

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS



The World Day of Prayer for Vocations is observed each year on the Fourth Sunday of Easter also known as "Good Shepherd Sunday". The purpose of this day is to publicly fulfill the Lord's instruction to, "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest" (cf. Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2). As a climax to a prayer that is continually offered throughout the Church, it affirms the primacy of faith and grace in all that concerns vocations to the priesthood and to the consecrated life. While appreciating all vocations, the Church concentrates its attention this day on vocations to the ordained ministries (priesthood and diaconate), consecrated life in all its forms (male and female religious life, societies of apostolic life, consecrated virginity), secular institutes in their diversity of services and membership, and to the missionary life.



Eucharistic Holy Hour for Vocations

Presided by Archbishop Richard Gagnon
at
Saint John XXIII Roman Catholic Church
Winnipeg, Manitoba

“Good Shepherd Sunday”

April 25, 2021

7:00 p.m.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

GATHERING

As far as possible, during the gathering all maintain an atmosphere of calm and recollection. Meanwhile, suitable instrumental music may be played on the organ. Just before the conclusion of this period of gathering, the cantor may sing the following song:

Lord, When You Came to the Seashore

Gather 678

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

ENTRANCE OF THE MINISTERS

The assembly stands as the Archbishop and assisting ministers approach the altar while instrumental music is played. All kneel as the priest brings the Blessed Sacrament to the altar and places it in the monstrance.

EUCCHARISTIC HYMN

A suitable song is sung by the people. The Archbishop, after placing incense in the censer, kneels and incenses the Blessed Sacrament.

You Satisfy the Hungry Heart (verses 1, 4, 5)

Gather 816

Refrain: **You satisfy the hungry heart with gift of finest wheat;
Come give to us, O saving Lord, the bread of life to eat.**

1. **As when the shepherd calls his sheep,
They know and heed his voice;
So when you call your fam'ly, Lord,
We follow and rejoice.** *(refrain)*

4. **The myst'ry of your presence, Lord,
No mortal tongue can tell:
Whom all the world cannot contain
Comes in our hearts to dwell.** *(refrain)*

5. **You give yourself to us, O Lord;
Then selfless let us be,
To serve each other in your name
In truth and charity.** *(refrain)*

Text: Omer Westendorf, 1916-1998
Tune: BICENTENNIAL, CM with refrain; Robert E. Kreutz, 1922-1996
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MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

GREETING

Archbishop: Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who in his great mercy gave us new birth into a living hope
by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
Blessed be God for ever.

People: **Blessed be God for ever.**

OPENING PRAYER

Archbishop: Let us pray
[that the Church of Jesus Christ may remain faithful to its mission.]

O God, whose will it is that all should be saved
and come to the knowledge of the truth,
look upon your abundant harvest
and be pleased to send workers to gather it,
that the Gospel may be preached to all creation
and that your people, gathered by the word of life
and sustained by the power of the Sacraments,
may advance in the path of salvation and love.

Through Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

READING: Acts 1.12-14

All listen attentively as the designated reader proclaims the following passage.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

After Jesus was taken up into heaven,
the Apostles returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet,
which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

When they had entered the city,
they went to the room upstairs where they were staying,
Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas,
Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus,
and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer,
together with certain women,
including Mary the mother of Jesus,
as well as his brothers.

The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Scripture readings in this celebration are based on the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, Copyright © 1989, 1993, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Adapted and used by permission. All rights reserved.

RESPONSORIAL CHANT

O Lord, Hear My Prayer

Gather 566

Ostinato: **O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer:
when I call answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer.
Come and listen to me.**

Text: Psalm 102; Taizé Community, 1982
Tune: Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994
© 1982, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

RECITATION OF THE LITANY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

The designated minister reads each invocation and the entire assembly responds as noted in the bold text.

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

**Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy**

Jesus, the Most High
Jesus, the holy One
Jesus, Word of God
Jesus, only Son of the Father
Jesus, Son of Mary
Jesus, crucified for us
Jesus, risen from the dead
Jesus, reigning in glory
Jesus, coming in glory

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Jesus, our Lord
Jesus, our hope
Jesus, our peace
Jesus, our Saviour
Jesus, our salvation
Jesus, our resurrection

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Jesus, Judge of all
Jesus, Lord of the Church
Jesus, Lord of creation
Jesus, Lover of all
Jesus, life of the world
Jesus, freedom for the imprisoned

