

VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2013

Vocations as a sign of hope founded in faith

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Check out the new website for Diocesan Vocations www.vocations.ie for contact details for all diocesan vocations directors, news and information and useful links.

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These resources have been prepared by Fr Willie Purcell and Ms Brenda Drumm of the Council for Vocations of the Irish Bishops' Conference. Columba Centre Maynooth Co Kildare.

The World Day of Prayer for Vocations or Vocations Sunday as it is more commonly known will be celebrated on Sunday 21 April 2013.

The theme chosen for this year is: *Vocations as a sign of hope founded in faith.*

This is the 50th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, occurring during the Year of Faith, which is marking the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. While the Council was sitting, Pope Paul VI instituted this worldwide day of prayer to God, asking him to continue to send workers for his Church (cf. *Mt 9:38*).

The following resources have been made available in order to promote Vocations Sunday 2013:

- Papal Message
- Vocation Voices
- Social Media Resources
- Prayers
- Useful web and social media links
- Posters
- Parish Newsletter Notices
- Homily Notes
- General Intercessions
- Prayer Service
- Family take-home page

OUR NEW POPE

We celebrate Vocations Sunday 2013 with a new Pope. Habemus Papam - We have a Pope - Tá Pápa again. Pope Francis was inaugurated on 19 March and becomes the 266th Pope.



Already he has given us much food for thought :

“In him (St Joseph), dear friends, we learn how to respond to God’s call, readily and willingly, but we also see the core of the Christian vocation, which is Christ! “

“We must not be afraid of goodness or even tenderness!”

“Today too, amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others.”

The above are excerpts from his homily at the Mass for his inauguration.

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MESSAGE FOR VOCATIONS SUNDAY Theme: *Vocations as a sign of hope founded in faith*

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,
On the occasion of the 50th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, to be held on 21 April 2013, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, I want to invite you to reflect on the theme: “*Vocations as a sign of hope founded in faith*”, which happily occurs during the [Year of Faith](#), the year marking the 50th anniversary of the opening of the [Second Vatican Council](#). While the Council was in session, the Servant of God, [Paul VI](#), instituted this day of worldwide prayer to God the Father, asking him to continue to send workers for his Church (cf. *Mt 9:38*). “The problem of having a sufficient number of priests”, as the Pope stated at the time, “has an immediate impact on all of the faithful: not simply because they depend on it for the religious future of Christian society, but also because this problem is the precise and inescapable indicator of the vitality of faith and love of individual parish and diocesan communities, and the evidence of the moral health of Christian families. Wherever numerous vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life are to be found, that is where people are living the Gospel with generosity” (Paul VI, *Radio Message*, 11 April 1964).

During the intervening decades, the various Christian communities all over the world have gathered each year on the Fourth Sunday of Easter, united in prayer, to ask from God the gift of holy vocations and to propose once again, for the reflection of all, the urgent need

to respond to the divine call. Indeed, this significant annual event has fostered a strong commitment to placing the importance of vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life ever more at the centre of the spirituality, prayer and pastoral action of the faithful.

Hope is the expectation of something positive in the future, yet at the same time it must sustain our present existence, which is often marked by dissatisfaction and failures. On what is our hope founded? Looking at the history of the people of Israel, recounted in the Old Testament, we see one element that constantly emerges, especially in times of particular difficulty like the time of the Exile, an element found especially in the writings of the prophets, namely remembrance of God’s promises to the Patriarchs: a remembrance that invites us to imitate the exemplary attitude of Abraham, who, as Saint Paul reminds us, “believed, hoping against hope, that he would become ‘the father of many nations,’ according to what was said, ‘Thus shall your descendants be’” (*Rom 4:18*). One consoling and enlightening truth which emerges from the whole of salvation history, then, is God’s faithfulness to the covenant that he entered into, renewing it whenever man infringed it through infidelity and sin, from the time of the flood (cf. *Gen 8:21-22*) to that of the Exodus and the journey through the desert (cf. *Dt 9:7*). That same faithfulness led him to seal the new and eternal covenant with man, through the blood of his

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Son, who died and rose again for our salvation.

