For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope. Jeremiah 29:11
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us!

O Virgin Mary, bless this Quo Vadis discernment camp.
We entrust ourselves to your maternal care and protection.
We are yours and are seeking your Son.
Lead us to our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

When your vocation was revealed, you courageously answered YES
and the Spirit came to your assistance.
Teach us, your sons, to hear the Father’s voice.
Pray we accept our vocation and find peace and joy.

O Blessed Mary, Mother of Vocations, help us grow as beloved sons
of our Heavenly Father in the image your Son Jesus, the Great High Priest. Amen.

Father Jorge Torres
Vocations Director
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Orlando, FL 32801
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jtorres@orlandodiocese.org
www.orlandodiocese.org

SAVE THE DATES

2017

Vocation Awareness Weekend (Trip to the Seminary)
November 10th-12, St. John Vianney College Seminary, Miami.
Bus leaves Orlando 4pm on the 10th.

Christmas Mass and Luncheon with Bishop Noonan,
Seminarians, Discerners, and Families
December 17th. 2pm, St. Mary Magdalen, Altamonte Springs

2018

Vocation Awareness Weekend (Trip to the Seminary)
March 9th-11th, St. John Vianney College Seminary, Miami.
Bus leaves Orlando 4pm on the 10th.

Ordination to the Diaconate
April 14th, St. Joan of Arc, Boca Raton.
Transportation not provided

Ordination to the Priesthood
May 25th and 26th, St. James Cathedral
Evening prayer 6pm on May 25th
Ordination 10am on the 26th

*More events and gatherings will also take place throughout
the year. Stay tuned with the Office of Vocations over Facebook
and Instagram for updates!
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My Lord Jesus Christ,
Your word is living and active in me. I do want it to have the effect You intend. I believe You have a particular plan for my life and holiness. Please let Your Holy Spirit open my mind and heart in prayer. Help me recognize the commanding authority of Your voice within me. And if you are calling me to the priesthood, as You did the apostles, grant me the manly courage and devotion to promptly leave all and follow You with confident trust. May Your Blessed Mother draw me close, teaching me to listen and respond in faith, hope and love. Amen.
Books on Prayer, Virtue & Vocation


2017 QVD Schedule

SUNDAY 7/30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>Arrival, room assignments</td>
<td>St. Francis Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch/orientation and parent’s Q&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>Liturgy of the Hours explained, Evening Prayer and MASS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>Break into Small Groups</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 pm</td>
<td>Talk/Panel: “Life in Seminary, Q&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 pm</td>
<td>Small Group Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Evening Prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Vocation Story: Religious Brother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:45 pm</td>
<td>Small Group Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 pm</td>
<td>Night Prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 pm</td>
<td>Lights Out</td>
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### MONDAY 7/31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Morning Prayer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Talk: Prayer and Discernment, Q&amp;A, Reflection time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>MASS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
<td>Angelus and Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>Talk/Discussion: The Life of a Priest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 pm</td>
<td>Shower, cleanup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 pm</td>
<td>Talk/Discussion: Vocation Story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 pm</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Prep Talk for Adoration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Exposition, Benediction, Evening Prayer, Vespers, Confessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 pm</td>
<td>Small Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 pm</td>
<td>Night Prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 pm</td>
<td>Lights Out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Formulas of Catholic Doctrine

#### The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit:
1. Wisdom
2. Understanding
3. Counsel
4. Fortitude
5. Knowledge
6. Piety
7. Fear of the Lord

#### The twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit:
1. Charity
2. Joy
3. Peace
4. Patience
5. Kindness
6. Goodness
7. Generosity
8. Gentleness
9. Faithfulness
10. Modesty
11. Self-control
12. Chastity

#### The five precepts of the Church:
1. You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and remain free from work or activity that could impede the sanctification of such days.
2. You shall confess your sins at least once a year.
3. You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season.
4. You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
5. You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church.

#### The seven corporal works of mercy:
1. Feed the hungry.
2. Give drink to the thirsty.
3. Clothe the naked.
4. Shelter the homeless.
5. Visit the sick.
6. Visit the imprisoned.
7. Bury the dead.

#### The seven spiritual works of mercy:
1. Counsel the doubtful.
2. Instruct the ignorant.
3. Admonish sinners.
4. Comfort the afflicted.
5. Forgive offenses.
7. Pray for the living and the dead.

#### The seven capital sins:
1. Pride
2. Covetousness
3. Lust
4. Anger
5. Gluttony
6. Envy
7. Sloth

#### The four last things:
1. Death
2. Judgment
3. Hell
4. Heaven
The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–12):
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

The two commandments of love:
1. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.
2. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12):
Do to others as you would have them do to you.

The three theological virtues:
1. Faith
2. Hope
3. Charity

The four cardinal virtues:
1. Prudence
2. Justice
3. Fortitude
4. Temperance

Leader: Let us pray.
All: Heavenly Father, bless our diocese with the grace of many vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated religious life. Through the intercession of the Blessed Mother, grant to those you have called, the willingness and generosity of spirit to give of themselves in devoting their lives and their talents to the service of our Lord and to His Church. Increase the faith of all within our diocese, and particularly the faith of those you have called and will continue to call. We ask this through Christ, Your Son. Amen.

Formulas of Catholic Doctrine

TUESDAY 8/1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Packing and Clean Up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Morning Prayer and MASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Final Q&amp;A and sharing of Graces</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>Blessing and Commissioning of Retreatants</td>
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The Quo Vadis Tradition

The Quo Vadis tradition is the story of St. Peter’s flight from the Emperor Nero’s persecution of Roman Christians in the first century.

As legend has it, Peter decided to flee Rome at the outbreak of the persecution, perhaps in fear, perhaps because he thought “the rock” should be somewhere safe so others could eventually find and cling to it, and to him.

Heading out the Via Appia, Peter meets Jesus, who is heading into the city of Rome to face the persecution. “Quo vadis, Domine,” Peter asks – “Lord, where are you going?” “I am going to Rome to be crucified,” Jesus answers – and disappears. At which point Peter turns back into the city to embrace martyrdom.

In Rome, you can visit the place on the Via Appia Antica where this meeting is said to have occurred.

Christians have built a church on the spot to commemorate it.

Quo Vadis Days is your encounter with Jesus. Each one of us comes to this sacred place from different situations. Like St. Peter, we will meet Jesus here at Quo Vadis Days. We too will have a choice to make - Do we follow Jesus where He leads us or go our own way?

Ask Jesus as did St. Peter, “Quo vadis, Domine?” Listen to Jesus, follow Him, and find your vocation and joy—purpose of your life.

Litany

SAINT JAMES, pray for us.
SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST, pray for us.
SAINT MATTHEW, pray for us.
SAINT MARK THE EVANGELIST, pray for us.
SAINT LUKE, pray for us.
SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS, pray for us.
SAINT ANDREW, pray for us.
SAINT ANN, pray for us.
SAINT ANTHONY, pray for us.
SAINT AUGUSTINE, pray for us.
SAINT BRENDAN, pray for us.
SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA, pray for us.
SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO, pray for us.
SAINT CLARE, pray for us.
SAINT ELIZABETH ANN SETON, pray for us.
SAINT FAUSTINA, pray for us.
SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI, pray for us.
SAINT GERARD, pray for us.
SAINT HUBERT OF THE FOREST, pray for us.
SAINT IGNATIUS KIM, pray for us.
SAINT ISAAC JOGUES, pray for us.
SAINT JOHN NEUMANN, pray for us.
SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST, pray for us.
SAINT JOHN VIANNEY, pray for us.
SAINT JOSEPH, pray for us.
SAINT JOSEPH OF THE FOREST, pray for us.
SAINT JUDE, pray for us.
SAINT LAWRENCE, pray for us.
SAINT LEO THE GREAT, pray for us.
SAINT MARGARET MARY, pray for us.
SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE, pray for us.
SAINT PATRICK, pray for us.
SAINT PETER, pray for us.
SAINT PHILIP PHAN VAN MINH, pray for us.
SAINT ROSE OF LIMA, pray for us.
SAINT STEPHEN, pray for us.
SAINT THERESA OF AVILA, pray for us.
SAINT THERESE, pray for us.
SAINT TIMOTHY, pray for us.
ST VINCENT DE PAUL, pray for us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.

God the Father of Heaven, 
have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the World, 
have mercy on us.
God the HOLY SPIRIT, 
have mercy on us.
BLESS'D TRINITY, 
have mercy on us.
HOLY NAME OF JESUS, 
have mercy on us.
Jesus in the BLESSED SACRAMENT, 
have mercy on us.
CHRIST THE KING, 
have mercy on us.
HOLY REDEEMER, 
have mercy on us.
GOOD SHEPHERD, 
have mercy on us.
CORPUS CHRISTI, 
have mercy on us.
MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD, 
have mercy on us.
PRINCE OF PEACE, 
have mercy on us.
Jesus, by Your ASCENSION, 
have mercy on us.
Jesus, by Your EPIPHANY, 
have mercy on us.
Jesus, by Your HOLY CROSS 
have mercy on us.
Jesus, by Your NATIVITY, 
have mercy on us.
Jesus, by Your RESURRECTION, 
have mercy on us.
Jesus, by Your SACRED HEART, 
have mercy on us.
Jesus, by Your DIVINE MERCY, 
have mercy on us.
Jesus, OUR SAVIOR, 
have mercy on us.
ALL SOULS, 
pray for us.
Our Lady of the ANNUNCIATION 
pray for us.
OUR LADY OF GRACE, 
pray for us.
OUR LADY OF HOPE, 
pray for us.
OUR LADY OF THE LAKES, 
pray for us.
OUR LADY OF LOURDES, 
pray for us.
OUR LADY, QUEEN OF PEACE, 
pray for us.
OUR LADY OF THE SPRINGS, 
pray for us.
OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, 
pray for us.
QUEEN OF PEACE, 
pray for us.
QUEEN OF THE UNIVERSE, 
pray for us.
SAINT MARY, 
pray for us.
SAINT MARY MAGDALEN, 
pray for us.
SAINT MARY OF THE LAKES, 
pray for us.
SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST, 
pray for us.
SAINT JOSEPH, 
pray for us.

Litany of Orlando Parish Patrons

Why are you here?

It is not by chance or coincidence that you are here at this year’s Quo Vadis Days. Jesus has called you to spend this time with Him. He wants to spend time with you. Give Him your heart and attention. He wants to speak to you! Let your heart and mind be still so you can hear Him.

Jesus Christ has a great and wonderful plan for your life. The Father created you for a great mission and purpose. This is called your vocation (from the Latin vocare, to call forth). It’s your job to listen, to hear Jesus Christ call you to your vocation. Your happiness, salvation, and the salvation of others rests on saying yes to your vocation.

Maybe Jesus is calling you to be a priest. Yes, you! Remember, He chooses us, we don’t choose Him. Be open to this possibility. The Lord still calls many men to follow Him in service to the Church and the Kingdom as priests. The Priesthood is an indispensable, awesome, and powerful mission.

You might not know what your vocation is right now. That’s okay. We all share a common vocation and that is to be holy men. Jesus calls us to battle sin with His power and grace. He also calls us to grow in virtue and deepen our prayer life with Him.

Quo Vadis Days is your chance to listen and grow closer to Jesus. Only responding to God’s call will bring you the joy and peace your heart desires.

St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, ora pro nobis!
How to get the most out of Quo Vadis Days

Jesus has a great plan for you during Quo Vadis Days. Here are some tips on how to have a great experience.

**Open yourself up to our Lord so He can fill you with His grace.**

- Remember why you are here - to meet Jesus.
  - Take the times for prayer seriously.
  - Give Jesus quality time in prayer each day.
  - The more attentive your prayer, the more you will enjoy QVD.
  - Be listening during the presentations and talks.
- Ask and you will receive. So...
  - Ask our Blessed Mother and the Saints to intercede for you.
  - Ask our Lord if He might be calling you to marriage, the priesthood or the consecrated life.
  - Get your questions answered about discerning your vocation.
- Get enough sleep to enjoy each day.
- Follow the rules and code of conduct.
- Be a Christian gentleman.
- Get involved in different events and activities.
- Go to Confession and/or talk to a priest about your discernment.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Have fun.

Benediction Prayers & Hymns...continued

**Invitation to Prayer**

**Leader:** You have given them Bread from heaven. (T.P. Alleluia)
**All:** Having all sweetness within it. (T.P. Alleluia)
**Leader:** Let us pray.
Lord Jesus Christ, You gave us the Eucharist as the memorial of Your suffering and death. May our worship of this sacrament of Your body and blood help us to experience the salvation You won for us and the peace of the kingdom where You live with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** Panem de caelo praestisti eis. (T.P. Alleluia)
**All:** Omne delectamentum in se habentem. (T.P. Alleluia)
**Leader:** Oremus.
Deus, qui nobis sub sacramento mirabili, passionis tuae memoriam religiisti: tribute, quae sumus, ita nos corporis et sanguinis tui sacra mysteria venerari, ut redemptionis tuae fructum in nobis iugiter sentiamus. Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum.
**All:** Amen.

**Divine Praises**

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 St. Joseph, her most chaste Spouse.
Blessed be God in His angels and in His saints.

May the heart of Jesus, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, be praised, adored, and loved with grateful affection, at every moment, in all the tabernacles of the world, even to the end of time. Amen.

**Closing Hymn:**

Holy God, we praise thy name;
Lord of all, we bow before thee;
All on earth they scepter claim;
All in heaven above adore thee.
Infinite they vast domain, Everlasting is thy reign!
Infinite they vast domain, Everlasting is thy reign!

Hark, the loud celestial hymn;
Angel choirs above are raising;
Cherubim and Seraphim,
In unceasing chorus praising,
Fill the heavens with sweet accord:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord!
Fill the heavens with sweet accord:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord!
Domine, Doce Nos Orare

The Pilgrim People of God

Luke 11: 1-4

He was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."

He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test."

Benediction Prayers & Hymns

Exposition Hymn:

O Saving Victim opening wide
The gate of heaven to all below.
Our foes press on from every side;
Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.
To Thy great name be endless praise
Immortal Godhead, One in Three;
Oh, grant us endless length of days,
In our true native land with Thee.
Amen.

O Salutaris hostia,
Quae caeli pandis ostium,
Bella praemunt hostilia:
Da robur, fer auxilium.
Uni trinoque Domino
Sit sempiterna gloria:
Qui vitam sine termino,
Nobis donet in patria.
Amen.

Benediction Hymn:

Tantum ergo Sacramentum
Veneremur cernui:
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui:
Praestet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.

Genitori, Genitoque
Laus et jubilatio,
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio:
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio.
Amen.
Prayer: Why Do It?

Prayer is a precious privilege. Most people would be honored if a famous person wanted to have some one-on-one time with them. The Lord of the Universe, the King of Kings wants to spend time with you everyday. He delights in you. He invites you to communicate with Him! He wants you to tell Him everything and He wants to help you. Rather than thinking of prayer as a burden or duty, prayer is truly a gracious gift. We would be fools not to partake of this thrilling encounter with God.

Prayer is necessary for thanking God. If we thank someone for holding a door for us, should we not be on our knees daily thanking God for all He gives us—friendship, life, eternal salvation?

Prayer is needed to battle sin. We need to express our sorrow to God for our sins. A son who truly loves the Father weeps for his offenses. Once we acknowledge our sin and seek forgiveness, we pray for God’s grace to help us overcome sin and strengthen us in virtue.

Stations of the Cross for Vocations

PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST CRUCIFIED

My good and dear Jesus, I kneel before You asking You to most earnestly engrave upon my heart a deep and lively faith, hope, and charity, with true repentance for my sins and a firm purpose of amendment. As I reflect upon Your five wounds and dwell upon them with deep compassion and grief, I recall the words that David the Prophet spoke long ago concerning Yourself: “they have pierced My hands and My feet, they have numbered all of My bones.”

