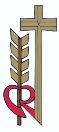


Vocations and Prayer



The Catholic Magazine on Vocation Ministry

January - March 2016

#103 Vol.XXV No.1



Family: A Workshop of Hope



Editorial

Good News for the World 3

The Gospel of the Family

Creating day by day an environment of faith and love.

Fr. Antonio Fiorenza, RCJ

Special Section

Fostering a Vocation Culture in the Family**The Family According to God's Plan** 4

A Seedbed for Vocations

To build a strong family is to yield great vocations.

Fr. Joseph Shea

The Holy Family 6

Modeling Discipleship for Families

To promote vocation awareness is a family's duty.

Fr. Toby Collins, CR

A Vocation Itinerary in the Family 9

Sharing the Beauty of Vocations

Ask the Lord what His plan for your life is.

Judy Cozzens

Interview

The Importance of Involving Families in Fostering Vocations 11

A Conversation with Bishop of St. Augustine, Felipe de Jesus Estevez

The family is the domestic church, the first seminary.

Pamela Selbert

Vocations Spotlight

Discovering a Vocation with Freedom and Joy 13

First Step in Exploring a Vocation Path

My freedom and joy was at the service of my discernment.

Br. Adam Becerra, FSP

Vocations Director's Corner 19**No One Searched for Me**

The Role of a Vocation Director Today

Vocation ministry was a function of "gatekeeping."

Br. Jonathan Beebe, CSC

Bible

"Follow Me" 20

The Charm of a Vocational Call in the Gospels

The public mission of Jesus begins with "vocation stories"

Fr. Giuseppe De Virgilio

Spirituality

A Dignified Touch 22

The Spirituality of Mercy

"When we encounter the poor, stop and touch them."

Fr. Eugene Hemrick

The Holy Year of Mercy 23

Understanding the Logo

Lectio Divina: Matthew 5:1-12 24**Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy**

Sr. Emily Beata Marsh, FSP

Vocations Witness

A Consecrated Life at the Service of Immigrants 25

An Interview with Sr. Norma Pimentel, MJ

They are people of faith looking for an opportunity.

Sr. Lou Ella Hickman, IWBS

Psychology

A Teen Never Seen 28

The Psychology of Adolescence

It is normal to want to be noticed, accepted, and validated.

Dr. Bruce Thiessen, Ph.D.

News

USA 31**Vatican**

- National Catholic Sisters Week
- Br. Jim Wisecaver ✠
- Pope Francis' answer to the vocation crisis
- Catholic Women Religious
- 53rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Corner Message: "They left the nets and followed him."

Inspired by Sr. Maria Rosa Guerrini

Insert: Holy Hours by Fr. Peter Quinto, RCJ

Publisher

Rogationist Fathers,
U.S.A. Delegation
Rev. Antonio Fiorenza, RCJ, President

Editor-In-Chief

Rev. Antonio Fiorenza, RCJ

Managing Editor

Mónica Llerena, BS

Contributing Writers

Judy Cozzens
Pamela Selbert
Br. Adam Becerra, FSP
Br. Jonathan Beebe, CSC
Fr. Giuseppe De Virgilio
Fr. Eugene Hemrick
Sr. Emily Beata Marsh, FSP
Sr. Lou Ella Hickman, IWBS
Dr. Bruce Thiessen, Ph.D.
Fr. Peter Quinto, RCJ

Art Director

Leonell Romero

Subscriptions

Karla Legaria

Printing and Design

Challenge Graphics, North Hills, CA
Robert Wielage

Subscription Rates

Single Copy \$5.00
One-year subscription \$18.00
Two-year subscription \$30.00
International:
One-year subscription \$25.00
Two-year subscription \$44.00

Vocations and Prayer is published quarterly by the Rogationist Fathers, U.S.A., in cooperation with:

**ROGATE ERGO/
MONDO VOC**

Via dei Rogazionisti, 8
00182 Rome, ITALY

ROGATE ERGO Asia

24 Calcutta St., Merville Park,
Parañaque,
Metro Manila 1700 - PHILIPPINES

ROGATE

Rua C. Ferreiro Carnero, 99
02926 Sao Paulo - S.P. BRAZIL

Manuscripts, letters to the editor, articles for publication are solicited from all those who wish to cooperate in vocation ministry. All inquiries should be addressed to:

Vocations and Prayer

6635 Tobias Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91405
Tel. (818) 782-1765
Fax (818) 782-1794
Email: info@vocationsandprayer.org
www.vocationsandprayer.org

2016 Congregation of Rogationists. None of the contents of this publication may be printed without written permission of the publisher.

The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent views of the Rogationist Fathers.

Cover photo: © Monkey Business

Good News for the World

The Gospel of the Family

By Fr. ANTONIO FIORENZA, RCJ

Pope Francis canonized the parents of French saint Thérèse of Lisieux during the Synod of Bishops on the Family on Sunday, October 18, 2015. This event marked the first time a couple was proclaimed saints on the same day.

Pope Francis said in his homily that “the holy spouses Louis Martin and Marie-Azélie Guérin practiced Christian service in the family, creating day by day an environment of faith and love which nurtured the vocations of their daughters, among whom was Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus.”