At every moment, especially the most difficult ones, the Lord's faithfulness is always the authentic driving force of salvation history, which arouses the hearts of men and women and confirms them in the hope of one day reaching the "promised land". This is where we find the sure foundation of every hope: God never abandons us and he remains true to his word. For that reason, in every situation, whether positive or negative, we can nourish a firm hope and pray with the psalmist: "Only in God can my soul find rest; my hope comes from him" (*Ps* 62:6). To have hope, therefore, is the equivalent of trusting in God who is faithful, who keeps the promises of the covenant. Faith and hope, then, are closely related. "Hope" in fact is a key word in biblical faith, to the extent that in certain passages the words "faith" and "hope" seem to be interchangeable. In this way, the *Letter to the Hebrews* makes a direct connection between the "unwavering profession of hope" (10:23) and the "fullness of faith" (10:22). Similarly, when the *First Letter of Saint Peter* exhorts the Christians to be always ready to give an account of the "logos" – the meaning and rationale – of their hope (cf. 3:15), "hope" is the equivalent of "faith" (*Spe Salvi*, 2).

Dear Brothers and Sisters, what exactly is God's faithfulness, to which we adhere with unwavering hope? It is his love! He, the Father, pours his love into our innermost self through the Holy Spirit (cf. *Rom* 5:5). And this love, fully manifested in Jesus Christ, engages with our existence and demands a response in terms of what each individual wants to do with his or her life, and what he or she is prepared to offer in order to live it to the full. The love of God sometimes follows paths one could never have imagined, but it always reaches those who are willing to be found. Hope is nourished, then, by this certainty: "We ourselves have known and believed in the love that God has for us" (*1 Jn* 4:16). This deep, demanding love, which penetrates well below the surface, gives us courage; it gives us hope in our life's journey and in our future; it makes us trust in ourselves, in history and in other people. I want to speak particularly to the young and I say to you once again: "What would your life be without this love? God takes care of men and women from creation to the end of time, when he will bring his plan of salvation to completion. In the Risen Lord we have the certainty of our hope!" (*Address to Young People of the Diocese of San Marino-Montefeltro*, 19 June 2011). Just as he did during his earthly existence, so today the risen Jesus walks along the streets of our life and sees us immersed in our activities, with all our desires and our needs. In the midst of our everyday circumstances he contin-

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ues to speak to us; he calls us to live our life with him, for only he is capable of satisfying our thirst for hope. He lives now among the community of disciples that is the Church, and still today calls people to follow him. The call can come at any moment. Today too, Jesus continues to say, “Come, follow me” (*Mk 10:21*). Accepting his invitation means no longer choosing our own path. Following him means immersing our own will in the will of Jesus, truly giving him priority, giving him pride of place in every area of our lives: in the family, at work, in our personal interests, in ourselves. It means handing over our very lives to Him, living in profound intimacy with Him, entering through Him into communion with the Father in the Holy Spirit, and consequently with our brothers and sisters. This communion of life with Jesus is the privileged “setting” in which we can experience hope and in which life will be full and free.

Vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life are born out of the experience of a personal encounter with Christ, out of sincere and confident dialogue with him, so as to enter into his will. It is necessary, therefore, to grow in the experience of faith, understood as a profound relationship with Jesus, as inner attentiveness to his voice which is heard deep within us. This process, which enables us to respond positively to God’s call, is possible in Christian communities where the faith is lived intensely, where generous wit-

ness is given of adherence to the Gospel, where there is a strong sense of mission which leads people to make the total gift of self for the Kingdom of God, nourished by recourse to the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and by a fervent life of prayer. This latter “must on the one hand be something very personal, an encounter between my intimate self and God, the living God. On the other hand it must be constantly guided and enlightened by the great prayers of the Church and of the saints, by liturgical prayer, in which the Lord teaches us again and again how to pray properly.” (*Spe Salvi*, 34).