The faithful who, after receiving Communion, recite this prayer before a picture of Christ Crucified may gain a plenary indulgence on any Friday in Lent and a partial indulgence on other days of the year, with the addition of prayers for the Holy Father's intention. (Enchiridion Indulgentiarum, no. 22) A Plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful who make the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross. Those who are impeded can gain the same indulgence if they spend at least one half an hour in pious reading and meditation on the Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Enchiridion Indulgentiarum, no. 63)
**Stations of the Cross for Vocations**

**The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross**

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)

V: Consider how, after Our Lord was taken down from the cross and placed in the arms of His afflicted Mother, she received Him with tenderness and pressed Him close to her bosom. Her sorrow was so great; it was as if a sword had pierced her heart as well. (Kneel)
R: Jesus, touch the minds, hearts of those You call to serve the people of God. Fill them with the assurance of our Blessed Mother’s love and care for them, especially as they grow to embrace their vocations. Enable them to respond to Your call to bring Your redeeming presence to a grieving and fearful world, that hungers for Your Truth.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)

By the cross with you to stay / There with you to weep and pray / Is all I ask of you to give.

**The Fourteenth Station: Jesus Is Placed in the Sepulcher**

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)

V: Consider how the disciples carried the Body of Jesus to its burial while His Holy Mother went with them and arranged it in the sepulcher with her own hands. They then closed the tomb and all departed. (Kneel)
R: We thank you, Jesus, for the infinite power that Your death and resurrection has brought to save and heal our souls. We thank You for those You have called these past 2000 years; men and women who formally dedicate their lives to the building up of Your Church. We pray for all seminarians and religious in formation. Let all young men and women sincerely reflect on the lives of the Saints and come to know heroic priests, religious and lay ministers who faithfully respond to Christ’s invitation, to, “Come, follow me!”

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)

Virgin of all virgins blest / Listen to my fond request / Let me share your grief divine.

---

**Prayer: Why Do It? ... continued**

Prayer is necessary to voice our needs.

“And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened” (Lk 11:9-10). Jesus commands us to ask the Father for everything. Turn to Him when we are fearful, lost, angry - share your entire life with Him and ask for everything!

Prayer is needed because we can’t be fulfilled without God.

Human persons dream and reach for the stars. We are created for greatness and can’t achieve it without God. We are also created with a thirst for water. Imagine trying to be happy without ever drinking water for the rest of your life. It is absurd and impossible. This is how real our need for prayer is. We need God.

Prayer makes our relationships with others better.

The better our relationship with God, the better our relationships with other people will be. The more we love God, the more we can love others. The closer we are to God, the greater our influence and effect on others. Love of God makes love of others possible.

Prayer transforms us into heroic men.

As men, we are called to be heroes of sacrifice and champions of goodness. No one is ever inspired by a coward. In order to fulfill the desire in us to live a heroic life for others, we must be men of deep prayer. The depth of our prayer directly corresponds to our capacity to live an exciting life of heroism and virtue.
Prayer: Nothing More Basic

Human persons are very different from the rest of creation. Animals are content with the stuff they find on earth. Human persons dream, hope, and wish for more. Did you ever wonder why we are like that?

The answer is because we were created for the infinite. We were created by and for God. We are transcendent beings - our needs go beyond this universe. That is why our destiny must be God and no one else. Prayer is absolutely basic. Look at what the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us:

CCC 27 -The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for:

The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator.

Prayer is very simple - God and a human person communicating or talking to each other. There is nothing more natural than for a creature to talk with his Creator.

Prayer must be our first duty. We can find lots of excuses for not praying. The biggest excuse on our list is not having enough time.

Can you imagine having a busier schedule than our beloved Pope John Paul II had? Some of us will not do in all of our years, what he did in one day. Yet, this holy man states that “the Pope’s first duty is prayer.” No excuses, prayer must come first. When we pray first, God gives us His power or grace to do all things and all things not just done, but done well. Without prayer, our greatest work amounts to nothing. With prayer, all things are possible.

Stations of the Cross for Vocations

The Eleventh Station: Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)

V: Consider how Jesus stretched out His arms and offered to His eternal Father the sacrifice of His entire life for our salvation. They nailed His hands and feet, and then, raising the cross, left Him to die. (Kneel)
R: Jesus, instill in youth today a deep desire to make a difference in the world no matter what the cost. Let the courageous example of modern martyrs inspire them to meet life’s challenges with faith, hope and love. Fill them with Your presence and the grace to respond to Your call to, “go out to all the world, and proclaim the Good News.”

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)
Let me share with you His pain / Who for all our sins was slain / Who for me in torments died.

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies Upon the Cross

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)

V: Consider how Jesus, after three hours of agony on the cross, is finally overwhelmed with suffering and, abandoning Himself to the weight of His Body, bows His head and dies. (Kneel)
R: Jesus, give to all who are considering their vocation a deep love of the Eucharist, the Most Holy Sacrament of Your passion, death and resurrection. Let them find in the Mass a daily renewal of Your invitation to live their lives through You, with You and in You, giving glory and honor to God our Father.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)
Let me mingle tears with thee / Mourning Him who mourned for me / All the days that I may live.
Stations of the Cross for Vocations

THE NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)

V: Consider how Jesus fell for the third time. He was extremely weak and the cruelty of His executioners was excessive. They tried to hasten His steps though He hardly had strength to move. (Kneel)
R: Jesus, help those You call to know that all vocations are grace-filled; that priests, sisters, brothers, deacons, consecrated men and women, married and single are all favored by God. Instill in them the understanding that nothing can separate them from Your love, and that You are actively present to everyone, in good times and in bad.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)
Make me feel as You have felt / Make my soul to glow and melt / With the love of Christ, my Lord.

The Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)

V: Consider how Jesus was stripped of His clothes. The inner garments adhered to his lacerated flesh and the soldiers tore them off so roughly that the skin came with them. Have pity for your Savior so cruelly treated. (Kneel)
R: Jesus, grant that all those being called to the priesthood and consecrated life will clothe themselves with sincere compassion, humility, kindness, gentleness and patience, forgiveness and thankfulness...and over all these virtues, let them put on love. May they understand that their vocation discernment is their deepest response to Your love.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)
Holy Mother, pierce me through / in my heart each wound renew / of my Savior crucified.

The Goal of Prayer

Prayer is the means not the end. The end is what is most important because it is the goal; the means is what gets us to the end. Think of this example. An athlete lifts weights in order to become stronger. No one lifts weights just for the sake of lifting something heavy. The end is getting stronger and the means is lifting weights.

Just like lifting weights makes no sense unless we understand the end, prayer makes no sense unless we understand the goal of prayer. The goal or end of prayer is union with God or what is called divine intimacy. The end is divine intimacy; the means is prayers.

What’s divine intimacy? Do you realize that God desires to be close to you? He hungers and thirsts for this. Not because God is incomplete without us, but because He is pure love. So that we would seek God in a real relationship, God created us with a similar ache and hunger for Him. The happiness we hunger for is only found in union with God. This is union with God is divine intimacy.

The end is divine intimacy; the means is prayer.

Types of Prayer

The Catechism teaches us that there are three types of prayers.
- Vocal Prayer
- Meditation
- Contemplation

We can add a fourth type of prayer.
- Liturgical Prayer

These types of prayer are described on the following pages.
Vocal Prayer

Vocal prayer is spoken prayer. Praying together at Church during Holy Mass, the Rosary, Novenas, litanies, and chaplets are a few examples of vocal prayers. Jesus taught us to address God with human thoughts and words.

CCC 2701 Vocal prayer is an essential element of the Christian life. To his disciples, drawn by their Master's silent prayer, Jesus teaches a vocal prayer, the Our Father. He not only prayed aloud the liturgical prayers of the synagogue but, as the Gospels show, he raised his voice to express his personal prayer, from exultant blessing of the Father to the agony of Gesthemani.

Pray is for us, not God. We need to express our inner life in words. Fr. Thomas Dubay in his book Prayer Primer: Igniting a Fire Within reminds us that vocal prayer is rooted in our human nature. We spontaneously cry out when we are in pain or need - this is the first step of vocal prayer to cry out for God. We have bodies and souls. We express ourselves through our bodies. We support each other through our prayer, asking each other to offer sacrifice and prayer to our heavenly Father.

Vocal prayer teaches the beginner how to be in a relationship with God. Vocal prayer helps us take those first steps towards intimacy with God, His Mother, and the saints.

Stations of the Cross for Vocations

THE SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)

V: Consider how the second fall of Jesus renews the pain in all the wounds of the head and members of His body. (Kneel)
R: Jesus, help those You call to the priesthood and consecrated life to accept their own limitations and the limitations of others always relying on Your merciful grace. Help them, in these times of darkness, to reach out especially to those whom the world calls “fallen”—persons who are addicted, imprisoned, poor, elderly, or of ill health.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)
For the sins of His own nation / Saw Him hung in desolation / Till His spirit forth He sent.

THE EIGHTH STATION: JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)

V: Consider how the women wept with compassion seeing Jesus so distressed and dripping with blood as He walked along the way. Jesus said to them, "weep not so much for Me, but rather for Your children." (Kneel)
R: Jesus, remove any prejudices or biases from all the faithful, especially those whom You call to walk with You as priests or consecrated religious. Let them see that all people are created in Your image and likeness, both male and female, regardless race or culture heritage. Let their words and example always speak of Christ's justice, mercy and love.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)
O sweet Mother! Fount of Love / Touch my spirit from above / Make my heart with yours accord.
Stations of the Cross for Vocations

THE FIFTH STATION: SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)
V: Consider how weak and weary Jesus was. At each step He was at the point of expiring. Fearing that He would die on the way when they wished Him to die the infamous death of the cross, they forced Simon of Cyrene to help carry the cross after Our Lord. (Kneel)
R: Jesus, send forth Your grace upon those You call to positions of leadership within Your Church. Help them to accept and affirm the gifts of others in proclaiming Your truth and in reaching out in sacrificial service.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)

Can the human heart refrain / From partaking in her pain / In that Mother's pain untold?

THE SIXTH STATION: VERONICA OFFERS HER VEIL TO JESUS

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)
V: Consider the compassion of the holy woman, Veronica. Seeing Jesus in such distress, His face bathed in sweat and blood, she presented Him with her veil. Jesus wiped His face and left upon the cloth the image of His sacred countenance. (Kneel)
R: Jesus, call forth numerous men and women who are able to see Your face on all with whom they meet. Help Your servants to truly understand that whatever good is done to the least of Your brothers and sisters, is done to You.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)

Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled / She beheld her tender Child / All with bloody scourges rent.

Tips for Improving Vocal Prayer

- The quality of prayer is more important than the quantity or number of prayers. It is better to say one Hail Mary with all of your heart than to rush through an entire Rosary and forget that your are praying to a person, God.
- If your vocal prayer leads you to meditation or contemplation, allow God to lead you to enter into meditation. Prayer’s goal is union with God. Sometimes, vocal prayer will be the beginning of God leading us into deep prayer or union with Him. Allow Him to guide you. You can always return to the vocal prayer later.
- Before beginning vocal prayer, pause for a moment and gather your inner attention to the task of praying. Athletes must warm up or stretch before working-out. Prayer is spiritual exercise and we need to take a moment and prepare ourselves for the exercise of praying.
- Give the Liturgy of the Hours and devotion to our blessed Mother priority in your vocal prayer. When we look at the rich treasury of vocal prayer in the Church, it can be overwhelming. Where do you start? The Liturgy of the Hours is the official prayer of the Church. Uniting our prayer with our Blessed Mother and asking her to lead us to Christ is essential in a healthy prayer life.
- Remember that vocal prayer is us talking to a person, God. Be attentive in your prayers and make them sincere.
How do we get to know someone? We meet them, talk, listen, and spend time together. Meditation is how we get to know God. It is a mental conversation between two friends coming closer and, as times goes on, becoming more and more intimate (Dubay 68). This is only the beginning. Just as vocal prayer prepares the path for meditation, so meditation prepares us for contemplation.

Jesus, the center of all meditation
God is a mystery, but a mystery who wants to be known. Jesus Christ wants to reveal himself to us and He has. Meditation is the doorway into the mystery of God. St. Teresa of Jesus advises us to turn out inner eyes upon Jesus in all the details of his life. Meditating on Scripture is how we can enter into details of his life. St. Frances de Sales taught beginners that meditating on Jesus fills their souls with his person, so that they more and more begin to think, speak, and act just as He did.

**CCC 2705** Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain. We are usually helped by books, and Christians do not want for them: the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day or season, writings of the spiritual fathers, works of spirituality, the great book of creation, and that of history the page on which the "today" of God is written.

Meditation helps us to love Jesus better. In her book on prayer, The Interior Castle, St. Teresa of Jesus cautions us that “The important thing is not to think much, but to love much.”

**CCC 2708** Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. This mobilization of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ. Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in lectio divina or the rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him.

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**Stations of the Cross for Vocations**

**The Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time**

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)

V: Consider the first fall of Jesus. The loss of blood from the scourging and crowing with thorns had so weakened Him that He could hardly walk. As the soldiers struck Him cruelly, He fell under the weight of His cross. (Kneel)
R: Jesus, let those You call know that they do not have to be perfect. Let them be open to Your transforming grace that can accomplish more than anyone could imagine. Give to those who respond to Your call to the priesthood and consecrated life, a deep trust that You will complete what You have begun in them.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)

**Christ above in torment hangs / She beneath beholds the pangs / of her dying, glorious Son**

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**The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother**

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (Rise)

V: Consider how the Son met His Mother on His way to Calvary. Jesus and Mary gazed at each other and their looks became like so many arrows that wounded those hearts which loved each other so much. (Kneel)
R: Jesus, instill in young men and women the desire to come to know Your Mother and find in their prayerful reflection of Sacred Scriptures a woman of faith, hope and love whose vocation is an example for all. Help parents to promote and support vocations within their own families and within their parishes.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...)

**Is there one who would not weep / 'whelmed in miseries so deep / Christ's dear Mother to behold.**
**Stations of the Cross for Vocations**

**PREPARATORY PRAYER**

ALL: Gracious God, each of us is called to discipleship with Your Son Jesus through the sacrament of Baptism. We are sent to proclaim the Gospel, to share the Good News of Your saving love. Hear our prayer as we ponder the redemptive vocation of Christ who continues to call men and women to reconcile everyone and everything to You. We give You thanks for the mystery of every vocation and pray for all who have answered Your call. Send forth Your Holy Spirit upon all the faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Your love. Draw many young men and women who will dedicate themselves with an undivided heart to the love of Christ and for His Church here on earth. Amen.

**THE FIRST STATION: PILATE CONDEMNNS JESUS TO DIE**

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  (Rise)

V: Consider how Jesus Christ, after being scourged and crowned with thorns, was unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on the cross.  (Kneel)
R: Jesus, we ask that You call the young men and women of today to publicly accept Your invitation to follow You more closely in spite of what others may think or say. Give them a passion for reaching out through Your love, to the needs of their brothers and sisters without counting the cost.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be…)

Through her heart, His sorrow sharing / All His bitter anguish bearing / Now at length the sword has passed

**THE SECOND STATION: JESUS ACCEPTS HIS CROSS**

V: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  (Genuflect)
R: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  (Rise)

V: Consider Jesus as He walked this road with the cross on His shoulders, thinking of us and offering to His Father on our behalf, the death He was about to suffer.  (Kneel)
R: Jesus, help those You call to see the cross as the symbol of union with You. Give them the strength and zeal to minister to those who are burdened with pain, sorrow, confusion and alienation. Let them faithfully witness that through life’s daily crosses, we attain new life rooted in You.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be…)

O, how sad and sore depressed / Was that Mother highly blessed / of the sole Begotten One

**How to Meditate**

1.  Choose a quite place and a suitable time.
2.  Inwardly gather yourself in mind and heart. Just as an athlete needs to mentally prepare to perform well, we need to do the same in prayer.
3.  Start talking to Jesus like you would talk to a friend. Whereas vocal prayer is a structured formula, meditative prayer begins with us freely speaking to God. Don’t worry about saying the right words, but focus on the prayer being genuine or expressing what you really feel.
4.  Read a passage of Scripture, writing of a saint, or small portion of the day’s liturgy.
5.  Ponder & Respond. Prayerfully reflect on the passage, think about how it applies to your life. Talk this over with Jesus. Use your own thoughts, words, desires, petitions. Be simple. Be yourself.
6.  Make a resolution. Determine to do something very specific (starting RIGHT NOW) about what you have been pondering. We must resolve, with Jesus’ grace and power, to change so that our actions may match our prayer. Since meditation brings us closer to God, we should be able to see the results. The resolutions are the results of your encounter with Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will assist you in fulfilling these resolutions.