Louis Martin and Marie-Azélie Guérin, who died in 1894 and 1887 respectively, had nine children; four of them died in infancy and the remaining five became nuns. Certainly, they were a family living in a different epoch, but exemplary even for us today because their lives were conformed to the Word of Jesus. In fact, the Gospel spans and gives life to all generations.

The Gospel inspires families to create an environment of faith and love, capable of generating vocations to marriage, consecrated life, and priesthood. In this regard, I find surprising the title of the Final Report’s second part of the Synod of Bishops on the Family, “Gospel of the Family.”

What do these words mean?

To speak of a “Gospel of the Family” is to say that the family is “Good News” for the world. As Pope Francis said at the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, the family is “a workshop of hope, of the hope of life and resurrection.”

Could the family be “a workshop of hope” also for vocations? For sure!

In which way? By cultivating a clear and profound vocation culture with at least three main objectives:

- Discerning and affirming the family’s original vocation according to the Creator’s plan. In today’s society, a dominant culture darkens



and confuses the reality of Christian marriage. However, to discover and to spread the beauty of the vocation to marriage according to God’s plan is a fountain of joy and serenity.

- Discovering and living out its mission in today’s world. The family is the “Good News” for the protection of all creation, the well-being of society, and the salvation of the world.
- Educating children about vocations, specifically about life as a vocation. Parents also have a responsibility to talk to their children about the various vocations in the Church: marriage, consecrated life, priesthood, and various ministries for the edification of the Christian community.

In the context of the Year of Mercy, we can say that promoting a vocation culture in the family also means to learn to be merciful like the Father. Every vocation, including the vocation to marriage, is a call to get out of oneself in order to live “with” and “for” others. ■



FR. ANTONIO FIORENZA, RCJ

Ordained in 1978. He holds a degree in Spirituality from the Lateran and Gregorian Pontifical Universities in Rome. Presently, he serves as the director of the Rogate Center in Van Nuys, California.

afiorenza@rcj.org

The Family According to God's Plan

A Seedbed for Vocations

By Fr. JOSEPH SHEA

God's dream and vision of family can be summed up in four P's—each P describes what God says a family is for and how we can strengthen our families, and thus vocations.

The first "P" stands for "a protective shelter in the storms of life"

A family is meant to be a protective shelter in the storms of life. Proverbs 14:26 states, "Reverence for the Lord gives a man deep strength; his children have a place of refuge and security."

We all experience storms in life. Life is tough. It rains on us. We get deluged. We go through difficult times. Things don't always go as planned. Some storms are financial. Others are physical. Still others are emotional, intellectual or moral. Three major storms that everyone experiences are change, failure, and rejection. From these storms, we can incur lifelong emotional wounds unless we have a place of refuge when the storms of life strike.

When the storms of life come, we need a place of security, protection, and stability. We need a home. "Home" is so important in life. We understand that instinctually. When we play "games" in life (i.e. Hide and Seek, Baseball, etc.), the goal of those games is to get to home. Why? Because when we are home, we are safe and we win. Homes are meant to be protective shelters in the storms—a place where we can be consoled, comforted and cared for.

If parents can create a safe, stable secure home for their children—a shelter when the storms of life strike—then their children will grow into mature, selfless young people. That kind of home environment is the seed bed for growing great vocations.

The second "P" stands for a "place for learning"

The Bible repeatedly tells us that families are meant to be places for learning. For example, the Letter to the Ephesians, 6:4 tells us, "Fathers, don't exasperate your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

Families are meant to be learning centers where children learn the basic skills of life and especially the important values of religious faith. A family is to provide training and instruction to help children grow. In raising their children, parents should want to take them through three stages: from parent control to self-control to God's control.

Parents should want their children to grow just as Jesus did. Luke 2:52 tells us that Jesus grew "in wisdom, age and grace before God and men." Growing in wisdom refers to the intellectual life. Growing in age or stature refers to the physical

life. Growing in favor with man refers to the social life. Growing in favor with God refers to the spiritual life. Parents should be equally concerned about helping their children grow in the very same four ways as Jesus did: intellectually, physically, socially, and especially spiritually.

Sadly, some parents have abandoned all efforts to give their children spiritual values and faith. I would be a wealthy man if I had a nickel for every time I heard parents say, "We are not going to teach our children any religion because we don't want to force them to do anything against their will. We are going to let them grow up and make their own choice about what religion they are going to choose."

Those parents are not only foolish, but also irresponsible. I often ask them, "Is there any area of life that you parents let your children decide to do on their own? Do you parents let your children decide whether they will put their finger in an electrical socket or on a hot stove to test



© Mstudio

it out? Do you parents let your children decide whether your children go to the doctor or dentist? Do your children get to decide on their own whether they decide to go to school or not. No way! You are benign dictators for your children in every area of life because you do know better. Then why would you neglect to give your children the most important thing of life—faith and religion?” Parents, if you are not teaching your children about God, you’re making a major mistake that has eternal implications. The Bible says that, as a parent, a critical part of your job description is to teach your children spiritual faith and values.