Deep and constant prayer brings about growth in the faith of the Christian community, in the unceasingly renewed certainty that God never abandons his people and that he sustains them by raising up particular vocations – to the priesthood and the consecrated life – so that they can be signs of hope for the world. Indeed, priests and religious are called to give themselves unconditionally to the People of God, in a service of love for the Gospel and the Church, serving that firm hope which can only come from an openness to the divine. By means of the witness of their faith and apostolic zeal, therefore, they can transmit, especially to the younger generations, a strong desire to respond generously and promptly to Christ who calls them to follow him more closely. Whenever a disciple of Jesus accepts the divine call to dedicate himself to the priestly ministry or to the consecrat-

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ed life, we witness one of the most mature fruits of the Christian community, which helps us to look with particular trust and hope to the future of the Church and to her commitment to evangelization. This constantly requires new workers to preach the Gospel, to celebrate the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. So let there be committed priests, who know how to accompany young people as “companions on the journey”, helping them, on life’s often tortuous and difficult path, to recognize Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. *Jn 14:6*), telling them, with Gospel courage, how beautiful it is to serve God, the Christian community, one’s brothers and sisters. Let there be priests who manifest the fruitfulness of an enthusiastic commitment, which gives a sense of completeness to their lives, because it is founded on faith in him who loved us first (cf. *1 Jn 4:19*).

Equally, I hope that young people, who are presented with so many superficial and ephemeral options, will be able to cultivate a desire for what is truly worthy, for lofty objectives, radical choices, service to others in imitation of Jesus. Dear young people, do not be afraid to follow him and to walk the demanding and courageous paths of charity and generous commitment! In that way you will be happy to serve, you will be witnesses of a joy that the world cannot give, you will be living flames of an infinite and eternal love, you will learn to “give an account of

the hope that is within you” (*1 Pt 3:15*)!
From the Vatican, 6 October 2012
BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

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VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2013

VOCATIONS SUNDAY & SOCIAL MEDIA

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There are a number of resources available for use on social media in the run up to and on Vocations Sunday on 21 April.

1. A Facebook Timeline image which has been sent to all Diocesan Vocation Directors for use to promote Vocations Sunday.
2. Posters and the text resources included here may also be used on Facebook and Twitter



TWEETS:

We have prepared a series of tweets which can be used for Vocations Sunday 2013 and we are suggesting the hashtag #vocations2013

Tweet 1:

Message for Vocations Sunday 2013 on the theme: Vocations as a sign of hope founded in faith http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/vocations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20121006_l-vocations_en.html #vocations2013

Tweet 2:

The harvest indeed is great but the labourers are few - pray the Lord of the harvest to send more labourers to his field. #vocations2013

Tweet 3:

We are praying for our Holy Father Pope Francis and that young people will be inspired by him to say yes to God! #vocations2013

Tweet 4:

Today is the 50th World Day of Prayer for Vocations on the theme Vocations as a sign of hope founded in faith. #vocations2013

Tweet 5:

Jesus continues to call people today. He continues to say "Come, follow me" (Mk 10:21) #vocation2013

Tweet 6:

"Vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life are born out of a personal encounter with Christ.." - BXV1 #vocation2013

Tweet 7:

The process, which enables us to respond positively to God's call, is possible in Christian communities where the faith is lived intensely...

All these tweets have been checked and they are either exactly at or just under the Twitter limit of 140 characters.

VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2013

PRAYERS FOR VOCATIONS

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Check out the website for Vocations Ireland www.vocationsireland.com for contact details for religious orders vocations directors, news, information and useful links.

