

Sunday of the Good Shepherd. Let us pray for Priestly Vocations

This 4th Sunday of Easter, called Good Shepherd Sunday is the annual day of prayer for vocations to the priesthood. As we Catholics ponder Scriptures which tell of the rich sacramental life begun by Jesus, we offer prayers that God will abundantly bless us with priests to further His shepherding ministry in today's parishes.

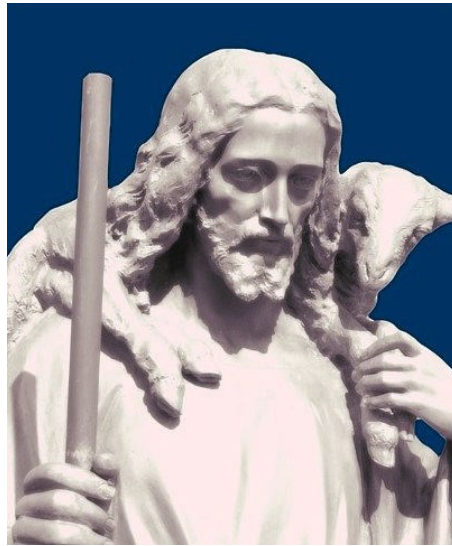
We are blessed with priests from Canada and abroad who serve us generously, but currently we have no seminarians, men who are preparing for priestly service.

In fostering vocations, the role of family—especially parents—is crucial. Speaking positively to their sons about the priesthood, encouraging children to be open to whatever God might ask of them in life and explicitly praying for priestly vocations in the church are some of the ways parents can help create the family climate in which seeds of priestly vocations might be nurtured.

In his letter for this year's 58th Day of Prayer for Priestly Vocations (April 25), Pope Francis considers the example of St. Joseph and his openness to a call from the Heavenly Father:

God looks on the heart (cf. 1 Sam 16:7), and in Saint Joseph he recognized the heart of a father, able to give and generate life in the midst of daily routines. Vocations have this same goal: to beget and renew lives every day.

The priesthood and the consecrated life greatly need these qualities nowadays, in times marked



by fragility but also by the sufferings due to the pandemic, which has spawned uncertainties and fears about the future and the very meaning of life.

In Saint Joseph's case, four dreams that revealed God's designs for him changed his life in an unimaginable way:

Joseph's dreams led him into experiences he would never have imagined. The first of these upended his betrothal, but made him the father of the Messiah; the second caused him to flee to Egypt, but saved the life of his family. After the third, which foretold his return to his native land, a fourth dream made him change plans once again, bringing him to Nazareth, the place where Jesus would begin his preaching of the Kingdom of God.

Amid all these upheavals, Joseph found the courage to follow God's will. So too in a vocation: God's call always urges us to take a first step, to give ourselves, to press forward. There can be no faith

without risk. Only by abandoning ourselves confidently to grace, setting aside our own programmes and comforts, can we truly say "yes" to God.

Saint Joseph is an outstanding example of acceptance of God's plans. Yet his was an active acceptance: never reluctant or resigned... May he help everyone, especially young people who are discerning, to make God's dreams for them come true. May he inspire in them the courage to say "yes" to the Lord who always surprises and never disappoints.

In closing, I ask prayers for Bishop Bourgon who is engaged these days in a spiritual retreat and for me; we both celebrate on the Feast of St. Mark our anniversary of ordination as bishops (his in 2016 and mine in 1995). May our service to God's people always be supportive of priests and of men seeking to serve Christ and his Church as future priests.

God bless you all.

H. E. Terrence Prendergast, S.J.
Apostolic administrator

Our Sincerest Thanks to All of You!

On April 13, the Crown prosecutor withdrew all criminal charges against Father Hervé Sauvé, Hélène Gauthier, Liz McInnis and myself. With this short message, I want to thank all those who have shown us support during this ordeal. Your support and prayers have been of great comfort to us. May the Lord take note of your generosity and may He bless you.

With all our gratitude, on behalf of the four of us,
Rémi Lessard, priest