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Jesus, joy of the sorrowing
Jesus, giver of the Spirit
Jesus, giver of good gifts
Jesus, source of new life
Jesus, Lord of life
Jesus, eternal high priest
Jesus, priest and victim
Jesus, true Shepherd
Jesus, true Light

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Jesus, bread of heaven
Jesus, bread of life
Jesus, bread of thanksgiving
Jesus, life-giving bread
Jesus, holy manna
Jesus, new covenant
Jesus, food for everlasting life
Jesus, food for our journey
Jesus, holy banquet
Jesus, true sacrifice
Jesus, perfect sacrifice
Jesus, eternal sacrifice
Jesus, divine Victim
Jesus, Mediator of the new covenant
Jesus, mystery of the altar
Jesus, mystery of faith
Jesus, medicine of immortality
Jesus, pledge of eternal glory

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Jesus, Lamb of God,
 you take away the sins of the world:
Jesus, Bearer of our sins,
 you take away the sins of the world:
Jesus, Redeemer of the world,
 you take away the sins of the world:

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Christ, hear us
Christ, graciously hear us
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer

**Christ, hear us
Christ, graciously hear us
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer**

EXTENDED PERIOD OF SILENT PRAYER

GOSPEL: Matthew 1.16, 18-21, 24a

All stand for the proclamation of the passage from the Gospel.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary,
of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ.
Now the birth of Jesus the Christ took place in this way.
When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph,
but before they lived together,
she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.
Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man
and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace,
planned to dismiss her quietly.
But just when he had resolved to do this,
an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,
“Joseph, son of David,
do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife,
for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.
She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus,
for he will save his people from their sins.”
When Joseph awoke from sleep,
he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him;
he took her as his wife.

The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

HOMILY

INTERCESSIONS

The Archbishop invites the assembly to pray. The designated minister announces the intentions and the entire assembly responds in the customary manner.

Dear brothers and sisters,
on this World Day of Prayer for Vocations,
with Saint Joseph and all the Saints
let us raise our prayers for the Church and the world.

1. For the holy Church of God:
may almighty God, by his faithfulness, confirm us all
in whole-hearted fidelity to the Gospel.

We pray:

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For Francis our Pope, Richard our Bishop, and all the clergy:
may almighty God, by his grace, watch over them in their ministry
and make them ardent yet gentle heralds of the Gospel.
We pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For all those who are called to live the consecrated life:
may almighty God, by his loving kindness,
strengthen in them a spirit of perfect charity
so that each day they may more fervently serve the work of salvation.
We pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For the faithful of the entire Archdiocese of Winnipeg:
may almighty God, by his holiness, transform the lives of us all
that, like Saint Joseph, we may be humble
and obedient servants of the divine will
responding generously in whatever vocation to which we are called.
We pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
5. For all government leaders:
may almighty God, by his wisdom, enlighten their minds
and lead them to help build the civilization of love.
We pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
6. For the poor and the sick throughout the world,
especially all those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic:
may almighty God, by his providence,
grant them refreshment, comfort and hope,
not least through the love of their brothers and sisters.
We pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
7. For all clergy, religious and lay faithful who have died:
may almighty God, by his mercy,
welcome the faithful departed to join the company of heaven
with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph,
and all the Angels and Saints.
We pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

The intercessions are concluded with the recitation of the Prayer to Saint Joseph by the entire assembly.

PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

from the Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* of the Holy Father Francis

**Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.**

**Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil.
Amen.**



BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

EUCCHARISTIC HYMN

Gather 132

All kneel. The **Tantum ergo** is sung. Meanwhile, the Archbishop incenses the Blessed Sacrament.

**Tantum ergo sacramentum veneremur cernui,
et antiquum documentum novo cedat ritui;
praestet fides supplementum sensuum defectui.**

**Genitori Genitrique laus et iubilatio,
salus, honor, virtus quoque sit et benedictio;
procedenti ab utroque compar sit laudatio.**

PRAYER

The Archbishop alone rises and sings or says the following prayer or another prayer from the ritual.

Let us pray.

Lord our God, in this great Sacrament
we come into the presence of Jesus Christ, your Son,
born of the Virgin Mary and crucified for our salvation.
May we who declare our faith
in this fountain of love and mercy
drink from it the water of everlasting life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**



BENEDICTION

After the prayer the Archbishop puts on the humeral veil, goes up to the altar, genuflects, and takes the monstrance. He then makes the sign of the cross with the monstrance over the people in silence. The Archbishop replaces the monstrance on the altar after the blessing.