**Tips for Meditation**

Pray when you pray best. Give Jesus good, quality time. We must give Jesus our all if prayer is going to be fruitful. If we are praying at the very end of a long and exhausting day, our prayer will be that we can just stay awake let alone having the mental capacity to dig into the mystery of God.

Pray at a time that works for you. “I’m too busy” is never a good excuse. We are all busy; deal with it. Find a time that works and stick to it.

Pray for a set amount of time. Start with 10 minutes. Stick with that for two weeks then increase it by 10 minutes. A man should try to pray for at least 1/2 an hour a day, with one weekly Holy Hour. The goal is to work up to praying a Holy Hour each day.
Contemplation is a real awareness of God, desiring and loving Him, which we do not produce, but simply receive from Him when we are ready for it.

Contemplation is what our prayer is always moving towards. Contemplation is very different from vocal prayer and meditation. These two forms of prayer focus on us doing something to start the process of praying. In contemplation, God does all of the action, we receive. More than all other forms of prayer, contemplation is a pure gift from God; it is nothing we can demand or get by a technique. All other prayer prepares us or makes us ready to enter into contemplation.

Contemplation is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus. "I look at him and he looks at me": this is what a certain peasant of Ars in the time of his holy curé used to say while praying before the tabernacle. This focus on Jesus is a renunciation of self. His gaze purifies our heart; the light of the countenance of Jesus illumines the eyes of our heart and teaches us to see everything in the light of his truth and his compassion for all men.

Contemplation also turns its gaze on the mysteries of the life of Christ. Thus it learns the "interior knowledge of our Lord," the more to love him and follow him.

Contemplation starts with a desire for God. This is a desire that God makes us aware of in our soul, He makes us hunger for Him.

Contemplative prayer is hearing the Word of God. Far from being passive, such attentiveness is the obedience of faith, the unconditional acceptance of a servant, and the loving commitment of a child. It participates in the "Yes" of the Son become servant and the Fiat of God's lowly handmaid.

Contemplative prayer is silence, the "symbol of the world to come" or "silent love." Words in this kind of prayer are not speeches; they are like kindling that feeds the fire of love. In this silence, unbearable to the "outer" man, the Father speaks to us his incarnate Word, who suffered, died, and rose; in this silence the Spirit of adoption enables us to share in the prayer of Jesus.

Mass Prayers & Responses

MASS RESPONSES (Latin)

Sanctus

Memorial Acclamation
A. Mortem tuam annuntiámus, Dómine, et tuam resurrectiónem confitémur, donec véniás.
B. Quotiescúmque manducámus panem hunc et calicem bibimus, mortem tuam annuntiámus, Domine, donec véniás.
C. Salvátor mundi, salva nos, qui per crucem et resurrectiónem tuam liberásti nos.

Agnus Dei
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: misérere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: misérere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: dona nobis pacem.

Prayer after Mass
Lord Jesus Christ, take all my freedom, my memory, my understanding, and my will. All that I have and cherish you have given me. I surrender it all to be guided by Your will. Your grace and Your love are enough for me. Give me these, Lord Jesus, and I ask for nothing more. Amen.

The Anima Christi
Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water of from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me. Within Thy wounds hide me Suffer me not to be separated from Thee, From the malignant enemy, defend me. In the hour of my death, call me. And bid me come to Thee, that with Thy saints I may praise Thee, For ever and ever. Amen.
Prayer before Mass
Almighty and everlasting God, behold I come to the Sacrament of Thine only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: I come as one infirm to the physician of life, as one unclean to the fountain of mercy, as one blind to the light of everlasting brightness, as one poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth. Therefore I implore the abundance of Thy measureless bounty that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to heal my infirmity, wash my uncleanness, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty and clothe my nakedness, that I may receive the Bread of Angels, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, with such reverence and humility, with such sorrow and devotion, with such purity and intention as may be profitable to my soul’s salvation.

Mass Responses (English)

Sanctus
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Memorial Acclamation
A. We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.
B. When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your death, O Lord, until you come again.
C. Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.

Agnes Dei
Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Liturgical Prayer

Deep in the heart of every human is the need and desire to worship and give thanks to God. G. K. Chesterton points out that one of the frustrations the atheist has to face is to experience the innocence of a baby’s face or the splendor of a nighttime sky and have no one to thank for it.

We are social creatures. Can you imagine being happy without sharing your life with other people? Even the world’s most introverted person needs to be in contact with another.

Combining these two truths about the human person (we need to worship and we are social beings) leads to praying together. This form of prayer is called liturgical prayer.

This is why we need the Church...
The Church teaches us how to pray together. Jesus gave to his Church the Sacraments. The Sacraments are gifts by which Jesus is made present to us today. No matter how much a man and woman love each other, they cannot have the eternal bond of marriage without the Church giving to them the Sacrament of Matrimony. A man may be the best seminarian, but without a Bishop ordaining a man to the Priesthood, he will never be a priest. Good intentions or hopes do not make Jesus present, the Sacraments do.

The Church’s liturgy (or prayer) is a glorious teacher of what and how to pray. When we celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—the risen Jesus Christ is truly present, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity on the altar! No other prayer can do that!

Participating in the sacraments of the Church nourishes and strengthens our life of prayer. While we are all called to foster a personal relationship with Jesus, we meet and find Jesus in the Holy Catholic Church. Prayer is never just “me and Jesus” because Jesus is only truly present in his Church.
Ignatius of Loyola was the youngest of eleven children in a noble family of Spain. As a young adult, his goal in life was to achieve fame and fortune. At the age of thirty, he was seriously injured in a battle. During the months of his recovery, he had the opportunity to examine his life and read about the saints. Ignatius never did anything halfway. Once he realized that God was calling him, he devoted all his energy to discerning God’s will and then doing it. In search of what he ought to do, Ignatius encountered setbacks, closed doors, and even imprisonment. He was convinced that God could be found in all things, and was guided by an inner peace that comes from knowing one is doing the will of God.

Ignatius developed the Spiritual Exercises, a practical guide for those who want to live a truly Christian life, and shared them with his companions. Ignatius called his companions the “Company of Jesus.” Today they are known as the Society of Jesus. Besides the three traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, members of the Society of Jesus take a fourth vow of obedience to the Pope.

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Praying with St. Ignatius

A Life that Speaks Volumes: Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491 – 1556)

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy (prayed on rosary beads)

1. Begin with the Sign of the Cross, 1 Our Father, 1 Hail Mary and The Apostles Creed.
2. Then on the Our Father Beads say the following: Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.
3. On the 10 Hail Mary Beads say the following: For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.
(Repeat step 2 and 3 for all five decades).
4. Conclude with (three times):
Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.
Common Prayers

The Rosary

The Joyful Mysteries
(recited Monday and Saturday)
- The Annunciation
- The Visitation
- The Nativity
- The Presentation
- The Finding in the Temple

The Mysteries of Light
(recited Thursday)
- The Baptism of Jesus
- The Wedding Feast of Cana
- The Proclamation of the Kingdom, with the call to Conversion
- The Transfiguration
- The Institution of the Eucharist

The Sorrowful Mysteries
(recited Tuesday and Friday)
- The Agony in the Garden
- The Scourging at the Pillar
- The Crowning with Thorns
- The Carrying of the Cross
- The Crucifixion

The Glorious Mysteries
(recited Wednesday and Sunday)
- The Resurrection
- The Ascension
- The Descent of the Holy Spirit
- The Assumption
- The Coronation of Mary Queen of Heaven and Earth

Prayer concluding the Rosary

Hail, Holy Queen, etc. as above
V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.
O God, whose only-begotten Son, by his life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech thee, that meditating on these mysteries of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ignatian Gospel Meditation

The power of the human imagination was not lost on Saint Ignatius of Loyola. He developed a method of prayer that uses the imagination to immerse the person who is at prayer, into a story from the Scriptures. With this method you visualize in your mind the details of the Gospel story. As it comes to life in your imagination, you are drawn to a personal and real encounter with Jesus in the present moment.

Here is a suggested format to follow for Ignatian Gospel Meditation:

1. Prepare yourself for prayer by assuming a comfortable position and allowing yourself to become silent. Select a passage from the Scriptures with which to pray. It is usually best to begin with the Gospels, because the details and story line are especially suited to this method. With some experience you will be able to spot other passages in the Scriptures that also work well.

2. Read the passage through once, paying special attention to the characters and the concrete details: What does this place look, feel, smell, and sound like? Who is there? What action unfolds? What words are spoken? You may wish to reread the text several times to absorb all the details.

3. Next, enter into the story in your imagination, just as if you were there. Use your senses to allow the details of the story to come alive. Listen, taste, feel, smell, and see all that you can. Either be yourself or imagine yourself as one of the people in the passage. Allow the story to unfold in your imagination without changing any of the main details from the Bible passage.

4. As you experience the story, pay careful attention to all your reactions, all that you are feeling and thinking.

5. Respond to this experience in prayerful conversation with Jesus. Tell him what happened.

6. Make a resolution. In prayer, we meet Jesus. Leave with a concrete resolution, something you will do as a result of your prayer. This step is really important!

The Scriptures are the “living Word” of God. Those who pray with this method have very real encounters with Jesus, and find that in the experience, God touches them and enlightens them. They are comforted, healed, and challenged by the living Christ when they meet Him through the doorway of imagination.
Lectio Divina

Reading.
Reading in the monastic tradition involved placing the divine word on the lips. It was a focusing and centering device. One would slowly read a selection from the Bible, and when a thought, line, or word stood out and captured the reader’s attention, he or she would stop there and dwell on that text, carefully repeating it over and over. At each distraction one would simply return to this repetition. He or she would stay with that same text until it dried up, and would then move on with the reading until finding another engaging text.

Meditation.
Once the word of God is on the lips and in the mouth, one begins to bite and chew it; one begins to meditate on it. To meditate means to ruminate, to chew the word, dwelling at leisure on a morsel to extract the meaning of the text. Every word of Scripture has meaning for you. Every text speaks of Christ and His relationship to the one praying. One does not work hard at this prayer, but simply keeps listening to the words being repeated, letting them suggest their own images, reflections, intuitive thoughts. One ponders and perceives the hidden lessons in the word of God in such a way that wisdom for life is learned. Meditation seeks to acquire the mind of Christ. One slowly begins to see what the scriptures are saying.

Prayer.
”Oration” or prayer is the response of the heart to the word of God we have heard addressing us through the Scriptures. It is petition, it is affective conversation with sentiments of love, it is resolution to grow in the virtues of Christ, it is compunction of heart for one’s sins, it is silent company-keeping, it is the loving gaze.

Contemplation.
Here God quenches the soul’s thirst and feeds its hunger. God lifts the one praying above the normal meditative self into the sphere of experienced transcendence. Here the Spirit prays in the human spirit. The love of God is no longer abstract, but concretely poured into the receiving self. One knows one is being loved and loving in return. We are speaking of pure gift at this point.

Litany of Loreto
V. Lord, have mercy.
R. Christ have mercy.
V. Lord have mercy. Christ hear us.
R. Christ graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
Holy Mary, pray for us.
Holy Mother of God, pray for us.
Holy Virgin of Virgins, [etc.] Mother of Christ,
Mother of divine grace,
Mother most pure,
Mother most chaste,
Mother inviolate,
Mother undefiled,
Mother most amiable,
Mother most admirable,
Mother of good Counsel,
Mother of our Creator,
Virgin most prudent,
Virgin most prudent,
Virgin most venerable,
Virgin most renowned,
Virgin most powerful,
Virgin most merciful,
Virgin most faithful,
Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,
Spiritual vessel,
Vessel of honor,
Singular vessel of devotion,
Mystical rose,
Tower of David,
Tower of ivory,
House of gold,
Ark of the covenant,
Gate of heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,
Queen of Angels,
Queen of Patriarchs,
Queen of Prophets,
Queen of Apostles,
Queen of Martyrs,
Queen of Confessors,
Queen of Virgins,
Queen of all Saints,
Queen conceived without original sin,
Queen assumed into heaven,
Queen of the most holy Rosary, Queen of peace.

V. Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world.
R. Spare us, O Lord.
V. Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world.
R. Graciously hear us, O Lord.
V. Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world.
V. Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.
V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, that we thy servants may enjoy perpetual health of mind and body, and by the glorious intercession of blessed Mary, ever Virgin, may we be freed from present sorrow, and rejoice in eternal happiness, through Christ our Lord. Amen.
Common Prayers

The Benedictus
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; he has come to his people and set them free. He has raised up for us a mighty savior, born of the house of his servant David. Through his holy prophets he promised of old that he would save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us. He promised to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant. This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies, free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life. You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way, to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen.

The Memorare
Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

The Magnificat
My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Scripture for Vocation Discernment

Genesis 12:1-4
Exodus 3:1-6, 9-12
Numbers 11:11-12, 14-17, 24-25
Isaiah 6:6-8
Jeremiah 1:4-9
Jeremiah 20:7-9
Matthew 9:35-38
Matthew 10:1-5
Matthew 20:25-28
Mark 10:17-27
Mark 10:28-30
Luke 14:25-33
John 10:11-16
John 12:24-26
John 15:9-17

John 20:19-23
John 21:15-17
Acts 6:1-7
Acts 20:17-18, 28-32, 36
Romans 12:4-8
2 Corinthians 4:1-2, 5-7
2 Corinthians 5:14-20
Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13
Philippians 3:8-14
Hebrews 5:1-10
1 Timothy 4:12-16
2 Timothy 1:6-14
1Peter 4:7-11
1Peter 5:1-4
Choose a time
- Make it a definite time dedicated only to prayer—an appointment with God.
- Try to make it the best time for prayer that you can find.

Choose a Place
- It should be a place free from distractions.
- It should be a private place.

Enter into Prayer
- Ask for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to teach you how to pray as you talk and listen to God.

Examine your conscience and repent of your sins
- Lay aside anxieties, problems, battles. Don’t allow them to dominate your time with God.

Recall to mind and assent to the basic truths of revelation
- The Father created you out of love and loves you always.
- The Father sent Jesus to give us life.
- Jesus promised to be with us and to send us the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus intercedes for us in heaven.
- Jesus is coming again in glory.
- Consciously say “YES” to these truths each day.

Intercede with faith and trust
- For our daily bread: pray for the world, the church, your family, friends, your enemies and yourself.
- For forgiveness: As you forgive others.
- For strength for the day and its trials.
- For discernment in your personal vocation.
- For protection from all evil.

Before leaving prayer, ask yourself
- What God has said to you; What God has shown you; What you know you should carry into the day and remember so your prayer will bear fruit.

Make a Resolution
- Prayer leads to conversion.
- Promise Jesus, with His grace, to reject a specific sin or to do an act of charity.