If we want to have a strong family life that produce strong vocations to every walk of life, then, once again, parents, your homes must be places of instruction and training, especially teaching the Catholic faith—passing on, yes, with some pressure and insistence, the truths and values of our faith.

Parents, if you intentionally teach your children the truths and values of our faith, if you teach that the Kingdom of God is truly “the pearl of great price”—worth every effort in this life to obtain it and desiring to share it with as many other people as you can—guess what? Once again, vocations will flourish.

The third “P” stands for a “place for prayer”

A family is a place where we learn to pray and worship God together.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that “Joseph, Mary and Jesus used to go every year to Jerusalem, for the Passover, and when Jesus was twelve, they went up to the celebration, as was their custom” (Luke 2:41-42). The Holy Family prayed together often.

A family that prays together stays together. A number of years ago Harvard University did a study that was later reported in *Marriage and Family* magazine. They studied married couples and families who daily prayed together, who read the Bible together, and who went to church together. The divorce rate among

couples who prayed and worshipped together regularly was 1 out of 1,285. That’s the difference God can make in a marriage and family. God is the glue.

Acts 16:33 tells us, “The whole family was filled with joy because they had come to believe in God.” When our whole family knows the Lord, loves the Lord, and serves the Lord, not only does it become a unifying factor, but it also produces joy.

Parents, your number one task is to do the best you can to make sure your kids grow up loving Jesus Christ and loving the holy Catholic Faith. Nothing is more important to you as parents than striving to make your children people of prayer, faith and holiness. I say this because a family who prays and worships together receives two special gifts.

First, a family receives God’s grace that can lift a family above its limited, fragile life and enable a family to do what God desires it to do. A family cannot accomplish God’s dream on its own. But with God’s supernatural grace, all things are possible—yes, even serving God full time happily as a priest or a religious!

Second, a family who prays and worships together also receives God’s Wisdom. A family that makes its home a place of prayer and is dedicated to prayer and worship will create incredibly dedicated children who will have the ability to give it their all when God calls. A praying family produces many great vocations.

The fourth “P” stands for “a launching pad for ministry”

A family is meant to be a launching pad for ministry.

We don’t just have a severe vocation shortage of priests and religious in our Church. We also have a severe crisis of volunteers for ministry. All our Church ministries are short-handed. Why? Because many parents are not teaching by example the absolute necessity to use the gifts that Christ has given them to serve Christ and the church.

I am a priest today because I started working side by side with my parents and my siblings in all sorts of ministries in the Church. My parents encouraged me whether it was serving Mass or helping to clean up the Church or visiting the sick or taking Christmas baskets to the poor. I found out that I had a proclivity and a knack for ministry. I also discovered that I liked doing ministry. I felt really happy and fulfilled to serve others. That’s how I began to hear God’s call to the priesthood. Maybe God was calling me to do this full-time as a priest? That is how vocations are launched.

There is a vocation crisis today—not just with vocations to the priesthood and religious life, but also with the vocation of marriage. It is because marriage and family life have been under attack for the past fifty years, weakening it and confusing people about the purpose of family.

Our Lord has given us the insights—the four P’s—how to strengthen marriage and family by knowing what God created family for and by putting those insights into practice in our own homes. When our homes become: 1) a Protective Shelter in the Storms of Life; 2) a Place for Learning the skills of life and especially, the truths and values of our holy faith; 3) a Place of Prayer; and 5) a Launching Pad for Ministry, then there will be a renewal of vocations.

I say this because the way the family goes is the way the world, the Church and vocations go. If there is a shortage of vocations in these modern times, it is because there is a grave shortage of strong, healthy, and faith-filled marriages and families in our world. If we can fix family life, we can fix the vocation problem. Building strong families will produce great new vocations. ■

FR. JOSEPH SHEA

Is the Pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Simi Valley California. Fr. Shea was ordained in 1978 as a priest for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. He was appointed as the Director of Vocations for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles where he served for six years.

The Holy Family

Modeling Discipleship for Families

By Fr. TOBY COLLINS, CR

I don't know exactly when it takes place. It's a kind of mystery of sorts. But sometimes people discover in themselves a desire to serve. They are willing to sacrifice for the well being of another and they find both joy and peace in this kind of self-gift. Their desire to reach out can often grow over time and they find ways to simplify their lives by making sacrifices, which allow them to deepen their commitment to serve. This mystery seems to be at the heart of any Christian vocation I have witnessed. And for Christians, I believe it is born out of discipleship.

With Mary's miraculous conception, Joseph's struggle to accept or dismiss Mary, and signs that lead them and their new son to live in foreign towns, the Holy Family had a pretty turbulent start by most people's standards. It is through these challenges though, that their discipleship shone brightly. Mary's discipleship was illuminated by her "yes" to becoming the mother of Jesus while for Joseph it was his "yes" by making a decision to trust God and take Mary as his wife even though he was not the father of Mary's child. They also accepted accommodations with ani-

mals and gifts from strangers during the birth of their son. This kind of fidelity to what was unfolding surrounded Jesus during his early and very formative years. Mary and Joseph would have instilled in him the importance of being prayerful and following the signs and directions that God gave them along the way. They would have taught the Jewish faith prayers, traditions, and rituals to him and practiced them at home and with the larger faith community. Also, their ongoing fidelity to doing God's will helped them to guide their child in his discernment. The instructions Mary gives to the servants, and indirectly to Jesus, in the story of the Wedding of Cana would be one example.