DIVINE PRAISES

The Divine Praises may be prayed. The people may repeat each acclamation after the Archbishop.

Blessed be God.

Blessed be his Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

Blessed be his most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be his most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in his Angels and in his Saints.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

(revised text 2017)

The Archdiocesan Prayer for Vocations may be recited by all present.

**O God, who have chosen the apostles
to make disciples of all nations
and who by Baptism and Confirmation
have called all of us
to build up your Holy Church:
Bless our married couples
and help them live out their vocation
through Christian family life,
a true Domestic Church, always open to your voice;
We earnestly implore you
to choose from among us, your children,
many Priests, Deacons and Religious Brothers and Sisters
who will love you with their whole heart
and will gladly spend their entire lives
to make you known and loved by all.
Amen.**

REPOSITION

The priest removes the Blessed Sacrament from the monstrance and places it in the tabernacle.

RECESSIONAL

After the tabernacle door is closed, all stand and join in singing a suitable song or acclamation.

Holy God, We Praise Thy Name

Gather 519

1. **Holy God, we praise thy name!
Lord of all, we bow before thee;
All on earth thy scepter claim,
All in heav'n above adore thee;
Infinite thy vast domain,
Everlasting is thy reign.
Infinite thy vast domain,
Everlasting is thy reign.**
2. **Hark! the loud celestial hymn
Angel choirs above are raising;
Cherubim and Seraphim
In unceasing chorus praising,
Fill the heav'ns with sweet accord:
Holy, holy, holy Lord!
Fill the heav'ns with sweet accord:
Holy, holy, holy Lord!**
3. **Holy Father, Holy Son,
Holy Spirit, Three we name thee,
While in essence only One,
Undivided God we claim thee,
And adoring, bend the knee,
While we own the mystery.
And adoring, bend the knee,
While we own the mystery.**

Text: *Grosser Gott, wir loben dich*; ascr. to Ignace Franz, 1719-1790; tr. Clarence Walworth, 1820-1900
Tune: GROSSER GOTT, 7 8 7 8 77; *Katholisches Gesangbuch*, Vienna, c. 1774

Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 2021 World Day of Vocations 25 April 2021

Saint Joseph: The Dream of Vocation

Dear brothers and sisters,

8 December last, the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the declaration of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, marked the beginning of a special year devoted to him (cf. *Decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary*, 8 December

2020). For my part, I wrote the Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde*, whose aim was “to increase our love for this great saint”. Saint Joseph is an extraordinary figure, yet at the same time one “so close to our own human experience”. He did not do astonishing things, he had no unique charisms, nor did he appear special in the eyes of those who met him. He was not famous or even noteworthy: the Gospels do not report even a single word of his. Still, through his ordinary life, he accomplished something extraordinary in the eyes of God.

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.

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.

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. We may ask ourselves, “Why put so much trust in a dream in the night?” Although a dream was considered very important in ancient times, it was still a small thing in the face of the concrete reality of life. Yet 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. The first of these upended his betrothal, but made him the father of the Messiah; the second caused him to flee to Egypt, but saved the life of his family. After the third, which foretold his return to his native land, a fourth dream made him change plans once again, bringing him to Nazareth, the place where Jesus would begin his preaching of the Kingdom of God. 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 programmes 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. In this regard, Saint Joseph is an outstanding example of acceptance of God’s plans. Yet his was an *active acceptance*: never reluctant or resigned. Joseph was “certainly not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive” (*Patris Corde*, 4). May he help everyone, especially young people who are discerning, to make God’s dreams for them come true. May he inspire in them the courage to say “yes” to the Lord who always surprises and never disappoints.

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. As one who knew how to embody the meaning of self-giving in life, Joseph is also the patron of a happy death. 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 fulfilment

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” (*ibid.*, 7).

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 strove to find and prepare a place where Jesus could be born; he did his utmost to protect him from Herod’s wrath by arranging a hasty journey into Egypt; he immediately returned to Jerusalem when Jesus was lost; he supported his family by his work, even in a foreign land. In short, 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.

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.

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. This was reflected in his perseverance in plying the trade of a humble carpenter (cf. *Mt 13:55*), a quiet perseverance that made no news in his own time, yet has inspired the daily lives of countless fathers, labourers and Christians ever since. For a vocation – like life itself – matures only through daily fidelity.

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.

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 neighbour. 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, *servng 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!

Rome, from Saint John Lateran, 19 March 2021, Feast of Saint Joseph

Francis

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