde*, 7).” (*Pope Francis’ Message for the 2021 World Day of Prayer for Vocations*)

We Pray:

O Great Saint Joseph, you were completely obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Obtain for me the grace to know the state of life that God in His providence has chosen for me. Since my happiness on earth, and perhaps even my final happiness in heaven, depends on this choice, let me not be deceived in making it. Obtain for me the light to know God's Will, to carry it out faithfully, and to choose the vocation which will lead me to a happy eternity. Amen.

St. Joseph, protector of vocations, inspire all those who follow Jesus to find life in abundance as they put themselves at the service of God and His kingdom. 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, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen



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Day Five: Wednesday, April 21, 2021

We Reflect:

“For Saint Joseph, service – as a concrete expression of the gift of self – did not remain simply a high ideal, but became a rule for daily life. . . . he adapted to different circumstances with the attitude of those who do not grow discouraged when life does not turn out as they wished; he showed the willingness typical of those who live to serve. In this way, Joseph welcomed life’s frequent and often unexpected journeys: from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census, then to Egypt and again to Nazareth, and every year to Jerusalem. Each time he was willing to face new circumstances without complaining, ever ready to give a hand to help resolve situations. We could say that this was the outstretched hand of our heavenly Father reaching out to his Son on earth. Joseph cannot fail to be a model for all vocations, called to be the ever-active hands of the Father, outstretched to his children.” (*Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2021*)

We Pray:

O Great Saint Joseph, you were completely obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Obtain for me the grace to know the state of life that God in His providence has chosen for me. Since my happiness on earth, and perhaps even my final happiness in heaven, depends on this choice, let me not be deceived in making it. Obtain for me the light to know God's Will, to carry it out faithfully, and to choose the vocation which will lead me to a happy eternity. Amen.

St. Joseph, protector of vocations, guide each of us to be like you, that in the course of our pilgrimage of faith, we may remain faithful to God’s call until the end. 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, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen



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Day Six: Thursday, April 22, 2021

We Reflect:

“I like to think, then, of Saint Joseph, the protector of Jesus and of the Church, as the protector of vocations. In fact, from his willingness to serve comes his concern to protect. The Gospel tells us that “Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night” (*Mt 2:14*), thus revealing his prompt concern for the good of his family. He wasted no time fretting over things he could not control, in order to give full attention to those entrusted to his care. Such thoughtful concern is the sign of a true vocation, the testimony of a life touched by the love of God. What a beautiful example of Christian life we give when we refuse to pursue our ambitions or indulge in our illusions, but instead care for what the Lord has entrusted to us through the Church! God then pours out his Spirit and creativity upon us; he works wonders in us, as he did in Joseph.” (*Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2021*)

We Pray:

O Great Saint Joseph, you were completely obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Obtain for me the grace to know the state of life that God in His providence has chosen for me. Since my happiness on earth, and perhaps even my final happiness in heaven, depends on this choice, let me not be deceived in making it. Obtain for me the light to know God's Will, to carry it out faithfully, and to choose the vocation which will lead me to a happy eternity. Amen.

St. Joseph, protector of vocations, intercede before Our Lord for our seminarians and ask that they be stirred with a bold faith to always serve God and others without fear, in holiness and righteousness. 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, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen



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Day Seven: Friday, April 23, 2021

We Reflect:

“Together with God’s call, which makes our greatest dreams come true, and our response, which is made up of generous service and attentive care, there is a third characteristic of Saint Joseph’s daily life and our Christian vocation, namely fidelity. Joseph is the “righteous man” (Mt 1:19) who daily perseveres in quietly serving God and his plans. At a particularly difficult moment in his life, he thoughtfully considered what to do (cf. v. 20). He did not let himself be hastily pressured. He did not yield to the temptation to act rashly, simply following his instincts or living for the moment. Instead, he pondered things patiently. He knew that success in life is built on constant fidelity to important decisions. For a vocation – like life itself – matures only through daily fidelity. “ (*Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2021*)

We Pray:

O Great Saint Joseph, you were completely obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Obtain for me the grace to know the state of life that God in His providence has chosen for me. Since my happiness on earth, and perhaps even my final happiness in heaven, depends on this choice, let me not be deceived in making it. Obtain for me the light to know God's Will, to carry it out faithfully, and to choose the vocation which will lead me to a happy eternity. Amen.

St. Joseph, protector of vocations, may your example of fidelity to your vocation inspire and encourage young people and their families. 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, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen



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Day Eight: Saturday, April 24, 2021

We Reflect:

“How is such fidelity nurtured? In the light of God’s own faithfulness. The first words that Saint Joseph heard in a dream were an invitation not to be afraid, because God remains ever faithful to his promises: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid” (*Mt 1:20*). Do not be afraid: these words the Lord also addresses to you, dear sister, and to you, dear brother, whenever you feel that, even amid uncertainty and hesitation, you can no longer delay your desire to give your life to him. He repeats these words when, perhaps amid trials and misunderstandings, you seek to follow his will every day, wherever you find yourself. They are words you will hear anew, at every step of your vocation, as you return to your first love. They are a refrain accompanying all those who – like Saint Joseph – say yes to God with their lives, through their fidelity each day.” (*Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2021*)

We Pray:

O Great Saint Joseph, you were completely obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Obtain for me the grace to know the state of life that God in His providence has chosen for me. Since my happiness on earth, and perhaps even my final happiness in heaven, depends on this choice, let me not be deceived in making it. Obtain for me the light to know God's Will, to carry it out faithfully, and to choose the vocation which will lead me to a happy eternity. Amen.

St. Joseph, protector of vocations, accompany all those who are discerning their vocation to not be afraid, to say yes to God with their lives each day. 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, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen



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Day Nine: Sunday, April 25, 2021 **World Day of Prayer for Vocations**

We Reflect:

“This fidelity is the secret of joy. A hymn in the liturgy speaks of the “transparent joy” present in the home of Nazareth. It the joy of simplicity, the joy experienced daily by those who care for what truly matters: faithful closeness to God and to our neighbor. How good it would be if the same atmosphere, simple and radiant, sober and hopeful, were to pervade our seminaries, religious houses and presbyteries! I pray that you will experience this same joy, dear brothers and sisters who have generously made God the dream of your lives, serving him in your brothers and sisters through a fidelity that is a powerful testimony in an age of ephemeral choices and emotions that bring no lasting joy. May Saint Joseph, protector of vocations, accompany you with his fatherly heart!” (*Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2021*)

We Pray:

O Great Saint Joseph, you were completely obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Obtain for me the grace to know the state of life that God in His providence has chosen for me. Since my happiness on earth, and perhaps even my final happiness in heaven, depends on this choice, let me not be deceived in making it. Obtain for me the light to know God's Will, to carry it out faithfully, and to choose the vocation which will lead me to a happy eternity. Amen.

St. Joseph, protector of vocations, just as you were faithful to your mission, inspire men and women to be faithful to their word, their commitment, their vocation and their mission. 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

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