Common Prayers

Daily Prayer to Discover Your Vocation:
Heavenly Father, if it be Your holy will that I am called to the vocation of marriage, please protect my future spouse. Keep her/him pure so that when in Your Divine providence You bring us together, may we discover and foster the love You have always intended for us to share, even from the beginning of time. Then, through our marriage, may we faithfully witness that love to the world each and every day of our lives. But Lord, if it be your will that I am called to the vocation of priesthood, diaconate, or consecrated life, then place holy people in my life to assist me along this path, not telling me what I should do, but guiding and encouraging me every step of the way, so that I may become the faithful instrument of Your grace for the souls you have entrusted to my care. I ask this through the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary, and in the name of Your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever, Amen.

Morning Offering
O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your sacred heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all the apostles of prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month.
**Common Prayers**

**Prayer to St. Michael**
St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle; be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray. And do thou, O prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

**Te Deum**
You are God: we praise you;
You are God: we acclaim you;
You are the eternal Father:
All creation worships you.
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven, Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you:
Father, of majesty unbounded,
Your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
And the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.
You, Christ, are the king of glory,
The eternal Son of the Father.
When you became man to set us free
You did not spurn the Virgin’s womb.
You overcame the sting of death,
And opened the kingdom of heaven
to all believers.
You are seated at God’s right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come, and be our judge.
Come then, Lord, and help your people,
Bought with the price of your own blood,
And bring us with your saints
to glory everlasting.
Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance.
Govern and uphold them now and always.
Day by day we bless you.
We praise your name forever.
Keep us today, Lord, from all sin.
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.
Lord, show us your love and mercy;
For we put our trust in you.
In you, Lord, is our hope:
And we shall never hope in vain.

**How to make a Holy Hour**

The following advice is from Fr. Benedict Groeschel and his book *Praying with the Saints in the Presence of Our Lord*:

This series of simple steps are based on a method of St. Teresa of Avila, who said she was afraid to go into prayer without a book in her hands. If St. Teresa used a book, we can hardly do better than to follow her lead.

**Step 1**
Collect your thoughts in an act of remembrance and adoration of the One with whom you are about to speak. We need to break the rapidly flowing stream of consciousness that has accompanied us through the day and brought us to the threshold of the chapel where Christ awaits us in His mysterious sacramental presence. Simply put, you have to stop and remind yourself that you are going to pray—you are going to speak with Jesus Christ, your Lord and Redeemer, present in His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, as He was at Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, and as He now is in eternal life and glory. The first step of real devotion is to be deeply aware that Christ is present to you, that He knows you and cares about you.

To stop the flow of everyday thoughts, it is helpful to kneel in adoration, and to take some deep breaths that help to calm us down and to repeat inwardly, “I am here with my Savior and my God,” or some similar expression of the awe we ought to experience in His presence. After all, we are talking to God. One should spend as much time as one needs to do this. To be effective, it really takes several minutes. Frankly, I think that those who minimize the importance of kneeling simply lack the experience of awe.

At the end of this step, taking a couple of minutes of complete silence is helpful, but this should be discontinued if the mind begins to wander and be filled with distracting thoughts. The end of the period of silence should be a fervent appeal to the Holy Spirit to give us the grace to pray well and in union with Christ.

**Step 2**
Now find a prayer or meditation from scriptures or some other book of devotions. Or better, keep your Bible with you if it is marked with quotations that you like.

Take time to find the quotation that fits your need at the moment. This should be a matter of what catches your attention and is based on your need in the situation that you have been enduring this day.
How to make a Holy Hour ... continued

Read the quotation a few times, savor it, and let its meaning fill your mind. Compare the truth or sentiment of the quotation with your present mood, need or state of mind. For example, if you are anxious about some specific thing in your life, many quotations from the psalms will be helpful to you. For instance, Psalm 107, from verse 4 to verse 9, gives us an image of God feeding the troubled soul and satisfying the soul’s hunger and thirst. This obviously can be related easily to the experience of receiving Holy Communion.

Step 3
Allow the meaning of the quotation or prayer to sink into your mind and heart. This may not feel very elevating, and it may be very silent. Let the quotation sink in quietly. Don’t be afraid to take some time just allowing the words to enter into your mind and heart.

Step 4
Then, in your own words and thoughts, speak to Our Lord, recalling His presence with such sentiments as awe, joy, gratitude, sorrow for sin, trust. Don’t be afraid to express fear, disappointment, frustration, and confusion. This is part of the purification we must sometimes enter into in the presence of the Savior of the World.

Sentiments can be best expressed in very simple individual phrases like the following:

- Jesus, I adore You, Son of God.
- Jesus, I am so grateful to You.
- Jesus, I am filled with joy that You are with me.
- Jesus, I hurt very badly.
- Jesus, what went wrong?
- Jesus, why did I fall and fail?
- Jesus, I am hurt and angry.
- Jesus, I don’t understand.
- Jesus, increase my faith.
- Jesus, be with me in my troubles.
- Jesus, keep me with Your cross.
- Jesus, don’t leave me.
- Jesus, be with those I love and care about.

These are just a few of the sentiments we might express. Obviously, there are hundreds of different ones. Remember that you can say anything to Jesus Christ in such an intimate moment. As you come to an end of such expressions, see if you can put all your feelings and experiences into a simple prayer, even a prayer without words. Then, if there is time left, begin Step 2 again. This time, perhaps you should seek another scripture quotation, perhaps a Psalm of praise like 149 or 150; or if it is a difficult time, perhaps a psalm of repentance like Psalm 51. You can also seek for another prayer in this manual or some similar devotional book.

Common Prayers

Under Your Protection
We fly to thy protection,  
O holy Mother of God.  
Despise not our petitions  
in our necessities,  
but deliver us always  
from all dangers  
O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Angel of God
Angel of God,  
my guardian dear,  
to whom God’s love commits me here,  
ever this day be at my side,  
to light and guard, to rule and guide.  
Amen

Eternal Rest
Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May their souls, and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen

Prayer to St. Joseph for a Happy Death
O Blessed Joseph, you gave your last breath  
in the loving embrace of Jesus and Mary.  
When the seal of death shall close my life,  
come with Jesus and Mary to aid me. Obtain  
for me this solace for that hour - to die with  
their holy arms around me. Jesus, Mary and  
Joseph, I commend my soul, living and dying,  
into your sacred arms. Amen.

Prayer before the Crucifix
Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus,  
while before Your cross I humble kneel and  
with burning heart I beg You to impress  
upon me lively sentiments of faith, hope and charity, contrition for my sins and desire of amendment. With great love and tender pity I ponder Your five wounds and recall the words David spoke of You, “They have pierced my hands and my feet; they have numbered all my bones.” Amen.
Common Prayers

**Hail Holy Queen**
Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us, and after this exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

**Salve, Regina**
Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiae, vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamamus, exules filii Eve. Ad te suspiramus gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle. Eia ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos miserericordes oculos ad nos converte. Et elemosynam fructum ventris tui, nobis, post hoc exsilium, ostende. O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria!

**Regina Caeli**

**Orémus.**
Deus, qui per resurrectionem Filii tui Dómini nostri Iesu Christi mundum latificáre dignátus es, praesta, quasumus, ut per eius Genetricem Virginem Mariam perpétue capiámus gáudia vitae. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum. Amen.

How to make a Holy Hour ... continued

**Step 5 Ending a Holy Hour**

As loyal disciples of Christ, we always ought to end our prayer with some resolution of charity, some decision to let Christ operate in our lives, so that each day it may be more and more true that “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20). We should think of some realistic action that we should take to show our love for Jesus by serving His brothers and sisters for whom He died. What we do to others we do to Him. To act in a way that is realistically united with His life of grace, we must proceed from a Christian motive and do things in a way that reflects His Gospel example and teaching. We never do this perfectly, but we can pray and struggle to do it better.

I came long ago to suspect any Christian prayer or experience that does not lead to Christ-like action. “If you love me, keep my commandments… As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me… I was hungry and you gave me food” (Jn 14:15; Mt 25:40; Mt 25:35). The honesty of prayer can be judged by the actions and struggles of grace as we surrender to the call of the Holy Spirit sent into our souls by our Blessed Master to teach us all that we need to know.

I always spend the last few moments of this time with Christ, asking the help and protection of His Mother and our Mother. I also address a few saintly friends already in the Kingdom of God and ask them to pray for me. And, finally, I greet my guardian angel, that mysterious celestial citizen whom God gave me when I started out on this brief human experience. I almost always leave the presence of Our Lord refreshed or at least better prepared for whatever the day may bring.

Give me the Eucharist or let me die.  
-St. Peter Julian Eymard

The church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic Adoration. Jesus waits for us in this Sacrament of love. May our adoration never cease.  
-Pope John Paul II
How to make a Holy Hour ... continued

I know I wouldn’t be able to work one week if it were not for the continual force coming from Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. In our society we begin our day with Mass and Holy Communion and we end it with one full hour of Adoration. We have permission from the different bishops to expose the Blessed Sacrament. All of us know that unless we believe and can see Jesus in the appearance of bread on the altar, we will not be able to see Him in the distressing disguise of the poor. Therefore, these two loves are but one in Jesus.

- Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

Do you want the Lord to give you many graces? Visit Him often. Do you want Him to give you few graces? Visit Him rarely. Do you want the devil to attack you? Visit Jesus rarely in the Blessed Sacrament. Do you want him to flee from you? Visit Jesus often. Do you want to conquer the devil? Take refuge often at the feet of Jesus. Do you want to be conquered by the devil? Forget about visiting Jesus. My dear ones, the Visit to the Blessed Sacrament is an extremely necessary way to conquer the devil. Therefore, go often to visit Jesus and the devil will not come out victorious against you. - Saint John Bosco

Common Prayers

The Angelus
V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.
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.

Angelus Domini
Ángelus Dómini nuntiávit Maríæ.
Et concépit de Spíritu Sancto.
Ave, María, grádia plena,
Dóminus tecum.
Benedicta tu in muliéribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesús.
Sancta María, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatóribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostræ. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.
Hail Mary.
V. And the Word was made flesh.
R. And dwelt among us.
Hail Mary.
V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray;
Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Through the same Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Glory be to the Father...
Common Prayers

The Sign of the Cross
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory be to the Father
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

The 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.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Amen

The 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

Signum Crucis
In nómine Patris et Fílii et Spíritus Sancti. Amen

Gloria Patri

Pater Noster
Pater noster, qui es in caelis: sanctificetur nomen tuum: adveniat regnum tuum: fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra.

Panem nostrum quotidiamum da nobis hodie: et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos inducas in temptationem. Sed libera nos a malo.

Amen

Ave, Maria

The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, OCD

The holiest and most necessary practice in the spiritual life is that of the presence of God. It consists in taking delight in and becoming accustomed to His divine company, speaking humbly and conversing lovingly with Him all the time, at every moment, without rule or measure; especially in times of temptation, suffering, aridity, weariness, even infidelity and sin. We must continually apply ourselves so that all our actions, without exception, become a kind of brief conversation with God, not in a contrived manner but coming from the purity and simplicity of our hearts.

During our work and other activities, even during our reading and writing, no matter how spiritual - and, I emphasize, even during our religious exercises and vocal prayers - we must stop for a moment, as often as possible, to adore God in the depths of our hearts, to savor him, even though in passing and stealthily. Since you are aware that God is present to you during your actions, that he is in the depths and center of your heart, stop your activities and even your vocal prayers, at least from time to time, to adore him within, to praise him, to offer him your heart, and to thank him. Nothing is more pleasing to God than to turn away from all creatures many times throughout the day to withdraw and adore him present within. Moreover, this turning inward imperceptibly destroys the self-love found only among creatures. In the end, we can offer God no greater evidence of our fidelity than by frequently renouncing and scorning creatures in order to enjoy their Creator for a moment. This exercise gradually destroys the self-love only found among creatures. Turning to God frequently rids us of self-love without our even realizing it.

This presence of God is the soul’s life and nourishment, which can be acquired by the Lord’s grace. Here are the means: a great fidelity to the practice of his presence and to the fostering of this awareness of God within, which must always be carried out gently, humbly, and lovingly, without giving in to any disturbance. We must take special care that this inner awareness precedes our activities somewhat, that it accompanies them from time to time. We must not get discouraged when we forget this holy practice, for all that is needed is to calmly take it up again; once the habit is formed we will find contentment in everything.

This practice of the presence of God is very helpful for mental prayer, for it will be easier to remain calm during mental prayer when the mind, not allowed to take flight during the day, is kept faithfully in God’s presence.

Since all of life is full of dangers and hazards, it is impossible to avoid them without God’s constant help. We cannot ask him for this help if we are not with him. We cannot be with him
Practice of the Presence of God ... continued

unless we think of him often. We cannot think of him often except by a holy habit of keeping ourselves in his presence, asking him for the graces we need at every moment.

Nothing can comfort us more in life’s trials and sufferings than this intimate conversation with God. Practiced faithfully, all physical illnesses will be easy to bear. God often permits us to suffer in order to purify our souls and to make us remain with him. Practiced faithfully, all physical illnesses will be easy to bear. If we are with God, and want him alone, we are incapable of suffering. We must therefore adore him in our infirmities, offering him our sufferings from time to time, asking him lovingly, as a child does his father, to be conformed to his holy will, and for the help of his grace. These short prayers are very appropriate for the sick and are an excellent remedy for pain.

We do not always have to be in church to be with God. We can make of our hearts an oratory where we can withdraw from time to time to converse with him there. Everyone is capable of these familiar conversations with God. A brief lifting up of the heart is enough, a brief remembrance of God, an act of inner adoration, even though on the run. These prayers, short as they may be, are very pleasing to God.

“My most normal habit is to simply keep my attention on God, and to be generally and lovingly aware of Him.”

Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, OCD

Examination of Conscience ... continued

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- Have I lied? Have I sworn falsely? Have I gossiped?
- Have I plagiarized or been academically dishonest?
- Have I revealed secrets or confidential information without good reason?
- Have I ruined anyone’s reputation by spreading lies or maliciously revealing their faults and sins?
- Am I critical, negative, or uncharitable in my talk? Am I sincere?

You shall not desire your neighbor’s wife.
- Have I deliberately and consciously entertained sexual thoughts about anyone?
- Do I guard my imagination and senses?
- Have I watched shows, plays, pictures, or movies that contain impure scenes with the deliberate intention of being aroused by them? Am I responsible about what I read?
- Do I pray at once to banish impure thoughts and temptations?

You shall not desire your neighbor’s goods.
- Am I envious or excessively desirous of the possessions, abilities, talents, beauty, or success of others?
- Have I been sorrowful over another’s good fortune? Have I been happy when someone was hurt?
- Am I moody, gloomy, sad, or sour?
- Do I work, study, and keep busy to counter idle thoughts?
- Is my heart set on earthly possessions or on the true treasures in Heaven?
Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.
- Have I deliberately missed Mass on a Sunday or Holy Day of obligation without a serious reason such as illness or lack of transportation?
- Have I deliberately come late or left early from Mass without a good reason?
- Do I try to keep Sunday as a day of rest and relaxation by avoiding unnecessary work?
- Have I deliberately allowed my children to miss Mass without a serious reason?
- Did I omit my Easter Duty? Did I omit my yearly Confession duty?
- Was I easily distracted at Mass?

Honor your father and your mother.
- Do I honor, respect, and obey my parents?
- Have I deliberately harmed my parents by word or by deed? Have I spoken badly of them in the presence of others?
- Have I neglected my family responsibilities?
- Do I respect and obey my legitimate superiors?

You shall not kill.
- Have I intentionally harmed anyone?
- Have I encouraged or helped someone to have an abortion?
- Have I attempted suicide or given deliberate consent to the idea? Have I neglected my spiritual, physical or mental health or tried to harm myself?
- Have I abused drugs or alcohol? Have I gotten high or drunk?
- Have I led anyone to sin through bad example or through direct encouragement?
- Have I gossiped, made fun of, or harmed someone’s reputation by my words?
- Have I harbored grudges or refused to forgive someone who hurt me?
- Have I been angry, resentful, or kept hatred in my heart?
- Have I failed to correct my transgressions through charity?

