

RESOURCES FOR PRIESTS

HOMILY IDEAS

April 21, 2013 • Good Shepherd Sunday

■ First Reading: Acts 13:14, 43-52

Summary: Paul and Barnabas preach in Antioch despite stringent opposition from the Jewish community.

The vocation angle: True courage is not the absence of fear, but the willingness to proceed in spite of it. St. Paul was utterly convinced of his call to bring the Gospel to Gentiles, and despite hardship, “was filled with joy.” From the outside, a vocation to priesthood or religious life may seem to involve too many sacrifices. But our true happiness lies in following God’s will for our lives.

■ Second Reading: Revelation 7:9, 14-17

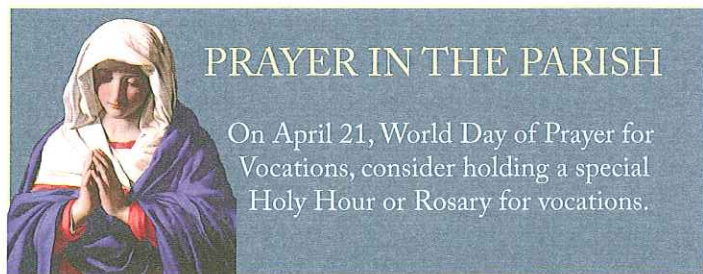
Summary: John sees a great multitude worshipping before the Lamb, sheltered by God because of their faithfulness.

The vocation angle: “Choose now what you wish to have chosen at life’s end,” wrote St. Anthony Mary Claret. Every vocation has heaven as its ultimate goal, and is also ordered toward bringing other people to heaven. Ask young people: “When you stand before the throne of God, whom will you have brought to heaven?”

■ Gospel: John 10:27-30

Summary: Jesus promises eternal life to those who hear his voice and follow him.

The vocation angle: To hear the Shepherd’s voice requires quiet and prayer. Pope John Paul II said, “Young people, if they can be taught how to pray, can be trusted to know what to do with God’s call.” Talk about prayer, methods of prayer, and the importance of listening for God’s voice, especially when making big decisions in life.



Stephen Golder Photography

In a special way, The Church exhorts priests themselves to foster more priestly vocations: “Let there be committed priests, who know how to accompany young people as ‘companions on the journey,’ helping them... to recognize Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life.” *-Message for 2013 World Day of Prayer for Vocations*

Which priests are called to do this? Not just Vocation Directors, but “all priests who know the Lord and His activity in their hearts—not just those who are young or handsome or articulate or good with youth or charismatic.” (From the USCCB’s *Lend Your Own Voice to Christ*.)

By one calculation, each priest need only to encourage one man to enter the seminary every 13 - 15 years, to maintain our current presbyterate!

■ Reaching parents with a pro-vocation message

Surveys of newly ordained priests find that many were initially discouraged from entering seminary by their own families. There is a widespread perception that priests are chronically lonely, distant from their families, and lead uninteresting lives. Here are ideas for addressing misconceptions with parents:

- Talk about your own family. Speak of your parents’ influence on you, of the relationships you may have with siblings, nephews, and nieces.
- Let people know you’re happy as a priest. Share stories about how you experience God’s grace ministering to people.
- Be bold in asking parents to encourage their own children to become priests and religious.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

- On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we pray for an increase in vocations to priesthood and consecrated life, especially in places where they are most needed. We pray to the Lord.
- For all charged with the common good, especially those who work with youth, that they will inspire children and young adults to strive for virtue. We pray to the Lord.
- For those who are having difficulty discerning their vocations, that the Holy Spirit give them wisdom and peace. We pray to the Lord.
- For more young men to respond to the Church's tremendous need for priests, especially from our own parish. We pray to the Lord.
- That young women will remain open to consecrating themselves to God as religious sisters. We pray to the Lord.
- That Christian parents will happily accept the possibility that God may call one of their children to priesthood or consecrated life. We pray to the Lord.
- For all clergy and religious, living and dead, who have served in our parish over the years. We pray to the Lord.



INVISIBLEMONASTERY.COM

A new web site allows Catholics to pledge to pray for vocations. It was inspired by a 2012 Vatican document urging the faithful to "organize an 'invisible monastery' in which many persons, day and night, are committed to continuous prayer for priestly vocations."

BULLETIN ITEMS

■ 50 Years of Praying for Vocations

Today is the 50th anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, which was instituted by Pope Paul VI during the Second Vatican Council. The entire Church, including lay people, are charged with the work of fostering priestly and religious vocations. Please pray that young people, especially those from our parish, will be open to God's call in their lives! Show your commitment to prayer by enrolling at www.invisiblemonastery.com, where you can also find more vocation resources.

■ Pray the Rosary for the Priests in Your Life

When praying the rosary, offer the first decade for the priest who baptized you, the second for the priest who gave you first Communion, the third for the bishop who confirmed you, the fourth for the priest who witnessed your marriage or the bishop who ordained you (or will do so in the future), and the fifth decade for the priest who will anoint you at your death.

FROM THE HOLY FATHER

■ From the First World Day of Prayer for Vocations

"The problem of having a sufficient number of priests has an immediate impact on all of the faithful: not simply because they depend on it for the religious future of Christian society, but also because this problem is the precise and inescapable indicator of the vitality of faith and love of individual parish and diocesan communities, and the evidence of the moral health of Christian families. Wherever numerous vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life are to be found, that is where people are living the Gospel with generosity" - Pope Paul VI in 1964

■ Pope Benedict XVI, when announcing the 50th Anniversary of World Day of Prayer for Vocations

"Today too, Jesus continues to say, 'Come, follow me.' Accepting his invitation means no longer choosing our own path. Following him means immersing our own will in the will of Jesus, truly giving him priority, giving him pride of place in every area of our lives."

"Whenever a disciple of Jesus accepts the divine call to dedicate himself to the priestly ministry or to the consecrated life, we witness one of the most mature fruits of the Christian community."