

WORLD DAY of PRAYER for VOCATIONS

Diocese of Grand Rapids

Resources *for* Priests

May 7, 2017 • Good Shepherd Sunday
& World Day of Prayer for Vocations

May 7 Homily Ideas

◇ **First Reading: Acts 2:14, 36–41**

Summary: Peter preaches to the crowd on Pentecost, exhorting them to be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit.

The vocation angle: When Peter addresses the crowd “they were cut the heart.” Sometimes the Holy Spirit speaks to us through a moment of clarity deep in our heart. Many men who have been called to the priesthood or women called to religious life have had this experience — during Mass, on a retreat, or at a youth event. The question is, how do you respond? Will you be like those in the crowd that day, who responded wholeheartedly to the call?

◇ **Gospel: John 10:1–10**

Summary: Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Those who hear his voice follow him.

The vocation angle: To hear the Shepherd’s voice requires quiet and prayer. Pope Saint John Paul II said, “Young people, if they can be taught to pray, can be trusted to know what to do with God’s call.” Preach about prayer, methods of prayer, and the importance of listening for God’s voice especially when discerning the big decisions in life. All decisions, especially our vocational calling, must be discerned in the context of prayer. God has a specific vocation in mind for each of us and the only way we can know God’s will is via prayer.



Holy Father Urges Adoration for Vocations

“There can be no promotion of vocations or Christian mission apart from constant contemplative prayer . . . above all, by the cultivation of a personal relationship with the Lord in Eucharist adoration, the privileged place for our encounter with God.” (*Pope Francis’ Letter for 2017 World Day of Prayer for Vocations*) Consider holding a special Holy Hour for Vocations in your parish.



Preaching on Vocations to Specific Audiences

It can be effective to address the “audience within the audience” during your homily. Here are some ideas:

To children: God has a plan for your life! Boys — don’t be afraid if He calls you to be a priest! Girls — don’t be afraid if He calls you to religious life! After all, Jesus wants us to be happy, so trust His call!

To teens and young adults: If you are not praying, you cannot hear God’s call—simple as that. Likewise, if you haven’t investigated all the various vocations, how can you truly discern? Don’t just assume marriage is your vocation.

To parents & grandparents: Let your kids (and grandkids know how proud of them you would be if they became a priest or a sister. Let them know these are viable and acceptable options for their life.

Prayers of the Faithful:

- ◇ On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we pray that God will supply holy shepherds for the Church. Let us pray to the Lord.
- ◇ That the example of religious sisters and brothers will show for the Church as the sacrament of salvation for the world. Let us pray to the Lord.
- ◇ For all Catholics in the process of discerning their vocation, that the Holy Spirit give them wisdom and peace. Let us pray to the Lord.
- ◇ That God will call men from our own parish to become priests. Let us pray to the Lord.
- ◇ For those in our parish called to profess vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Let us pray to the Lord.
- ◇ That teachers and youth ministers will encourage children and teens to respond to God's call to be priests and religious. Let us pray to the Lord.
- ◇ That parents will encourage their children to consider the priesthood and consecrated life. Let us pray to the Lord.
- ◇ For the deceased clergy and religious who have served our parish, that the Good Shepherd will welcome them with open arms. Let us pray to the Lord.



For the Bulletin:

2017 World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Today the Church throughout the world prays for vocations. Will you make a special effort to ask the Lord for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life?

- Pray for the priests who have ministered to you throughout your life, both living and dead.
- Keep our parish priests in your prayers throughout the week.
- Encourage your children, grandchildren, or other young people to consider a vocation as a priest or religious brother or sister.
- Pray a rosary for more young men and women in our diocese to respond to God's call



Realistic Ways Priests Can Encourage Vocations

From Fr. Brett Brannen, author of *To Save a Thousand Souls: A Guide to Discerning a Vocation to Diocesan Priesthood*

- Every Thursday, the day Jesus instituted the Priesthood at the Last Supper, I offer the votive Mass for priestly vocations found in the Roman Missal. The people pray with me specifically on that day for more priests.
- In my first parish, we used young men (18 to 25 or so) as sacristans for the weekend Masses. Not only did this greatly contribute to help with the liturgies, but it exposed them to learning all about the Mass and gave them time with the priests and all the lay ministers.
- When I visit a classroom to talk about vocations, I ask the children, since they know one another so well, to tell me who in their class they think would make a good priest, brother, or sister. Amazingly, they always point to one or two classmates. Rather than embarrass those students, I compliment them and invite them to pray about this possibility.
- I will often ask a young man, "Do you want to be a priest?" If he says no, I follow with: "If God asked you to become a priest, would you do it then?" Almost everyone says yes. Then I tell the young man to pray and ask the Lord: "Help me to want what you want for me."



Diocese of Grand Rapids
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