What the Holy Family teaches us is that being a good disciple means prayerful discernment of how one lives one's life within the context of a community. What they teach us along the way is that being committed to their relationship with God through observing the Jewish rituals of their time and pondering prayerful visits, dreams, and astounding events is integral to being a good disciple. Over time they became a shining example of how God chooses the family to reveal great gifts of love that lead to transformation and joy.

Families in North America today are

often overcome by complexities that pose great challenges to discipleship. But their root causes are not so different from one generation to the next. We have always struggled to form community with those are lost, sick or isolated. Carving out a discipline of prayer from endless distraction has always been difficult. It is still not easy to treat our neighbor with great love and share our resources with those who have less. And to love God and make sacrifices to do God's will is still quite radical. But the Holy Family gives us hope that discipleship can be taught and nurtured in the family if we believe that God still chooses to use families to form new disciples that pray, listen, and serve in new and profound ways.

Vocations in the Family Forming Disciples for Today

I have heard many vocation stories from people throughout North America. Their vocations include priesthood, the permanent diaconate, consecrated life, married life and those serving as single people in lay ecclesial ministry, mission work, various occupations and volunteer positions. They are all in agreement that their vocation began with their baptism and grew by being educated and influenced by their parents, siblings, teachers, religious



Painting by Albrecht Dürer

leaders and others who were part of their community of support. They each had unique stories but it took a village of people to help them find their way by modeling good discipleship for them. And it is usually their parents that do most of the modeling. They model for their children what it means to pray, make sacrifices, and stay connected with the faith community. Their children watch them closely and begin to decide for themselves whether or not these behaviors will lead to more joy and peace in their own lives.

I remember a phone call I received from my sister when I was in the seminary. She just had her first child and bragged that she now knew what the most self-sacrificing thing a person could do. Up until that discussion I had thought it was the vocation to Consecrated Life because of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience I was attempting to live and how difficult it can be. But after she described the number of times she got up at night to a crying baby, how often she fed him throughout the day, and yes, how she had to change his diaper quite regularly, I was humbled by the amount of sacrifices she and her husband were making and reluctantly conceded to her point of view. Sixteen years later she and her husband not only grew as a married couple but had become so proud of their son who continues to make good and prayerful choices with his life. He has caught on to the benefits of discipleship and become a recipient of the transforming power of married love.

Couples everywhere have the privileged opportunity to demonstrate this kind of sacrificial love. But they need to be aware of its source and connection with our faith. I can recall the first couple that I ever prepared for marriage. They were both Catholic and had been coming to church on Sundays for quite some time. When I found out that they did not want to have a mass and preferred a simple ceremony I had to ask why. I thought their faith tradition of their extended family might be different. After a long period of silence I was surprised to hear that their reason was that having a mass would take the focus off of them. It became a teachable moment. We took our time to make the connection be-

tween the sacrifice Jesus made for us at his crucifixion and the sacrifices in marriage that emulate this kind of love. They were discovering their vocation as husband and wife in a new light and later passed on their findings to their children.

In very practical ways, families are engaging in specific activities to promote vocation awareness as part of being good disciples. Making use of the Internet and sharing links to vocation related materials is increasing as more and more material gets posted. Gathering for prayers and

acknowledging the gifts they see in someone else that may be suited for a particular vocation.

The Educational Challenges of the Family in North American Society

While working on a sacramental preparation video designed to address the lack of collaboration between home, school, and parish one comment stood out in an interview. It was that any one of these places would be naive to think that they



meals continues to be a great time to have open discussions about a variety of vocations. Having a priest over for dinner, for example, exposes the family to those living the less common vocations in a more relaxed atmosphere. This kind of exposure helps the children to see how normal and necessary vocations like priesthood and consecrated life really are.

Finally, parents can work with the entire family to create a place where all are welcome and everyone is loved just as they are. Even though there may be disagreements family members can disagree with love and mutual respect. In this kind of space the safety one needs to discern their vocation can be found. And the family members can act as a supportive presence by praying for one another and

had all the answers. Collaboration between home, school and parishes will always carry with it some tension but it occurred to me in that moment that we all need each other if children and adults are going to be well educated in the ways of our faith. If we lose the opportunity for open dialogue by behaviors that insist on our own way or simply refuse to invest the time and energy collaboration requires, we will miss out on the blessing of unity. In this unity there is an openness to share and compliment one another with the goal of forming healthy disciples and healthy leaders for today and tomorrow.

Secondly, I believe this common saying is true: If you do what you have always done you will get what you already have. If you apply this saying to the curriculum

materials used to promote the faith, without continual updates faith formation can become stagnant. Recently I was asked to help with the development of the Catholic curriculum being created for three Canadian provinces. After my first meeting I was in awe of the successful integration of current theology with modern publishing and video techniques. It was also apparent that the challenge of staying current was met with the support of the Bishops, leaders within the Catholic education, and funding from the government.