You shall not commit adultery.
- Have I engaged in any kind of sexual activity with anyone of either sex (includes prolonged kisses, passionate touches or any use of another person as an object to obtain sexual pleasure)?
- Have I indulged in pornographic magazines, videos, or internet websites?
- Have I masturbated or fornicated?
- Have I looked lustfully at someone or used impure speech in speaking of another? Have I led others to impure thoughts or actions by my bad example?
- Do I avoid laziness, gluttony, idleness, and the occasions of impurity?

You shall not steal.
- Have I stolen or accepted stolen goods?
- Have I deliberately destroyed the property of others?
- Have I cheated anyone of what I owe? Do I pay my debts promptly?
- Do I gamble excessively?
- Do I share what I have with the poor and the Church according to my means? Am I stingy?
- Have I returned or made equal restitution for anything obtained immorally?

Examination of Conscience ...

God Speaks in Silence

The human soul seeks union with God. This union is accomplished through Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, who took upon Himself human flesh and nature, and gave us entry into the very heart of God. If we are to foster the awe, reverence, and adoration through which we may know the Word of Christ, than we must love and foster, and never fear silence and stillness in our lives.

From silence comes the Word.
From silence God spoke and created the world.
From silence He spoke to Mary and took up a dwelling place in her womb.
From silence He sent His Holy Spirit at Pentecost to lead the Church.
Meditative quiet is neither favored nor fostered in our culture.
Yet there is no getting around the simple fact that only in stillness do we learn to listen with the interior ear.
Only in stillness can we build the habit of listening, a habit that, when impeded by the jangle of noise, can never develop.
Only in stillness do we calm down enough to sense the Lord’s presence.
Only in stillness do we find out that the Lord loves us and that we are made to love Him.
Silence is not a den of terror; it is rather the place where we fall in love.

He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."

And he said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation."

“And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Monday Meditation

Prayer before Examination of Conscience

Come Holy Spirit into my soul. Enlighten my mind that I may know the sins I ought to confess, and grant me your grace to confess them fully, humbly, and with a contrite heart. Help me to firmly resolve not to commit them again. O Blessed Virgin, Mother of my Redeemer, intercede for me through the Passion of Your Son, that I may obtain the grace to make a good confession. All you blessed Angels and Saints of God, pray for me, a sinner, that I may repent from my sins, and that my heart may be forever united with yours in eternal love. Amen.

The Commandments

I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.

- Do I strive to love God with my whole heart, mind, soul, and strength? Do I give Him the priority in my life that He deserves as my Creator and Lord or rather do I make compromises on my love for God for the sake of pride, pleasure, or the avoidance of a necessary sacrifice? Do I spend time in prayer daily?
- Have I had any direct involvement with the occult, witchcraft, wicca, ouija boards, séances, tarot cards, new age crystals, fortune telling, or the like? Have I put faith in horoscopes?
- Have I received Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin?
- Have I abused the Sacrament of Reconciliation by deliberately lying to the priest or deliberately choosing not to confess a mortal sin?
- Have I publicly denied a truth of the faith out of concern for the respect and opinion of others? Have I doubted or denied my faith?
- Have I read books against the Catholic Faith?

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

- Have I always treated the holy name of God with the greatest possible reverence and awe?
- Have I deliberately cursed or shown contempt for or ridiculed God, Sacred Scripture, the Church, Mary, the saints, or sacred places or things? Did I cause scandal by doing this in the presence of others?
- Did I curse or swear? Do I use profane language?
O Jesus, ever flowing fountain of compassion, I approach You to cleanse me from all my sins. O Divine Physician heal my soul. O Infinite Love, enkindle the flames of Your Love in my soul that it may love nothing but You. May this Confession bring about in me an entire change in my life so that I may be fully reconciled to You.

Mother of God, you are so charitable to sinners who desire repentance, assist me to make a good Confession. My Guardian Angel, help me to discover the sins I have committed. My Patron Saint and all you Saints of Heaven, pray for me that I may bring forth worthy fruits of repentance. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving after Confession
Merciful Lord, with a pure heart I thank you for taking away my sins. Let your Holy Spirit guide my life so that my soul may bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Renew my desire to be your faithful friend and servant, increase my loving dependence on you. And grant me that joy and peace of heart which comes from doing your holy will. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Final Prayer after Reconciliation
Thank you, God, for once again proving to me Your endless generosity in forgiving my many sins and offenses. I rely on Your grace to heal and strengthen my weak human nature, so that I may serve you more faithfully from this day on. I am determined that my life shall reflect the increase of grace You have given me by this Sacrament. Accept my sorrow, and my renewed love for You in reparation also for the offenses of all my loved ones, my friends, and those of all men. Through the saving grace of our Redeemer, may we all place ourselves totally at Your service. Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cle'opas, an-swered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see."

And he said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?"

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Tuesday Meditation

How to go to Confession

“Your sins are as a grain of sand by comparison with the huge mountain of God's mercy.”  
–Saint John Vianney

“O God, have mercy on me a sinner.”  
Luke 18:13

“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”  
John 1:29

“Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven…”  
John 20:23

“Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”  
Matt. 5:48

How to go to Confession

Before entering the confessional, pray to God the Holy Spirit for His light and His grace.

Examine your conscience.

Be sorry for your sins.

Make a firm resolution not to sin again, to avoid the near occasions of sin.

In the confessional, make the sign of the cross with the priest.

Say to the priest: “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It’s been -_________ weeks/months/years since my last confession and these are my sins.”

Confess your sins openly and candidly. Make sure you mention all mortal sins and, as best you can, the number of times each was committed. When you are through, say “I am sorry for these sins, and all the sins I cannot now remember.”

Listen to the advice of the priest. Feel free to ask him any questions about the faith that you are not sure about, such as whether or not something is a sin. The priest will then give you a penance.

Say the Act of Contrition when the priest asks you to.

Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with Your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy.

After leaving the confessional, promptly do the penance the priest gave you.

Prayer before Confession

O Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, worthy of all my love, I humbly present myself before You. Look upon me with merciful eyes and help me to be reconciled to You by a good confession. But as I can do nothing if You do not help me, I implore You in Your tender mercy to enlighten me, that I may know all my sins and detest them with my whole heart.
The Wheels—The four wheels of the car correspond to four aspects of our Christian life that need constant maintenance, four areas of attention that can get worn down, low on air, or entirely flat if we don't take care of them. Without them, however, we cannot move forward at optimal speed and efficiency in our pursuit of total communion with God.

The "RACE"—They are easy to remember - RACE:

"R" for "Reading". Reading refers to constantly learning more about my faith, about the teachings of the Church, about Christ and his plans, whether by reading books, listening to tapes, attending lectures and study circles, etc. If I make no effort to learn Christ's point of view, I will end up adopting someone else's point of view - the TV's, the newspaper's, my boss', my professor's? In our "age of information", with Church teaching available from myriad sources, we have no excuse for not knowing what we believe and why.

"A" for "Apostolate". An "apostle" is someone who is "sent out" to perform a task. When we become followers of Christ we are given the all-important task to: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mt 28:19-20) If a cell is not reproducing, it is probably dying; if I am not bringing others closer to Christ, I am probably not close to Christ myself.

"C" is for "Cross". The Cross - suffering, sacrifice, self-denial - was Christ's chosen instrument to redeem the world, to reestablish communion between God and man. If self-denial and sacrifice (i.e. doing things God's way when I would prefer to do things some other way, accepting the trials he allows me to undergo even when they make my heart bleed) are not present in our lives, how can we stay close to Christ? As Christ put it: "Then he said to all, 'If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'" (Lk 9:23). He didn't make it optional.

"E" for "Encouragement". We can't do it alone. There are no Christian "Lone Rangers" - at least, not for long. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18:20). We need the encouragement of friends and companions who share our priorities, and we need the encouragement of those who are further along on the journey, who can guide and direct us.

In Short—If I am frequenting the sacraments, I will have plenty of fuel for my journey. If my prayer-life is healthy, the engine of my life will be pushing me forward towards the fulfillment of the purpose for which God created me. If the four wheels have good tread and plenty of air, I will be running the "RACE in order to win" (1Cor 9:24), discovering every day the "immeasurable riches of Christ" (Eph 2:7)
The Meaning of Life—God created us in order to live in communion with him, to know and love him, to serve him, and in that way to experience the fullness of life that he wants to give us. As the Catechism puts it: "Man is made to live in communion with God in whom he finds happiness" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #45).

What Went Wrong?—The original sin of our first parents destroyed that communion with God, frustrating his plan for our lives and leaving us unable to achieve the purpose for which we had been created.

God to the Rescue—In response to our tragic situation, God sent his Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity, to become one of us and thereby undo what sin had done.

Through a personal friendship with Christ (being in a "state of grace"), each of us can regain intimacy with God, thus fulfilling the ultimate purpose for which we were created.

Nothing else will satisfy our hearts, not money, not fame, not power, not pleasure. As St Augustine put it, and as the Catechism reminds us: "You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." (Confessions, Book 1; Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 30).

What Next?—The crucial task of every human life, then, consists in knowing, loving, and following Jesus Christ: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

Christ established his Church as a means to foster that friendship between him and each person, between him and all people, and between all people in him.

Getting Closer to Christ—Our Christian life is a pilgrimage, a journey. In order to do a quick "check-up" to see how your journey is going, you can use the analogy of a car.

Our destination is God, communion, intimacy with him. Is that your destination?

The Fuel—Our fuel, without which the car will go nowhere, no matter how nice it may be, is God's grace, his very life, poured into our soul. God is infinite and perfect, we are finite and imperfect; if he does not reach down and offer us his friendship, we cannot achieve it on our own. That "offer" of God comes through his grace. And the normal channels of that grace are the sacraments: baptism, confirmation, confession, communion, matrimony, orders, and anointing. Most of them we only receive once, but confession and communion are there for us to frequent, to "fill up" our spiritual fuel tanks regularly.

The Engine—The engine, which transforms the fuel into energy, which allows God's grace to affect my mind, my heart, and my entire life, is prayer. Without prayer, God's grace remains dormant, it doesn't reach my heart, and I don't grow closer to him. How long will a friendship last if you never spend time with your friend? Our friendship with Christ is no different.
Servant of God Frank Parater ... continued

In addition, he wrote an "Open Letter to the Scouts of Richmond" marked in a similar manner. The Act of Oblation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was not discovered until after his death on February 7, 1920, when a fellow seminarian, Frank Byrne, of the Diocese of Richmond went through his effects and found this testament.

In late January 1920, Frank came down with rheumatism that developed into rheumatic fever causing him tremendous suffering. He was taken to the hospital of the Blue Nuns on January 27. The spiritual director of the college, Father Mahoney, explained to Frank that his illness was grave and he administered the Last Rites to him. Frank wished to get out of bed and kneel on the floor to receive Holy Communion as Viaticum, but was prevented from doing so. With devotion and unafraid of death, he knelt on the bed and made his last communion. On February 6, Monsignor Charles A. O'Hern, rector of the college, offered the Mass of the Sacred Heart for Frank. Frank Parater died on February 7, 1920. He was buried in the College Mausoleum at Campo Verano. His Act of Oblation was discovered after his death.

Two popes have asked for copies of it, and it has been published in English and in the L'Osservatore Romano in Italian.

In 1920, both city newspapers and the Bishop of Richmond, Most Reverend Denis J. O'Connell, D.D., praised the virtues of the deceased seminarian, the latter holding him up as a model for seminarians. Decades later in the 1960's, a bishop of Richmond, who had been a fellow student with him, the Most Reverend John Joyce Russell, D.D., named a summer camp for Frank Parater and procured various items from his family to be kept in the diocesan archives. The present Bishop of Richmond, the Most Reverend Walter F. Sullivan, D.D., having received authorization from the Holy See, has initiated the cause by establishing a Tribunal to examine the reputation for holiness of the Servant of God Frank Parater, Seminarian. Father J. Scott Duarte, J.C.D. of the Diocese of Richmond is the Postulator.

Servant of God Frank Parater: October 10, 1897-February 7, 1920

Notes...

"I have nothing to leave or give but my life and this I have consecrated to the Sacred Heart to be used as He wills. I have offered my all for the conversion of non-Catholics in Virginia. This is what I live for and in case of my death what I die for. Since my childhood, I wanted to die for God and my neighbor. But if I go on living, every action of my life here is offered to God for the spread and the success of the Catholic Church of Virginia. I shall be of more service to my diocese in heaven than I can ever be here on earth."
In 1917, Frank began studies for the priesthood at Belmont Abbey Seminary College in North Carolina. He continued to lead a very devout life as is detailed in the journal he kept while there. His stated goal was: "To strive by every possible means to become a pure and worthy priest, an alterus Christus [sic]."

During this period, he continued to go to Mass and receive Holy Communion daily, prayed the Rosary and Memorare daily, and went to confession weekly in accord with a Rule of Life he had drawn up for himself. He had an abiding sense that "...the Sacred Heart never fails those that love Him." The Benedictine Fathers made him aware of the spirituality of the Little Flower, Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, O.C.D.

While at the college seminary, Frank made the decision to study for the diocesan priesthood. This decision was made with the assistance of his spiritual director and after discussions with the Right Reverend Denis J. O'Connell, D.D., Bishop of Richmond. Frank decided that there was such a great need for priestly ministry in his native Virginia that he would forego his desire for monastic life in favor of direct service to the people of God.

During the summers, while at Belmont Seminary College, he was active in the Knights of Columbus summer wartime activities for youth and was director of the summer camp for the Boy Scouts of America. The leaders of the Scouts saw such virtue and ideals in Frank that they wanted him to serve as a summer camp director supervising those who were his seniors. He was considered a "four-ply scout", exceptional in every way.

In the Fall of 1919, the Right Reverend Denis J. O'Connell, a former Rector of the North American College, and then Bishop of Richmond, sent him to study at the Pontifical North American College in Rome. He arrived and was matriculated on November 25, 1919. He was popular among his peers, displayed a warm sense of humor and cheer to all and continued to deepen his spiritual life. In December he wrote an Act of Oblation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus which was sealed and marked to be read only in the event of his death in Rome. Frank expressed his motivation in making his offering in this way:
Servant of God, Seminarian Frank Parater

**Francis Joseph Parater** was born into a devout Catholic family on October 10, 1897, in the city of Richmond, Virginia. His parents were Captain Francis Joseph Parater, Sr. and his second wife, Mary Raymond. Francis, Sr.’s first wife died as did several children she gave birth to by him. Mary Raymond was raised as a devout Episcopalian and communicant at Saint John's Episcopal Church on Church Hill (where Patrick Henry made his famous speech). Since, at the time of her marriage, she agreed to raise any children born to them as Catholics, she decided she could do that best by becoming Catholic herself.

Frank was baptized at Saint Patrick’s Church on Church Hill, the highest of Richmond's seven hills. He grew up the context of his own close knit family and of the large Catholic Community in that Church Hill neighborhood at the time. Frank’s father was a city employee who cared for the park across from their very modest home. He also took care of the garden at the Monastery of the Visitation located two blocks from their home. From their home Frank could easily walk to the monastery for daily Mass at which he served as an altar boy from the day of his first communion until he left Richmond for college. The Sisters of the Visitation, had an academy where at the time Frank's two sisters, Marie and Grace, were educated. Frank was educated at the Xaverian Brother's School (currently Saint Patrick's School) and at Benedictine High School in Richmond. He graduated in 1917, top in his class and valedictorian. In his late teens, Frank became very active in the Boy Scouts of America. His involvement was so exemplary that he was asked to serve in roles of leadership even at his young age. A remarkable young man, Frank was known for his ideals and practical judgment. Although small in stature, he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. At a time when the Catholic faith was not considered to be a social asset, Frank was well thought of by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. In fact, newspaper accounts note his achievements, his natural talents and his gifts of heart and mind. His vocational choice to study for the priesthood, his journey to Rome, his untimely death and his Last Will and Testament received coverage far beyond what one might expect for the times.
Vocation Definitions ... continued

A man is ordained to priesthood through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Together each man and the Church discern (discover) whether or not he is called to become a priest. Diocesan priests are called to serve the people of a particular diocese. Men called to be priests in religious orders belong to communities and in addition to receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders they also take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience (the three evangelical counsels).