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Prayer for Discernment

God our Father,
You have a plan for each one of us,
You hold out to us a future full of hope.
Give us the wisdom of your Spirit
so that we can see the shape of your plan
in the gifts you have given us,
and in the circumstances of our daily lives.
Give us the freedom of your Spirit,
to seek you with all our hearts,
and to choose your will above all else.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

(DVC- Based on Jeremiah 29:11-13)

Prayer to Our Lady for Vocations

Most holy Virgin, who without hesitation
offered yourself to the Almighty
for the carrying out of his plan of salvation,
pour trust into the hearts of young people
so that there may always be zealous
pastors
who are able to guide the Christian people
on the way of life,
and consecrated souls who may know how
to witness,
in chastity, poverty, and obedience,
to the freeing presence of your risen Son.
Amen.

(Pope John Paul II , Message for Vocations Sunday 2001)

Vocation Prayer for Parents

Loving God, you have given us the privilege as well as the responsibility of being loving parents. In the name of Jesus, we ask you to guide us as we invite our children to hear your call to service and leadership in our church.

May our children respond with deep faith and generosity to the needs of God's people. Help us to be a source of encouragement to our children by our own desire to be committed people who serve with love and enthusiasm.

(NRVC - Australia)

Parish Prayer for Vocation

Lord Jesus,
you said to your disciples:
"The harvest indeed is great
but the labourers are few."

We ask that we may know
and follow the vocation
to which you have called us.

We pray for those called to serve:
those whom you have called,
those you are calling now,
and those you will call in the future.

May they be open and responsive
to the call of serving your people.
Amen

VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2013

USEFUL CONTACTS AND LINKS

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Bishops' Council for Vocations

Columba Centre
Maynooth
Co Kildare
E: nationalvocations@gmail.com
W: www.vocations.ie

The Council for Vocations of the Irish Bishops' Conference works in the area of promoting a culture of vocations in the Irish Church and advises the hierarchy on vocations matters. The Chair of the Council is Bishop Donal McKeown.

Vocations Ireland

St Mary's
Bloomfield Avenue
Donnybrook
Dublin 4
E: info@vocationsireland.com
W: www.vocationsireland.com

Vocations Ireland presents Religious life as a creative opportunity to live the mission of Christ in today's world. It provides information about missionary and religious life as well as support, resources and in-service opportunities for those in vocation ministry. It also provides personal accompaniment and discernment programmes for prospective candidates.

Saint Joseph's Young Priests Society

23 Merrion Square
Dublin 2
E: sjyps@eircom.net
W: www.sjyps.com

This is an Irish lay organisation founded in 1895 with branches in every diocese in Ireland. Its members promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life and assist students financially, at home and abroad.

Useful links:

- ⇒ www.vocations.ie
- ⇒ www.vocationsireland.com
- ⇒ www.catholicbishops.ie
- ⇒ www.vocation.com
- ⇒ www.sjyps.com
- ⇒ www.ncdvd.org
- ⇒ www.exploreatway.net
- ⇒ www.vatican.va



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PARISH NEWSLETTER NOTICES

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For use on Sunday April 14th

Do you believe that God calls all people to spread the Good News?
How are you responding to the call?
Do you want some help?

Next Sunday is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

Come and join with the parish in prayer for special blessings that each person will be strengthened in their vocation.



JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

For use on Sunday April 21st

Today, the Fourth Sunday of Easter or Good Shepherd Sunday is a special day for everyone in our parish.

We celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

We ask that we may be filled with joy and the Holy Spirit as we carry on the mission of Jesus, our Good Shepherd.

Let us pray for one another that we may be strengthened in our Christian vocations as married and single people, priests, deacons and religious.

May our young people listen to God's call and be encouraged to respond generously.



VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2013

FAMILY TAKE-HOME PAGE

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For use in the home

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: We gather

All: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Leader: God calls each of us by name. As a sign of our willingness to listen to God's call let us each respond "Here I am, Lord!" when you hear your name called.

(Leader says each person's name aloud and the person responds.)

Prayer

Jesus, we want to follow you. Help us to listen to your Word and to hear your voice in our hearts and in each other. We want to be near

you forever. Amen.

Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of John (John 10:27-30)

Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

I give them eternal life, and no one can ever take them from me or the Father.

The Father and I are one." The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Sharing

Take time to share about the ways Jesus talks to us and how we listen. What helps us follow Jesus more closely?

Prayers

(Offer personal intentions)

The Lord's Prayer

Sign of Peace (Share a sign of peace with each person.)

Closing Prayer

Dear God, You made everyone special in their own way.

Please help us to find our vocation in life. Guide us to choose the right path in serving you.

Amen.

Taken from

Dear God, Open My Heart



VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2013

HOMILY NOTES

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During Mass some years ago, a priest was using the penitential rite for the blessing of people with holy water. As he began the rite, the priest realised that the sacramentary (the book used for prayers in the liturgy, today the New Roman Missal) had been left in the sacristy. Without a word, the priest immediately left to retrieve the book in the sacristy. In the meantime, the little server, not knowing what had happened to Father, picked up the holy water container and went up and down the aisle blessing all the people! The people were smiling and making the sign of the cross. When the priest returned, he laughed and said: "I couldn't have done a better job myself," and continued with the Mass. In this true story, we readily understand how the little server saw a need and then felt called to do something about it. The boy had seen this holy action celebrated before – one that reminds us of our baptism – and he was ready to get involved.

On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we are reminded, as baptised Catholics and all Christians, that our central vocation is both a call to holiness and to service. "Holiness . . . is the vocation of our times, of all of us," said Pope Paul VI in Vatican Council II. Pope John Paul II constantly called upon young people and all of us to give our lives in service as followers of Jesus Christ.

We know that all vocations flow from baptism. But what do we mean by the word "vocation?" A good understanding of the word "vocation" might well be considered within the following sequence of statements:

- 1) Through the sacrament of baptism each person receives a "call" or vocation.
- 2) God calls all who are baptised to holiness and service.
- 3) This call is lived as a single, married, ordained or consecrated person.



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HOMILY NOTES 2

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In this last statement, we understand that “vocation” is to be lived as a life commitment. Those who are single have responded to the vocation of joyfully acknowledging that God has called them to be a prophetic witness of what it means to be a single, loving, committed Christian in today’s world. Those who are married have responded to the vocation of joyfully relying upon a God who has called them to a shared witness of what it means to have a covenantal commitment of love in today’s world.

Those who are consecrated and ordained have responded to the vocation of joyfully journeying with God’s people as priests, sisters, brothers and others who have promised and vowed to grow in faith and holiness while helping God’s people to do the same. In each vocational commitment we are called to be loving and supportive of one another.

As we celebrate this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, the Gospel passage could not have been better cho-

sen. In the story of the Good Shepherd, as recounted in John 10, we listen to the words of Christ: “My sheep hear my voice and they follow me.” This passage confirms the contemporary story of a man who went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The man tells of how in the city of Bethlehem he watched two shepherds caring for their flocks of sheep. To his amazement, at the end of the day, he watched the shepherds put their respective flocks in the same cave—the sheep intermingling with each other. Wondering how the shepherds would ever be able to separate the sheep, he arose early the next morning to observe. The pilgrim watched while one of the shepherds walked some distance from the cave. At a certain point, the shepherd gave a particular call and immediately his flock ran out to him. The sheep knew the shepherd’s voice. Together, shepherd and sheep went on their way. The question is posed to you and me. Do we have a familiarity with the voice of the Good Shepherd in our lives?

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HOMILY NOTES 3

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When God calls us to a commitment of single, married, consecrated or ordained life have we prepared ourselves to respond? And are we prepared to continue that response every day of our lives?

Ultimately, a vocation is not defined by “doing” but rather by “being.” We are called to live our lives in a generous response to the One who gave us life. Being in the presence of the Father, sharing in the mission of Christ, and witnessing in the power of the Holy Spirit is what being a follower of the Good Shepherd is all about.