Thirdly, without teachers and parents to animate the curriculum with accuracy and passion, the application of any resources can be jeopardized. Ongoing formation that is prayerful, creative, and fun is necessary if the teachers and parents are to fully realize the benefits of any materials used to pass on the teachings of our faith.

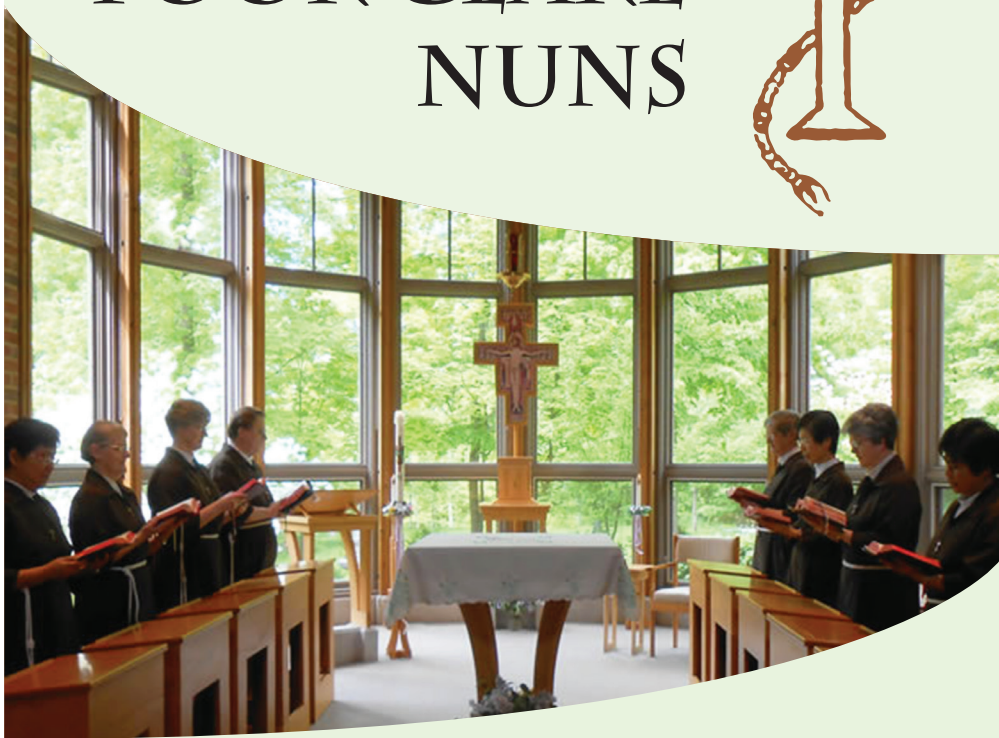
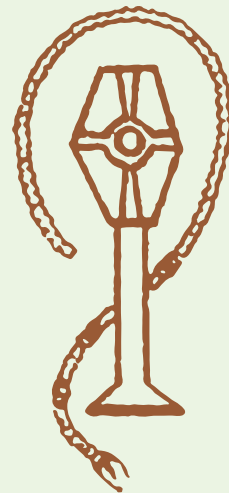
Finally, I believe it is very challenging for families to balance an active schedule with mass times, and various parish based activities such as sacramental preparations. With extracurricular activities in areas such as dance, music and sports taking up much of our time it becomes challenging to make more of a connection with our local parish and the preparations required to make the reception of the sacraments a meaningful and nourishing experience. When these conflicts arise it is important that we reflect upon our commitment to be good disciples. Like Mary, Joseph and Jesus we are called to love God and our neighbor within the context of a faith community. There we can gather, celebrate, affirm and support each other as brothers and sisters. There we can grow in our faith together and continue to serve one another with joy and renewed confidence in God's life-giving plans. ■



FR. TOBY COLLINS, CR

Is a member of the Congregation of the Resurrection. He was recently appointed full-time Vocation Director and currently ministers at St. Jerome's University in Waterloo, Canada.

FRANCISCAN POOR CLARE NUNS



As **Poor Clare Contemplative Nuns**, our mission is to pray for the needs of the Church, the World and all people. Our life of prayer is shaped by our daily celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours, and our day unfolds in a rhythm of personal prayer, communal prayer, community work, study, recreation and rest.

If you feel called to the contemplative life and to Franciscan spirituality, we invite you to **contact our vocation director, Sr. Anna Marie, at 513-825-7177.**



Among the other gifts that we have received and do daily from our benefactors, the Father of mercies, and for which we must express the deepest thanks to the glorious Father of Christ, there is our vocation... Recognize your vocation.

-Testament of St. Clare (TestCI 2-4)

www.poorclarescincinnati.org
sistersprayers@gmail.com
 Poor Clares Cincinnati

A Vocation Itinerary in the Family

Sharing the Beauty of Vocations

By JUDY COZZENS

In our family, my husband, Jack, and I have always shared the beauty of our Catholic Faith. On our first date, Jack told me that he would like to go out again but he wasn't just looking for a date, he was looking for a wife that would kneel beside him in church. The next morning was Sunday and we attended Mass together. Even in dating, we knew if we got married that the most important element of our journey together was to prepare ourselves and our children for heaven.