Religious Life: Priests, brothers or sisters in communities that embrace the spirituality, charism and teachings of the community’s founder call their way of life religious life. Members of these communities follow Jesus through taking vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Religious Community: The founder of a religious community brings together a group of men or women who share the same charism and are dedicated to the same mission in the Church. These are religious communities of priests and brothers and communities of sisters. The apostolates of the communities vary according to their mission. Those dedicated primarily to prayer are contemplative communities; those who combine prayer with apostolic ministries are called active communities.

Secular Institute: Single lay men and women, and also some priests, belong to secular institutes. They make a commitment to live the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. Members do not necessarily live together as a community. Their goal is to be a transforming presence in society.

Vows: Formal commitments made to God to follow Jesus in His poverty, chastity and obedience as members of religious communities. The vow of poverty means that members hold all things in common. The community takes care of each other’s needs through the providence of God and their own charity. The vow of chastity means that the member gives up the goods of marriage and marital relations for the sake of God’s kingdom. The vow of obedience allows the member of the community to imitate and share in Jesus’ obedience to His Father in order to accomplish His will.

(Diocesan priests promise to live in celibate chastity, obedience to their bishop, and a simple life)
Vocation Definitions

**Vocation:** Vocation means a call. It is God’s invitation—His call—to each person to love and serve Him and His Church in a particular state or way of life.

**Brother:** Brothers live in religious communities. They take vows and promise to use their talents to serve God wherever the community decides they are needed. Brothers are not ordained.

**Charism:** Each religious community has a charism—a unique way of returning God's love to Him and His people which manifests a particular attribute of God's being.

**Apostolate:** The type of work or mission of the order through which their particular charism is lived out.

**Consecrated Life:** A permanent state of life recognized by the Church, entered freely in response to the call of Christ to perfection, and characterized by the making of public vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

**Permanent Deacon:** A third degree of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, after bishop and priest. The permanent deacon is ordained for ministry and service, but not to the priesthood. He assists and preaches at Mass, baptizes and presides at weddings and funerals. They have jobs outside the Church to make a living. Men at least 35 years of age, married or single, may be ordained permanent deacons.

**Transitional Deacon:** Men who are called to the priesthood who are in the final stage of formation before being ordained as priests. They receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders and usually serve as deacons for one year before ordination to the priesthood. During their year as a deacon they continue their studies and serve in parish assignments.

**Holy Orders:** The Sacrament by which the mission entrusted by Christ to His Apostles continues to be exercised in the Church through the laying on of hands. By receiving Holy Orders men become members of the ordained clergy—deacons, priests and bishops. All three confer a per-
DISCUSSION:

THE LIFE OF A PRIEST

An archangel appeared to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Angels visited St. Joseph in his dreams. A light blinded and knocked him to the ground. The Lord spoke to St. Francis from a crucifix and appeared to St. Catherine in her childhood. Like many events from the lives of the saints, these should be revered but not desired. In the end, such extraordinary callings are precisely that—extraordinary. A vocation is really a simple thing, but we tend to complicate it. We expect God to intervene in extraordinary ways. Short of a bolt of lightning or an earthquake, many young men and women will not believe that God calls them to the priesthood or religious life. So it helps to review the basics: God calls, man responds.

First, the call is simple: the Lord says to Peter and Andrew, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” No echoes. No booming voice. No thunder. All they saw and heard was a man standing on the shore. He spoke to them man to man. He called them in His humanity. This is the pattern for all vocations: God uses human means to communicate His divine will. Most priests and religious can tell you about the moment someone—a parent, teacher, priest, sister or nun—first suggested a vocation. It might have been the initial calling; it may have been the confirmation of what they already knew. Either way, it was God using a human instrument for His divine purposes.

The first step, then, is to pay attention to God’s human instruments. Those discerning a vocation must take such suggestions seriously, for they are God’s ordinary means of communicating. Just as the Apostles had faith that the carpenter from Nazareth was in fact God Himself calling them, so today men and women must trust that God calls them through others.

And the rest of us should not be shy about encouraging and suggesting a vocation. Much of the so-called “vocations crisis” lies certainly not in God’s failure to call, but in our unwillingness to cooperate. We do not want to seem “pushy” or forceful. But if we do not propose it to the young, they will never strive for it. God used the sacred humanity of Christ to call the Apostles. He now desires to use our humanity—our voices and words—to call people today.

Second, the response is simple: The Apostles “abandoned their nets and followed him…[T]hey left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.” No hesitations. No questions. No complaining. Their response was simple, although certainly not easy.

More importantly for discernment purposes, the fishermen’s immediate and total response reveals their prior willingness to do God’s will. Without the abandonment to His will—whatever it is, and even before we know what it is—we cannot hear His voice. Like defiant children who stop their ears, we close ourselves off to the Lord’s voice when we are unwilling to do His will. To hear, we must first be willing to respond. God’s simple call demands a simple listener. Someone who complicates his response—“I will do God’s will if it is x, y or z”—cannot hear God’s voice. Someone who desires to hear God’s voice should pray, as Samuel did, with a will already abandoned to His: “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening” (1Sm 3:10).
Help Me To Say “Yes” ... con’t

And yet I loved you, Lord; what have I done to you?
I worked for you; I gave myself for you.
O great and terrible God,
What more do you want?

Son, I want more for you and for the world.
Until now you have planned your actions, but I have no need of them.
You have asked for my approval, you have asked for my support,
   You have wanted to interest me in your work.
But don’t you see, son, that you were reversing the roles?
I have watched you, I have seen your good will,
And I want more than you now.
You will no longer do your own works, but the will of your Father in heaven.

Say “Yes,” son.
I need your “yes” as much as I needed Mary’s “yes” to come to earth.
   For it is I who must do your work,
   It is I who must live in your family,
   For it is my look that penetrates, and not yours,
   My words that carry weight, and not yours,
   My life that transforms, and not yours.
Give all to me, abandon all to me.
I need your “yes” to be united with you and to come down to earth,
I need your “yes” to continue saving the world!

O Lord, I am afraid of your demands, but who can resist you?
That your Kingdom may come and not mine,
That your will may be done and not mine,
Help me to say “Yes.”
DISCUSSION:

Vocation Story

I am afraid of saying “Yes”, Lord.
Where will you take me?
I am afraid of drawing the longer straw,
I am afraid of signing my name to an unread agreement,
I am afraid of the “yes” that entails other “yeses.”

And yet I am not at peace.
You pursue me, Lord, you besiege me.
I seek out the din for fear of hearing you, but in a moment
of silence you slip through.
I turn from the road, for I have caught sight of you, but at the end of the path you are awaiting me.
Where shall I hide? I meet you everywhere.
Is it then impossible to escape you?

But I am afraid to say “Yes,” Lord.
I am afraid of putting my hand in yours, for you hold onto it.
I am afraid of meeting your eyes, for you can win me.
I am afraid of your demands, for you are a jealous God.
I am hemmed in, yet I hide,
I am captured, yet I struggle, and I fight knowing that I am defeated.
For you are the stronger, Lord, you own the world and you take it from me.
When I stretch out my hand to catch hold of people and things, they vanish before my eyes.
It’s no fun, Lord. I can’t keep anything for myself.
The rising sun of the morning fades in my sight.
My laugh freezes on my lips.
The music I hear leaves me restless and uneasy.
Everything seems empty,
Everything seems hollow,
You have made a desert around me.
I am hungry and thirsty,
And the whole world cannot satisfy me.
Possible Priesthood Promptings ... continued

6. Do you have a sneaking suspicion that you are on the brink of a major life decision?

7. Are you afraid to tell friends and family that you are thinking about the priesthood?

8. Does the idea of becoming a priest excite you and at the same time frighten you because you feel "unworthy"?

9. Have you ever felt your heart move as a priest celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and thought what it would be like to stand at his place at the altar?

10. Have others encouraged you to consider the priesthood?
Why a Plan of Life?

Jesus promises us that the road to sanctity and eternal happiness is hard. However, even though it is hard, your desire is all God needs from you so that He can give you the strength to stay on that road which leads to eternal life and to the greatest amount of peace, happiness, and contentment which this life can offer.

Our Lord calls us to begin by simply sanctifying our lives in the little things we do every day, in our relationships with our families, classmates, and our friends. Our struggle for holiness requires growth in prayer and love of the Sacraments, to deepen our relationship with him.

There are well-defined steps that we take toward holiness. We must start out on our spiritual journey slowly with simple prayers and devotions, step by step. As we become stronger and more sure of ourselves and confident of God’s loving affection, we can increase our steps gradually until we can run toward Him. Just as an architect has a design for his building, we have to have a design to help us reach God, our final goal. We could call it our “Plan of Life.”

There are certain advantages to following a Plan of Life:
- A plan gives constancy and regularity to one’s efforts in developing and deepening the spiritual life.
- With a plan, there is less danger of being lazy and wasted time.
- With a plan there is less danger of falling away from spiritual practices.
- A Plan of Life forces one to be attentive to the duty of the moment.
- With a plan it is much easier to see God in the “ordinary” activities of the day.

Without a plan our spiritual progress may suffer:
- We may lose much valuable time.
- Fall into the habit of indecision.
- Neglect our duties or fulfill them carelessly and haphazardly.

Questions on Priesthood … continued

Are you responding to our heavenly Father’s voice today?
How do you know if He is calling you?
How do you know to what He is calling you?

Possible Priesthood Promptings

If you are being called to serve the Church as a priest, you will see visible signs of this calling in the following areas:
- Human - you are someone whom others trust and turn to, you draw people around you closer to Christ.
- Spiritual - you have a lively and personal love for Jesus Christ and the Church, the people of God, you desire to courageously serve Christ.
- Intellectual - you have the capacity and desire to learn and grow in your understanding of Jesus Christ, the Church and our world and culture.
- Pastoral - you have a desire to care for God’s holy people, by serving them as the Good Shepherd. You make a difference in people's lives through your witness to Christ.

If you recognize these qualities or their potential in yourself or others, maybe The Father is calling!

Are You being called by the Father to be a priest?

Take this quick discernment quiz to find out! Answer "yes" or "no" to the following questions:

1. Does the idea of becoming a priest keep coming back time and time again even though you thought you had moved on in your life and forgotten about it?
2. Do you feel called to give more, to be more?
3. Does your relationship with God sustain you, enliven you, invigorate you in such a way that you want to share His Truth and Love with others?
4. Do you desire to courageously and selflessly give all to Christ, to cast out into the deep and follow Him, wherever He calls you?
5. Do you long for more than what “the world” teaches us to strive for – money, sensuality, power, self-indulgence and comfort at any cost?
More Questions about Priesthood

What does a priest do?
A priest is ordained to be an “alter Christus” (another Christ) in the midst of God’s people. He is configured to the very person of Christ to continue the Lord’s mission and ministry in the world. The priest does this primarily through the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass and through preaching the Word of God. He enables people to encounter Jesus through the celebration of the other Sacraments: baptizing, reconciling sinners through Penance, attending the sick through Anointing, and celebrating love through Matrimony. As a priest, he is the servant-leader of God’s people in the midst of parish life. He is an administrator, teacher, counselor, and friend to the poor. He cares for people, as Jesus did, in their daily needs and struggles. To sum it up: “A priest is called to be all things to all people.”

Is it easy to become a priest?
In all honesty the answer must be “No, it is not easy to become a priest.” A man who wants to become a priest must go to college for four years, with at least two years of philosophical training. After graduating college, he must go to a major seminary for another four years to earn a Master’s degree in Divinity. After high school, a man goes to school for another eight years before becoming a priest. Just to think of so many years of education and formation can be discouraging. But remember, God always gives us the grace to do what He asks us to do!

What do priests do for recreation and fun?
If you remember that priests are human beings, you will understand that recreation and fun are a necessary part of life. As men, priests need to exercise their bodies and recoup their energy through healthy outlets. A priest can do anything he wants for recreation, as long as it is consistent with the Christian life. Some priests love sports and play them regularly. Others enjoy movies, plays, music, and reading good books. Some even like to hunt, fish, hike, and every other imaginable recreation. There are many forms of recreation that bring refreshment of strength and spirits after expending energy through pastoral ministry. Most priests have some sort of hobby that gives them pleasure and relaxation.

Do priests get paid?
Most people in the world engage in some career to earn a living. Careers allow people to be creative and earn a paycheck. Priests do not get paid in the sense of worldly careers. Because a priest does not have a family and because he lives a relatively simple life, he does not need a lot of money. Priests do, however, receive a monthly salary which gives them means to buy their necessities, purchase and maintain an automobile, take a vacation, buy clothing, and do normal recreational activities. A priest’s monthly salary is small because the Church provides free room and board, and most priests usually have minimal expenses because they try to live simple lives. Like the disciples before us, is Christ calling you to be one of His priests?

9 Pillars for my Plan of Life

1. Begin each day by making the Morning Offering: 
   O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day, for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of the Holy Father and for the intention of (your intentions).

2. Take a couple of minutes around the middle of the day to stop and pray to God.

3. Each night before you go to bed make an examination of conscience, asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten you as to how you have loved, and failed to love God and neighbor that day.
   Then pray the Act of Contrition:
   My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

4. Pray at least one decade of the Rosary daily.

5. Never miss Sunday Mass and go to daily Mass whenever you can.

6. Make a good confession at least once a month.

7. Try to make a holy hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament each week.

8. Set aside 15 minutes for Spiritual or Scriptural reading and meditation doing Lectio Divina. See page 22.


Now take some time to think about what belongs in your Plan of Life, and write down your plan on the next pages.
The gift of celibacy does not just keep one’s physical desires under control or enable us to live as bachelors; this gift is being able to say “yes” to the Lord each day and live the example of His life.

Christ is always willing to accept and strengthen the sacrifice you will to make for Him — and the Church needs the generosity of your heart as a priest. Be not afraid to make the total sacrifice of yourself out of love to serve the Lord and His Church.

Thoughts on Priestly Celibacy from John Paul II

It is important to point out that there are profound theological reasons supporting the discipline of celibacy. The encyclical *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus*, published in 1967 by my venerable predecessor Pope Paul VI, synthesizes them as follows: (cf. nn. 19-34)

First and foremost there is a Christological motivation: as Mediator between the Father and the human race, Christ remained celibate so as to dedicate Himself totally to the service of God and men. Those whose fortune it is to share in the dignity and mission of Christ are called to share also in this total gift of self.

Then there is an ecclesiological motivation: Christ loved the Church, offering Himself entirely for her sake, in order to make her a glorious, holy, and immaculate Spouse. By choosing celibacy, the sacred ministers themselves manifest the virginal love of Christ for the Church, drawing forth the supernatural vigor of spiritual fruitfulness.

Finally, there is an eschatological motivation: at the resurrection of the dead, Jesus said, “They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven” (Matthew 22:30). Priestly celibacy proclaims the arrival of a new dawn of salvation, and in a way it anticipates the fulfillment of the Kingdom as it sets forth its supreme values that will one day shine forth in all the children of God.
The Priesthood and Celibacy

The Roman Catholic Church requires that her priests be celibate. It is the practice of perfect continence by priests and bishops ordained for service in the Church. Celibacy has a long tradition and is the normative discipline for all Catholic clergy. In fact, the Church will only call to Holy Orders those men who believe they already have the gift of celibacy.