How do we prepare ourselves? Personal and communal prayer, frequent reception of the sacraments, the reading of scripture, educating ourselves in the faith, and being of service to one another are ways in which we can more readily discern the Good Shepherd’s beckoning voice in our daily lives.

So let us pray for vocations in our Church. We need committed men and women who believe that their call to

single, married, ordained or consecrated life is from God. We need to support each response of vocation and make sure each kind of vocation is an encouraged and viable option for our children.

On a personal note, I thank God for the gift of your vocations as I thank God for the gift of my own vocation in serving you as priest. Thank you for the many ways you witness God’s love to me in this parish. My friends, the Good Shepherd calls each of us by name. May we respond to that call with the familiarity of truly knowing, loving and serving the One who calls us?

ENDS



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GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

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For use on Sunday 21 April 2013

Priest: Let us seek the loving care of our Good Shepherd as we present the needs of our Church and world.

Reader: After each prayer, please respond: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

⇒ That all Church leaders will be filled with the Holy Spirit as they guide us, we pray:

⇒ That leaders of nations may work together to bring about greater justice and lasting peace, we pray:

⇒ That we, the People of God, may listen intently to the call of the Good Shepherd and have the courage to be witnesses of the Gospel as we live out our baptismal commitment, we pray:

⇒ That those who are suffering may find comfort and encouragement so they may know joy, we pray:

⇒ That our youth may find direction in their lives as they discern God's call to priesthood, consecrated life, married life, single life, or the diaconate, we pray:

⇒ For those who have died (especially . . .) may they be filled with the joy of everlasting life, we pray:

Priest: Loving God, we know of your gentle care for us.

We trust that you will give us what we need.

Shepherd us to follow in your ways now and forever.

Amen.



VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2013

PRAYER SERVICE

WEBSITE

Check out the new website for Diocesan Vocations www.vocations.ie for contact details for all diocesan vocations directors, news and information and useful links.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

You can find and like us on Facebook for an easy way to share our updates and news on your own Facebook page - Diocesan Vocations Ireland

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

You can follow us on Twitter and join in the conversation about vocations. Our Twitter handle is @NVocations and use the hashtag #vocations.

This may be used in churches and by groups in the lead up to Vocations Sunday 2013:

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: O Lord, open our lips

All: And our mouth will declare your praise.

Song

Opening Prayer

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Loving God,
You call us your Beloved
and welcome us into your flock.

On this day of prayer for vocations,
give joy to your servants
and help us
to listen and respond to
your call.

May the grace of the resurrection empower us to live a life of loving service.

We ask this through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Psalmody
Reading
Reflection

General Intercessions

The Lord's Prayer

Offering with Blessing
We offer to you, O God,
our hearts filled with love.

By our vocation of (marriage, single life, priest, brother, sister, deacon, consecrated virgin) we dedicate our lives to you and ask for a blessing.

Blessing with Sprinkling

- May Jesus, the Good Shepherd, fill your hearts with joy. Amen.
- May Jesus, the Good Shepherd, guide your steps all the days of your life. Amen.
- May Jesus, the Good Shepherd, lead you to eternal life. Amen.



VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2013

PRAYER SERVICE (Continued)

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Blessing over Assembly

May God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit Bless you with abiding peace. Amen.

Sign of Peace

Concluding Song

Psalmody

Suggestion: Psalm 100

Reading Acts 13:14, 43-52

Reflection

Invite married couple, a single person, a priest, brother, sister, deacon to share how his/her vocation blesses and challenges him/her.

General Intercessions

See General Intercessions in other section of this document

Adoration and Benediction

Ask married couples to stand and pray the offering. Invite single adults to stand and pray the offering.

A sung blessing may be used during the sprinkling.

Ends



VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2013
Vocations as a sign of hope founded in faith

**A GOOD TIME TO BE A PRIEST OR RELIGIOUS?
WE THINK SO!**



“Today too, amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others.”

Pope Francis

www.vocations.ie | www.vocationsireland.com