In working with our family's faith journey, we took one step at a time beginning with good conversations and prayer times. As a mother and grandmother, I always say a Hail Mary every day for each child and pray that they will remain chaste and holy for their journey in life. I let the kids know that I am praying for this goal. When I leave my grandkids or tuck them into bed, I give them a special blessing using their name. "Sean, I bless you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I pray that you grow to be a holy man and serve the Lord." One of my grandsons asked, "Does this mean I have to be a priest?" I chuckled and replied, "Only if the Lord calls you. I want you to remember to ask the Lord what His plan for your life is. Your Dad serves the Lord and he is a holy man also." The kids love getting their blessings. As my oldest granddaughter was leaving for college, I forgot to give her a blessing. She chased our car down for her blessing.

Friends of ours, Sharon and Bob Spinharney, prepared the following list for families to think about. They live in Eden Prairie and have five children. Two of them, Father Isaac and Sister John Paul Marie, entered Religious life with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal, respectively.

- Let your children notice an attitude of



openness to God's will in you and hear you thank God for each day.

- Encourage your middle school child to pray to discover and use the gifts God has given to him or her.
- Include a vocation prayer in your personal and family prayer.
- Attend an ordination of a priest or deacon or a profession of a Sister or Brother.
- Invite your parish priest or a Sister or Brother to supper with your family.
- Promote teen Holy Hours, especially during Advent and Lent, so they can have a time of silence with the Lord or bring their troubles to Him.
- Show Catholic movies to your family.
- At a Family Night, ask your children to study their patron saints (their given name or Confirmation name or other saint's name) and tell why the saint is their hero. Start off by telling your own saint's story.
- Promote vocation knowledge by having your children research a Religious Order on the Internet. Give them a list of things to include in their search.
- Build a miniature altar; make costume vestments and Religious garb for youngsters to teach them about the Mass (Serran idea), and to more closely observe what goes on at Mass when they attend the real thing. Children have been playing Mass and dressing up as priests and Religious for centuries.
- Arrange an "On the Road" family visit to a monastery, convent, friary, motherhouse, or shrine once a year.

Our family was privileged to volunteer for World Youth Day in Denver in 1992.

This was a wonderful experience for us and certainly allowed the kids to see the beauty of our universal church. Pope John Paul II became one of our family's heroes and his words really share the importance and blessings of religious vocations:

"Parents, give thanks to the Lord if He has called one of your children to the consecrated life. It is to be a great honor, as it always has been, that the Lord should look upon a family and choose to invite one of its members to set out on the path of the evangelical counseled? Cherish the desire to give the Lord one of your children so that God's love can spread in the world. What fruit of conjugal love could be more beautiful than this?"

"We must remember that if parents do not live the values of the Gospel, the young man or woman will find it very difficult to discern the calling, to understand the need for the sacrifices which must be faced, and to appreciate the beauty of the goal to be achieved. For it is in the family that young people have their first experience of Gospel values and of the love which gives itself to God and to others. They also need to be trained in responsible use of their own freedom, so that they will be prepared to live, as their vocation demands, in accordance with the loftiest spiritual realities."

-Pope John Paul II, Vita Consecrata

At our recent celebration of our 50th wedding anniversary, Bishop Andrew said the Mass. There is nothing that is better than seeing your own son bring us the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. I beg you to pray for our ordained and consecrated men and women and to encourage more youth to serve the Lord in a religious vocation. ■



JUDY COZZENS

Is a mother of three children and grandmother of nine. She recently celebrated her 50th wedding anniversary. Judy is a former elementary school teacher and has been a Serran for 15 years.



ROGATIONIST PUBLICATIONS

PRESENTS

VOCATIONS ANONYMOUS

A Handbook for Adults Discerning Priesthood and Religious Life

"There is nothing anonymous about the experience, humor, wisdom, and common sense approach to vocations Sr. Kathleen Bryant shares with us in her book Vocations Anonymous."

SR. SARAH SHREWSBURY

Vocation Director
Diocese of San Bernardino, CA



264 pages | 5"x8"

WHAT IS YOUR CALLING?

Ways to order

6635 Tobias Ave. Van Nuys, CA 91405

Tel: (818) 782-1765 · Fax: (818) 782-1794

Email: info@vocationsandprayer.org

www.vocationsandprayer.org

Also available on
amazon.com

Involving Families in Fostering Vocations

A Conversation with Bishop of St. Augustine, Felipe de Jesus Estevez



Diocese of St. Augustine

By PAMELA SELBERT

Bishop Felipe de Jesus Estevez of St. Augustine, Florida, was born February 5, 1946 in Matanzas, Cuba. At age fifteen, he says, he fled from “the oppression of a newly turned Marxist-Lenin government” to the United States, one of 14,000

high school students in a program called Operation Pedro Pan (named for the children’s book “Peter Pan”).

Bishop Estevez grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He studied at Montreal University in Montreal, Canada, earning a Licentiate in Theology in 1970, and was ordained May 30th that year for the Diocese of Matanzas,

Cuba. He has since earned a Master’s in Art (1977) from Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida, and a Doctorate in Sacred Theology (1980) from Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. He is fluent in French and Italian, as well as Spanish and English.