Celibacy is not just a law in the Roman Catholic Church; it also has a deeply understood spiritual significance for priestly life and ministry. The Second Vatican Council’s “Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests” asserted: “Perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven was recommended by Christ our Lord. It has been freely accepted and laudably observed by many Christians down through the centuries as well as a feature of priestly life. For it is at once a sign of pastoral charity and an incentive to it as well as being in a special way a source of spiritual fruitfulness in the world.” (No. 16)

In its essence, the priesthood does not demand celibacy. However, the centuries have proved that celibacy is in harmony with the priesthood and its origins are grounded in apostolic tradition. Priests identify themselves with Christ, Who was celibate. They dedicate the whole of their lives to the service of the Lord and His Church. Celibacy enables the priest to focus entirely on building up the kingdom of God here and now.

The gift of celibacy enables priests to cling to Christ with undivided hearts and dedicate themselves more freely to His service and to the service of their brothers and sisters. In this way priests become signs in this world of the Church’s union with the Lord. Unmarried priests also remind the world of the Kingdom of God where in resurrected glory there “shall not be marriage or giving in marriage.”

To live a celibate life, the priest must look to Christ as the ideal, eternal priest. This identification should permeate the priest’s whole being. Just as Christ remained celibate and dedicated His life to the service of His Father, a priest accepts celibacy and consecrates himself totally to the Lord’s mission. This total gift of self is a sign of the Kingdom present among us.

Through celibacy, the priest bonds himself and his life to the Church. He is better able to be a minister of the Word of God, listening to that Word, pondering its depth, living it, and preaching it with whole-hearted conviction. He is the minister of the sacraments, and, especially through the Mass, acts in the person of Christ, offering himself totally to the Lord. Celibacy also allows the priest more freedom and flexibility in fulfilling his pastoral ministry.

Throughout the Church’s teaching on celibacy, three important dimensions must be kept in mind. First, celibacy involves freedom. A man called to Holy Orders freely accepts the obligation of celibacy. Secondly, celibacy involves sacrifice, and a sacrifice is an act of love for Christ and His Church. In essence, the celibate priest is wedded to Christ and His Church. Thirdly, celibacy requires the grace of God to be lived faithfully.
My Daily Plan of Life
Questions on Discernment ... continued

your vocation. Make sure you pray correctly. Do not ask yourself, “What do I want to do with my life?” That is using our freedom selfishly. Rather, we should pray as Jesus taught us in the perfect prayer “The Our Father” - *Thy will be done!* May God’s will be done in my life!; this is the prayer we must pray. You should be thinking and asking: "Jesus what have I been created for? How have I been created to love You?" Pray and listen for the answer! Listen with your heart, not just your head. Seek guidance from the Church, the Bride of Christ, to help you hear and respond to God’s voice. *We need the wisdom and guidance of Holy Mother Church* to assist us. This process is called discernment.

What are the possible vocations through which I might be called to follow Christ?
Many people are called to the married state of life while others are chosen to be priests, consecrated religious men and women, or deacons. Some people are committed to remain single, yet still living a life of generous self-giving to the Church. Remember: It is normal to desire marriage and family. Just because you have this desire does not exclude the possibility that you have a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life. For a priest, the desire for a spouse is fulfilled as he marries his Bride, the Church. His desire for fatherhood is abundantly fulfilled, as he becomes a spiritual father of God’s holy people.

If I decide to enter the seminary to "give it a try" am I committed for life?
Certainly not! The seminary is where real discernment, trying to hear God’s voice revealing our vocation, begins. Sometimes, the only way to really know if you have a vocation to the priesthood or religious life is to actually enter the seminary. During that time of formation, God’s will for you becomes clearer. The goal of the seminary is to help you discern God’s will. A seminary rejoices when a man discerns that he is not called to priesthood and leaves to serve the Church in another vocation. Those precious years spent in formation are a benefit to you spiritually even if you discover that you are not called to be a priest or consecrated religious. That time will definitely help you hear God’s voice and find your vocation.

Priests and consecrated religious are very holy; I’m not. Should I enter seminary?
There is one mission all people have in common; we are all called to be holy. Holiness, becoming more like Jesus, is a lifetime endeavor for every person in every vocation. Give God a chance to work on you. With God all things are possible, even you becoming holy! Jesus’ first words in His public life give us the formula for holiness: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:15). Christ is calling you to holiness *right now.* Reject sin by frequenting the Sacrament of Penance monthly, receive our Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist, adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament by making visits to Church outside of Mass and pray daily, especially meditating on Holy Scripture. You will be amazed at the good things Jesus can do in and through you.
Decisions as a Son of the Father

There are decisions – and then there are DECISIONS!! We make decisions every day and most are of little or no consequence. What we wear or eat are decisions that matter little. But there are other decisions that affect the future course of our life. Those decisions are vital and we must make them after a determination arrived at after serious consideration.

Our personal vocation in life is one such decision. It demands from us a serious discernment because this decision calls for a lifetime commitment. Who will I share the rest of my life with? Is Church ministry a value to me? What are my values in life? Is God calling me to the priesthood or religious life?

There are several steps to making an important life decision. Most important is to know that a life altering decision needs to be made. It is essential to be alert to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, especially in crucial times. In any decision, you must consider your options, be attentive to the process, and to your feelings.

As you consider all the options available to you, it is good to write down the pros and cons of the various options. While not an especially formal process, it is an important step, because it places the options clearly before you. After writing down the pros and cons, ask yourself the possible consequences for each option or how each might fit into your life’s goals and plans.

No decision can be made without recourse to prayer. Prayer is a necessary and vital component in any Christian decision-making process. Simply ask God for guidance. Ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the ability to be open to the promptings of the Spirit. Asking for wisdom and the openness to do God’s will may allow your heart to be open to whatever may be encountered along the way.

Questions on Discernment

What is a vocation?
First, all are called to holiness, rejecting sin and loving God with our entire heart, body, and soul. Within this universal call to holiness, God creates each person for a specific purpose, reason or mission. This is our vocation; a vocation is a gift from God, a plan or “calling” from our heavenly Father. A vocation is God’s invitation or calling to each individual to love and serve Him and His Church in a particular state or way of life.

Do I have to do what God is calling me to do?
Remember, God loves you better than you love yourself. He created you and formed you with your unique gifts, talents, and abilities. God knows what will make you truly happy. In embracing and generously responding to your vocation, you will find a greater happiness, peace, and joy than you can find on your own. Your happiness depends on answering His call.

What about what I want to be or do with my life?
In God’s infinite love for you, He has given you the gift of freedom. True freedom is doing what we ought, meaning what is right and according to God’s will. The world gets things mixed up sometimes, teaching us that freedom is doing whatever we can or want to do. This misguided understanding of freedom actually enslaves us making us prisoners of our own selfishness. God wants us to discover real joy by using our freedom to respond to God with courageous and generous lives. He made us and knows what will make us happy.

Can I be happy in my life if I don’t follow the vocation Jesus invites me to embrace?
If someone does not follow the vocation our Father created for him to fulfill, they can attain a certain degree of happiness in this world and still attain salvation. However, they will not be as happy or blessed as they might have been had they followed their proper vocation. Rejecting our vocation affects others also (What if your parents never said yes to each other? What if the priest who has had a great impact on your life said no to Jesus?). This is why it is so important that everyone discern his or her particular vocation prayerfully and responsibly. Of course, there are trials and tribulations in every vocation. To become a priest or consecrated religious does not take away all suffering. But there is great joy in laying down one’s life for Christ. Your vocation is Christ’s gift to you; how you respond is your gift to Him and yourself.

How do I know what my vocation is?
Jesus tells us, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Mt 7:7). Pray every day, asking God to reveal or show you His plan for you,
From the MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE BENEDICT XVI
FOR THE 48th WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS
15th MAY 2011-FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Theme: Proposing Vocations in the Local Church

...The work of carefully encouraging and supporting vocations finds a radiant source of inspiration in those places in the Gospel where Jesus calls his disciples to follow him and trains them with love and care. We should pay close attention to the way that Jesus called his closest associates to proclaim the Kingdom of God (cf. Lk 10:9). In the first place, it is clear that the first thing he did was to pray for them; before calling them, Jesus spent the night alone in prayer, listening to the will of the Father (cf. Lk 6:12) in a spirit of interior detachment from mundane concerns. It is Jesus’ intimate conversation with the Father which results in the calling of his disciples. Vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life are first and foremost the fruit of constant contact with the living God and insistent prayer lifted up to the “Lord of the harvest”, whether in parish communities, in Christian families or in groups specifically devoted to prayer for vocations.

...It is essential that every local Church become more sensitive and attentive to the pastoral care of vocations, helping children and young people in particular at every level of family, parish and associations – as Jesus did with his disciples - to grow into a genuine and affectionate friendship with the Lord, cultivated through personal and liturgical prayer; to grow in familiarity with the sacred Scriptures and thus to listen attentively and fruitfully to the word of God; to understand that entering into God’s will does not crush or destroy a person, but instead leads to the discovery of the deepest truth about ourselves....

Decisions ... continued

The ultimate goal of a decision is to take some concrete action. And this is where you cannot be afraid to move on to the steps necessary to make your decision a reality. Over thirty-seven times in the New Testament we hear God’s word say to us: “Do not be afraid.”

When a decision is finally made and acted upon, a sense of true peace will prevail over you. Peace is the ultimate gift of a good decision —a peace no one can take from you. Like seeking God’s will, these steps may prove helpful to you in discerning your personal vocation in life. Remember, prayer and spiritual direction are important means of arriving at an understanding of God’s will for your life!

10 Ways to Seek God’s Will

- Pray about it. Ask God for the grace to make a good decision.
- Put it in writing. Clearly state the decision you want to make.
- Do your research. Collect solid information and talk over your discernment with a spiritual director.
- Consider your options. List the pros and cons and the relative weight of each.
- Use your imagination. Imagine what benefits and problems might result.
- Tune into your feelings. God may be speaking through your attractions and desires.
- Make your decision and offer it to God. Ask God to help you live it.
- Look for fruits of the Spirit. Watch for virtues like charity, peace, patience, and joy.
- Stay open. Be willing to make adjustments as you live out your decision.
- Persevere. Make discernment a part of your daily spiritual life.
A vocation is all about love. It is a life of love in a concrete, particular form that comes from God. Each vocation begins with His love for us. In that love for you He is calling you to a particular form of life. This love involves first His total gift of Himself to you, and then in response your total gift of self to Him. Christ our Lord tells us in the Gospel according to St. John, “You did not choose me, but I chose you” (Jn 15:16). His choice for you is what makes a vocation different from an “occupation” or a “career”. You can choose an occupation or a career for yourself, but a vocation (from the Latin vocare, “to call”) is HIS choice for you and which He invites you to undertake for love of Him. Often we are taught to ask, “What do I want to do in the future” or “What if I were to choose?” The better way to think is, “What does Jesus want for me?” “What life will bring Jesus the greatest glory?” and ultimately to say, “I want what Jesus wants.”

The following are the basic steps of vocation discernment.

A vocation is the particular life He has chosen for you, and for which He has specifically created you. He is God and therefore knows which life will best bring about your salvation, your happiness, and His greatest glory. His call will completely fulfill you as a man and a father. A vocation means to be sent by Jesus on a mission to help Him bring His salvation to the world, and so will call for much love, heroism and sacrifice on your part, made possible by the grace of God. The key to discovering your vocation is first to allow Jesus to show His merciful love to you. This love will make you capable of loving Him in return.

It is vital to discover your vocation precisely because your fulfillment, happiness, and ultimately your salvation, depend on accepting that plan which God has known from time immemorial.

Steps of Discernment

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The following are the basic steps of vocation discernment.

Pope John Paul II on His Vocation

“I am often asked, especially by young people, why I became a priest. Maybe some of you would like to ask the same question. Let me try briefly to reply. I must begin by saying that it is impossible to explain entirely. For it remains a mystery, even to myself. How does one explain the ways of God? Yet, I know that, at a certain point in my life, I became convinced that Christ was saying to me what he had said to thousands before me: ‘Come, follow me!’ There was a clear sense that what I heard in my heart was no human voice, nor was it just an idea of my own. Christ was calling me to serve him as a priest.

“And you can probably tell that I am deeply grateful to God for my vocation to the priesthood. Nothing means more to me or gives me greater joy that to celebrate Mass each day and to serve God’s people in the Church. That has been true ever since the day of my ordination as a priest. Nothing has ever changed this, not even becoming Pope.” (Los Angeles, USA, September 14, 1987)

“The priestly vocation is essentially a call to sanctity, in the form that derives from the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Sanctity is intimacy with God; it is the imitation of Christ, poor, chaste and humble; it is unreserved love for souls and self-giving to their true good; it is love for the church which is holy and wants us to be holy, because such is the mission that Christ has entrusted to it. Each one of you must be holy also in order to help your brothers pursue their vocation to sanctity.” (Rome, Italy, October 9, 1984)

“Your wish to become priests, or at least your wish to discover if you are really called. And so the question is a serious one, because you have to prepare thoroughly, with clear intentions and an austere formation.” (Rome, Italy, October 13, 1979)

“His calling is a declaration of love.” Your response is commitment, friendship, and love manifested in the gift of your own life as a definitive following and as a permanent sharing in his mission and in his consecrations. To make up your mind is to love him with all of your soul and all of your heart in such a way that this love becomes the standard and motive of all your actions. From this moment on, serve him as a priest.

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The Holy Eucharist and Vocations

by Reverend John A. Hardon, S.J.

It is impossible to exaggerate the close relationship between the Holy Eucharist and vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

This is only to be expected once we realize that every vocation is a special grace from God, and the greatest source of grace we have is the Eucharist as Presence, Sacrifice, and Communion.

Faith tells us that Christ is really present on our altars, that He really offers Himself in the Mass, and that we really receive Him in Holy Communion. In each case, the Living Christ is now inspiring men and women to give themselves to Him with all their hearts and follow Him in the extension of His Kingdom.

The Eucharist, therefore, is the best way to foster vocations. This means that persons who attend Mass, receive Communion, and invoke Christ in the Blessed Sacrament will obtain light and strength they need.

The Eucharist is also the best way to recognize vocations. Show me a man or woman devoted to the Eucharist and I will show you a person who is an apt subject for the priesthood or the religious life.

The Eucharist is finally the infallible way of preserving one's vocation. This is especially true of devotion to the Real Presence. Is it any wonder that saintly priests and religious over the centuries have been uncommonly devoted to the Blessed Sacrament? They know where to obtain the help they need to remain faithful to their vocations. It is from the same Christ Who called them and Who continues to sustain them in His consecrated service.

Vocations begin with the Eucharist; they are developed through the Eucharist; and they are preserved by the Eucharist. All of this is true because the Eucharist is Jesus Christ, still on earth, working through men and women whom He calls to share His Plan for salvation.

The Lord has loved you into being, and even before the moment of your conception has had a plan for your life. God the Father has created you for some specific mission, and wants to reveal it to you.

The Venerable John Henry Cardinal Newman wrote, “God has created me to do him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission… He has not created me for naught. I shall do good, I shall do His work; I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep His commandments and serve Him in my calling.”

Jesus loves us so much that He invites us to help Him save the world. He alone is the Savior, but He opens up His life to us that we too may share in this work. So the first step in discerning your vocation is to understand that God has created you out of love and in His love invites you to share in His work of salvation.
Pope John Paul II said that, “every vocation to the priestly ministry is an extraordinary gift of God’s love.” The second step in discerning your vocation is opening up to that love. He told His Apostles and now He is saying to you: “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you.”