The bishop’s priestly ministry first took him to Guascoran Parish in Honduras, where he served from 1970 to 1975. For the next two years he was on the faculty at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, Florida, then in 1980 he took over as the seminary’s President/Recto, a post he held for six years. He next was campus minister at Florida International University in Miami, 1987-2001, while also serving as pastor at nearby St. Agatha Church. He then returned to St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, to serve as Dean of Spiritual Formation until 2003.

He was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Miami on November 21, 2003, and was consecrated January 7, 2004. In the post he oversaw the archdiocese’s Ministry of Pastoral Services, including family life, youth, campus, prison and respect-life ministries. In 2010 he was appointed Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Miami.

On April 27, 2011 Pope Benedict XVI named Auxiliary Bishop Estevez the tenth Bishop of St. Augustine. He was installed on June 2, 2011 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Mandarin (Jacksonville), Florida. The diocese, which spans seventeen counties in the northeastern part of the state, includes about 220,000 Catholics, fifty-two parishes and eight mission churches.

At the time of the 2011 installation, retiring Bishop Victor Galeone spoke of Bishop Estevez as “a man of dignity with a calm demeanor, great kindness, strong faith in the church, and strong loyalty to the Holy Father.” His main priority as bishop is evangelization, focusing on reaching out to youth and “estranged” Catholics. He encourages

the clergy “to inject more joy and energy into church services, making parishes more welcoming to those who want to return.”

On a recent occasion he answered several questions regarding vocations in his diocese:

Are you seeing increased interest in vocations to the priesthood or religious orders in your diocese? If so, why do you think this is?

We have seen a considerable increase in the past six years. I attribute it to the visible presence of our seminarians in parishes and schools, increased Eucharistic devotion, and a strong renewal of the evangelistic spirit in our youth and young adults. When the church is alive people want to be a part of its ‘aliveness’ -- it calls you in.

Is it mostly young people who are considering a vocation? Or are older people also answering the call?

The majority are young, but about ten percent are “second career persons,” those who are experiencing a second calling, both men and women.

What do you do to encourage a person’s interest in pursuing a religious vocation?

We offer public teaching on vocations, also preaching, praying, witnessing, and sending seminarians to the parishes and schools. There is a missionary appeal in the dioceses that is attractive, the wide vitality of preaching the good news to the poor. It’s not only the words of Jesus that they hear, but something happening in the life of today, missionaries doing God’s work here and abroad.

How do pastors and youth ministers help a person discern God’s call?

They offer a relationship, a personal invitation, helping the person to feel welcome, encouraging them to explore the possibility of a religious vocation without being afraid. It’s important to listen to a person’s story, answer their questions. Mentoring is fundamental.

How does your Office of Vocations work? What sort of spiritual direction do you offer?

We have a diocesan director and two assistant vocational directors. Spiritual direction is essential. A person experiencing the mystery (of a call) within needs a mentor to listen, helping them reach certitude, so the voice of the Lord may be heard. It’s a challenge: priests are busy; they must address numerous needs within the parishes. Thus it’s difficult for them to invest time offering spiritual direction, but we encourage them to understand that this is a precious priority.

Is there prayer for vocations throughout the parishes?

There is the prayer of the faithful, a frequent intention, but we need to do better, working to develop more consistent prayer groups, more intentional, deliberate prayer.

What is the role of parents in helping a young person discern God’s call?

It is extremely important. Often a young person’s interest in a spiritual vocation is perceived by their parents as an interference, not what they had hoped or intended for that young person. Parents need to realize what a blessing the Lord is giving.

We hold two annual gatherings, in the summer and at Christmas, getting families together with seminarians, inviting not only parents but siblings as well to be involved as the young person struggles to discern God’s call. Having the family involved is very important, because after all, the family is the domestic church, the first seminary, a “vocation promoter” if the young person feels a call. Our gatherings are well attended, with usually about one family for each of our thirty seminarians. It’s very positive.

How is Pope Francis’ leadership affecting interest in vocations?

He is having a beneficial effect. In general there’s a favorable attitude toward Pope Francis: people like what they see and hear; they like the way he engages in pastoral care. He has helped create a climate where

the Catholic Church is viewed in a very positive light. The Holy Father is good with the media. He allows a flow of information about what he’s doing to come out of Rome; he’s very open. All this helps provide an environment that encourages candidates to a religious vocation.

Do you think the upcoming Year of Mercy will encourage people to consider a religious vocation?

I do. I believe the theme of love and caring will give a new vitality to the liturgical life of the church. Those touched by faith will find the church so engaged in merciful love to be very attractive. This love, like that of a father, will provide a new initiative; will illustrate the essential core of who we are: messengers of God’s love.

How will your diocese celebrate this Extraordinary Jubilee?

We have a committee that is developing a diocesan plan, and are basically using as a template plans the Holy Father has designed. I personally will lead parishioners on four pilgrimages: to Rome (February 22 to March 1); to the National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts (April 18-20); to Poland for World Youth Day (July 24 to August 3); and to the Holy Land (October 17-28). We anticipate that 200 to 250 parishioners will take part.