Thus it is that receiving His love and our vocation are one in the same thing. Because this love is total and complete, without regard to our past mistakes, weaknesses, ignorance and confusion, it is only just that we give everything we can in return.

As the great poet Dante Alighieri wrote, “In his will is our peace.” This is often the step that is most challenging to even the faithful Christian. To say “Yes” to God without condition is to put our lives radically at His disposal. When we say, “Not my will but your will be done,” we are handing over to Him our plans, our ideas, our goals, our very selves. This can be frightening, but it is only in His Will that we will find peace in this life and in the world to come.

His Presence in the Most Blessed Sacrament is a primary way in which we encounter and accept His love and then give ourselves in return. In every Mass, He invites us to unite ourselves to Him in His Sacrifice on Calvary. In the Liturgy of the Word, He cuts us upon with His Word from Holy Scripture which is “sharper than any two edged sword”, so that He can pour His very self into us. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist we see the Word become Flesh before our very eyes, and then receive Him into our flesh in Holy Communion. In every Mass, we join our Blessed Lord in His act of sacrificing Himself for the salvation of the world, and receive from the altar His very Body and Blood. The Mass is the primary place where this giving and acceptance of His love happens. To find your vocation, going to Mass faithfully and often is indispensable.

Seminary: A Place for Discernment...continued

Along with these academic subjects, the seminary will continue to assess the candidate through the discernment process by prayer and spiritual direction. The seminarian will have the opportunity for daily prayer and meditation, Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, days of recollection, and yearly retreats. Each seminarian will be assigned a seminary spiritual director who will help him discern the Holy Spirit’s action and be led to a decision whether the priesthood is truly his lifelong vocation.

The seminary also provides opportunities for the building of the body through sports and recreation. The candidate will come to understand the goodness of community and fraternal support and the value of being a “team player” which are vital to living well the priestly lifestyle.

Most importantly, the seminarian is expected to pray. He is taught to pray liturgically and privately. The candidate is taught how to accomplish his life’s work: to become like Jesus!

Formation in seminary is never wasted. If priesthood is your vocation, it will provide the foundation needed to live a truly wonderful life as God’s servant. If you discern that priesthood is not your vocation, you will have received an excellent education and formation, and then continue as a more faithful Christian to discern where God is calling you.

Thou Art a Priest Forever
J. B. Henri Lacordaire, OP

To live in the midst of the world with no desire for its pleasures…
To be a member of every family, yet belong to none…
To share all sufferings; To penetrate all secrets; to heal all wounds…
To go daily from men to God to offer Him their petitions…
To return from God to men to offer them His Hope…
To have a heart of fire for charity and a heart of bronze for chastity…
To bless and be blest forever.
O God, what a life, and it is yours,
O Priest of Jesus Christ!
Many are called but few choose to answer! Do you believe God may be calling you to serve Him as a priest in the Catholic Church? This is a question that you may be trying to answer as you experience these Quo Vadis Days. Your time is spent well if you are trying to listen for the voice of God as you discern your unique vocation.

You may be looking for a great sign from God that priesthood is definitely what He has in mind for you. But while God works in strange and mysterious ways, He uses ordinary human means invite persons to follow Him. He has already told us in the Scriptures that “My ways are not your ways and my thoughts are not your thoughts”. God often leads us in subtle ways. While we may want more clarity, God leads us gently and sometimes imperceptibly. Who can truly discern matters of the heart?

A man who thinks God might be calling him to be a priest should consider seminary. The seminary is the best place to truly discern God’s Will for your vocation.

The decision to enter the seminary is not a final decision to become a priest! But the seminary is equipped with the personnel and tools necessary to clarify and deepen your discernment of God’s Will.

First and foremost, the seminary will give you the time necessary to decide if priesthood is your true vocation in life. It is a good testing ground. For men who have graduated high school, seminary lasts for eight years. For those who graduated from college, a pre-theology program can last from one to two years, depending upon the needs of a particular candidate. Following a pre-theology program, a young man will spend another four years studying graduate theology leading to a Masters degree in Divinity.

The aim of the seminary is the formation of body, mind, and spirit. To this end, the seminarian in formation will study Catholic Theology, Sacred Scripture, Church History, Canon Law, Moral Theology, Asccetical Theology, pastoral counseling, and other subjects.

Since a vocation is not our will but a calling from God, we must attune ourselves to His voice so that we can hear His call.

**Prayer**

Prayer is how we primarily listen to the Lord’s voice. Oftentimes we know we should pray, but don’t know how or where to start. If you don’t know how to pray, don’t worry. The Lord longs to be with you in prayer and will help you. He has already helped us through His Church by showing us the primary ingredients to a life of prayer. The first is liturgical prayer. This is the public prayer of the Church, the greatest expression of which is Holy Mass. All of the Sacraments, like Confession, are liturgical prayer, as well as the Liturgy of the Hours, sometimes called the “Divine Office” and Eucharistic Adoration. We also need to develop habits of personal prayer, especially meditation and contemplation. Prayer which honors our Blessed Lady is indispensable for finding your vocation. The Church and the saints for centuries have made powerful use of the Rosary, knowing that Mary, the perfect example of following one’s vocation, will lead us to find her Son’s will if we only ask.

Attuning ourselves to the voice of the Lord also means becoming aware of the obstacles to hearing His voice. Sin and noise are the two major obstacles which get in the way of hearing His voice.
Sin is perhaps the most obvious obstacle because it is our willful turning away from God. Thus sin can never be seen as just the breaking of rules. Sin harms and can even destroy our relationship with the God who created us, hung on the Cross for us, and who is calling us to follow Him. In discernment, sin is like mud that gets in our spiritual eyes and ears making us blind and deaf to the Lord.

To answer God’s call in life we must be free to say “yes,” which requires freedom from sin. We are not born free nor can we become free on our own. Only Jesus can free us. Through the Cross He conquered sin and death; through His priests He now transmits that saving power in the Sacrament of Confession. We will never know our vocation and be able to respond generously and freely to it without regular Confession. Receiving this great Sacrament at least every two weeks and never less often than once a month will give those who wish to respond to their vocation the freedom to do so. From this Sacrament comes not only the forgiveness of sins but also a generous outpouring of sanctifying grace into the soul. This sanctifying grace is Jesus’ own divine life, which, if allowed to consume your whole being, will show you His will.

After we have allowed Him to free us from mortal or serious sins we still have the ongoing work of attachment to venial sin. Attachment to sin is that desire to sin even if we don’t follow through on the evil act - wishing we could get away with it. St. Francis de Sales likens attachment to sin as the Israelites in the desert who sometimes longed for the life of Egypt even though it was the place of their slavery. Those attachments, even if they don’t spawn sin, keep us back spiritually by preventing our complete gift of self to Jesus and desire to do his will.

The Voice of the World
The voice of the world is a voice that is under the dominion of the devil, and thus could be considered an extension of his voice. It calls us to put our trust in the things of this world: prestige, money, fame, relationships, importance. It is the voice we hear in advertising, on TV shows, and in much of the music on the radio. The “noise” mentioned before is part of the voice of the world. This voice tempts us to forget about Heaven, our salvation and the Lord’s call in our life. The alluring things that appeal to the flesh often drown out the voice of Jesus and His love.

The Voice of the Devil
The voice of the devil is that voice that is always trying to lead us away from Jesus and to keep us enslaved to him. His voice always tells us to doubt the Lord’s goodness and not to trust in Him. It is the voice that says, “I know more than He does.” It is the voice that tells us to say “no” to Jesus. The most obvious example of the voice of the devil is the temptation to sin, but he can be very cunning, and as St. Paul says can appear as an angel of light. If the devil cannot get us to listen to sin, he then will try to get us to choose something that, while good in itself, is not the good that Jesus wants for us. In other words, the devil’s voice can try to make us choose a less perfect life than that which God has prepared for us.

Be Not Afraid
Confusion, frustration and sometimes outright rebellion can be part of the discernment process. Nevertheless Jesus tells us, “Be not afraid. I am here.” His love can conquer everything, and if we open ourselves to the power of His grace, we will come to find our vocation. Jesus’ desire to tell us is infinitely greater than our desire to know. We need but say with simple hearts, “Jesus, I trust in Thee.”

Step 3: Continued...

Step 6: Continued
In the process of discernment we should become aware of four voices and need to learn to distinguish them from one another. These four voices are the Lord’s, our own, the world’s, and the devil’s. Being attuned to the voice of God, as the previous steps have led us toward, will make the other voices easier to separate. It is not always easy to tell these voices apart from one another, therefore discernment requires time, patience and perseverance in the face of struggle.

The Voice of the Lord
The Lord’s voice is that which is communicating His constant and unfailing love to us. We hear His voice through Divine Revelation, both in Holy Scripture and in Holy Tradition, and in the Magisterium of His Church, urging us to do that which is good, to trust in Him and to sacrifice out of love. Discouragement and confusion are never the voice of Jesus, which expresses courage and truth as he calls us to a deeper conversion in the face of sin.

With regard to your vocation, be assured that He is calling you, as a man, to one vocation - either the priesthood, consecrated life or marriage. His voice is never deceptive and He will give you the graces to accomplish whatever that particular vocation is. When we are tempted to think that Jesus is calling us to a life that we do not want or cannot accomplish, it is not His voice that we are hearing, but that of another.

The Voice of Oneself
Our own voice is expressed in the deep down desires of the heart. With maturity comes an ordered awareness of these desires and the ability to fulfill them. As a man you are designed by God to desire to be heroic, to change the world for the better, and to love and serve the Lord Jesus with all that you are by loving and serving his creation. Be assured that because it was He who put those desires in your heart it is He who will allow you to fulfill them. Sometimes, however, our deepest desires are in conflict. The sinfulness of our fallen nature can clamor loudly. Sometimes our voice is in conflict with the voice of the Lord. We are always in need of deeper conversion.

Noise
Noise is another obstacle in discernment. We live in a world of noise and are often already immersed in it as we begin the process. Habits of excessively watching television, having idle conversations with others, playing video or computer games and listening to music all the time contribute to the noise around us. Rarely do we have silence, either exterior or interior, throughout the day. In fact when we do come into contact with silence it often leads to discomfort and a desire for more noise. St. Ignatius of Loyola, the spiritual master of discernment wrote, “the voice of God, having once fully penetrated the heart, becomes strong as the tempest and loud as the thunder, but before reaching the heart it is as gentle as a light breath which scarcely agitates the air. It shrinks from noise, and is silent amid agitation.” Therefore, if you want to know your vocation, begin to develop habits of silence. Limit time spent watching television, playing video and computer games, using the Internet, and listening to music. The only way to do this is to TURN IT OFF. While none of these things are evil in themselves, used without the virtue of moderation they create spiritual static in our hearts and dull our spiritual sensitivity. In addition to eliminating noise we must foster silence through habits of quiet prayer, reading—especially the works of our spiritual tradition—and just thinking and pondering. Do not fear being alone with your thoughts, for that is where the voice of God can be heard.
Even once we know of God’s love and desire for our happiness and have begun to realize His specific will for us it is not uncommon to feel unable or unwilling to give ourselves completely to Him. In order to persevere in following our vocation it is necessary to understand and deal with the things that keep us from giving our entire selves lovingly over to Him.

Past Hurts
Past hurts can complicate the discernment process. The result of another’s sin against us, they impair our ability to trust and follow the will of God, an act demanding of much trust. Often taking the forms of abuse, neglect or absence of a parent or rejection by friends, they not only decrease our ability to trust, but also interfere with the ability to love others and to accept love. We may find forgiveness difficult because we haven’t yet dealt with the just anger we have about those things, but is absolutely necessary for a complete gift of ourselves to Christ. The strength to do so will come from Him who makes all things new (Rev 21:5). Have confidence in Jesus who comes to free you and make your life new. Find a priest, whom you can trust and open up to, so that he may pray with you and offer counsel. Talking through pain privately with someone trustworthy can bring an enormous amount of healing.

Step 4: Cooperate with Him in Freeing You to Say “Yes”

Virtue
Virtue is a habit of doing that which is good. It comes from the Latin “vir” meaning “man” and conveys true masculinity and strength. Virtue is a habit, that is, not something we do now and again, but regularly and without thought. Living a virtuous life means striving to be in accord with God’s commandments. Our personal relationship with Jesus relies heavily upon our desire to be virtuous men, for he told us, “If you love me, keep my commandments.”

Asceticism
Asceticism, the practice of making sacrifices for God, makes us more willing receptors of his life within us. Asceticism also sharpens our spiritual senses, which aids in resisting temptation to sin. True love means true sacrifice for another. When a man loves a woman he is less concerned with his personal desires and wants more to fulfill hers. So too, as we grow in our love of God, we should seek more to fulfill His desires than our own selfish ones. Sacrifices are not made just for the sake of giving up something out of obedience, but are gifts of self that stem from love. In its most basic sense asceticism means checking one’s own will in order to embrace the Lord’s will - to curb our earthly desires, such as comfort, attention and material goods, so we are free to desire the will of God.

In addition to giving up something, resisting temptation and doing that which we do not desire because it is the will of God is an ascetic act. We do not do ascetical works to earn Jesus’ love or grace; we do them to accept more deeply His love and grace that is already offered. Asceticism will help to sharpen our sensitivity to Him and His voice.

Step 5: Continued...
The next step then is to respond to Christ’s love with all that we are. We seek to give ourselves entirely to Jesus through a deep, personal relationship. In order to understand the meaning of your life and what you are supposed to do with it this personal relationship is necessary. Another way of putting it is to ask yourself, “Do I know Jesus, or do I only know about Him?” It is in this relationship with Him as Lord and Redeemer and as His intimate friend where we can hear His call to us.

Loving Jesus means striving after holiness. Our first vocation, the demand for holiness was placed upon us at our Baptism. Holiness means living the life of God here and now. Within this call to holiness emerges the more specific call to a state of life in the Church: priesthood, consecrated life, or marriage. The life of holiness involves prayer (loving conversation with God), virtue (living God’s life) and asceticism (opening up oneself to God’s life).

**Prayer**

Prayer is our vital, daily and intimate contact with the Lord. It entails the lifting of our hearts and minds to Him who is with us throughout the day. Prayer is more about listening than speaking to Him, but it involves both. A man who desires to know his vocation must be a man of committed, daily prayer.

A personal relationship is built upon personal prayer. Therefore you must make time in your day to be with Him exclusively and not just when it is convenient. We make time for friends and important people, and there is no better friend or more important person in the life of a Christian than Jesus Christ himself.

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**Fear**

Fear inhibits our complete gift of self to Jesus. This fear is not the awe and wonder of holy fear, but rather a crippling fear that comes not from God but from the devil – a state in which it is impossible to discern. The fears can be varied and many: “I hear Him knocking at the door of my heart, and I’m scared to say ‘Yes’ to Him.” “I’m afraid to move away from home and my family.” “Will I be happy as a priest?” “I’ve done too many terrible things to be a priest.” “My parents want grandchildren and they won’t have any if I become a priest.” “What will be left of me if I give myself totally over to Him?” “My friends think I’m crazy for thinking about it.”

Jesus says over and over again, “Be not afraid!” Our beloved Pope John Paul the Great echoed this line frequently, and our Holy Father Pope Benedict has continued it, because it is so needed. We live in a world of fear. St. John tells us, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear” (1Jn. 4:18). Jesus loves perfectly and Jesus casts out fear; He can put fears to rest. He can do this when together with Him we face them with courage and bring them to prayer.

Dealing with sin, past hurts and fear will free us and purify our love for Him so that His voice can begin to resonate deep within our hearts. It will clear the way to finding your vocation. When you hear His voice and put yourself before His presence you will be in a position to say, “Yes, Lord Jesus. I say ‘Yes’. Be it done unto me according to Your will. Yes Lord, send me.”