What does the Year of the Divine Mercy mean to you?

It means a deeper commitment to works of mercy, and to be deliberate and intentional about the initiatives in our local churches, much like what Pope Francis is doing globally. ■



PAMELA SELBERT

Is a freelance writer who lives just outside St. Louis. Over the past 30 years, Pamela has had nearly three thousand articles published in more than 75 newspapers and magazines.

Discovering a Vocation with Freedom and Joy

The First Step in Exploring a Vocation Path



By Br. ADAM BECERRA, FSP

We often spend countless hours reading books that impact our lives. I recall reading Henri Nouwen's "The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom." This book was considered Nouwen's secret journal where he spent a period of his lifetime writing down his raw feelings and experiences about a "once loss" of self-esteem, his energy to live, his sense of being loved, and his hope in God. These feelings and experiences emerged in Nouwen during the most painful times of his life where he was facing a spiritual crisis. Although this article is not about my own spiritual crisis, which God knows I have had many as a religious; rather, it tells my story that resonates with a chapter from Nouwen's book that has truly impacted my discernment to be a religious. A line from his chapter reads: "Only by attending constantly to the inner voice can you be converted to a new life of freedom and joy."

Like Nouwen, my story is one about

freedom and joy that marked the beginning of my vocational path towards religious life as a Friar of the Sick Poor of Los Angeles. When I began to explore and toy with the idea of becoming a religious, I knew that I had to do it freely and with joy because it was going to be my vocation, and no one else's. Often times, family members and friends push and encourage their loved ones to pursue something that they may not be interested in doing. I found myself in this very similar situation when I first shared with my parents that I wanted to enter religious life. They were ecstatic and immediately put me on a pedestal because they had raised a son who would soon become a religious. Well, as life takes its course, I studied eight years in the seminary, left twice, and finally found myself with the Friars of the Sick Poor of Los Angeles—this is where my freedom and joy rests!

Before I talk about the friars and about my freedom and joy from my vocational path, I would like to bring up another scenario that I think is valuable for our pondering when choosing a vocation. This

scenario deals with the lack of conversation and understanding about the possibility of a religious vocation. I have discovered that in our American society, we have lost interest in talking to our family members about a religious vocation because we want our teens/young adults to succeed in life through other career paths. I am not knocking down career paths because as a friar, I work in Catholic education as an executive administrator at Chaminade College Preparatory in California. I know what it is like to have a career, but I do have to remind myself every day that this is my ministry, and not my work. Living it out this way helps me to understand myself as a minister of God and model for everyone a "servant leadership" style that brings people towards God rather than away from God. I want to show everyone that God transforms, heals, and converts the hearts of those who wish to be touched by a God who loves infinitely! Thus, my freedom and joy rests in being an executive administrator by ministering as a servant leader!

We have pondered upon two very dif-

ferent scenarios that however, include one common goal: freedom and joy. Those who are exploring a vocational path, my advice is twofold: (1) do not allow yourselves to be placed on a pedestal by others because this will cause a difficulty in your discernment process of discovering your passions; (2) if your family does not spark a conversation about the possibility of a religious vocation, then do it yourself! I challenge you to think about how you want to discern your vocational path that involves freedom and love.

In my own experience, I fled with freedom to ponder upon the gifts that God had given to me in order to help build up our Church and strengthen our faith. With this freedom, I looked for ways in which I aspired to grow in relationship with God and discovered that God had already claimed me as his own: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). The prophet Jeremiah

helped me to experience God's love and freedom in living out my passion of empowering others to find their way back to God. Through this experience, I found the Friars of the Sick Poor of Los Angeles who I believe God connected me with because their charism is to "be ever ready to them the reason for your hope" (1 Peter 3:15). My freedom and joy "jolted" as their charism resonated with my own passion for living. It was my freedom and joy that connected me to the friars' charism because I didn't allow anyone to put me on a pedestal during my discernment process nor currently, as a friar. My freedom and joy helped me to have a conversation with my family about the possibility of a religious vocation due to my personal growth in relationship with God.

As you can see, my freedom and joy was at the service of my discernment process. Without it, I would not have been able to properly discern the plan that God set out for me when he consecrated me before I was born. With all of this said, I am con-

vinced that the first step in exploring a vocational path to religious life is by getting in touch with our inner freedom and joy. Why? Because our inner freedom and joy causes a "jolting" that transpires us to follow our passions and deepen our relationship with God. I followed my passion which eventually led me to the Friars of the Sick Poor of Los Angeles in order to build up hope in the midst of people's suffering.

Trust and use your inner freedom and joy to discover your passions and vocational path in order to build up the people of God! ■



BR. ADAM BECERRA, FSP

Is a religious with the Friars of the Sick Poor of Los Angeles. He currently serves as the Director of Mission Integration and Ministry at Chaminade College Preparatory.

Subscribe to *Vocations and Prayer*

The Catholic Magazine on Vocation Ministry

Vocations and Prayer magazine's fundamental mission is to spread the primacy of prayer in fostering a culture of vocations. A quarterly publication on vocations ministry, for priests, religious men and women catechists, different groups of ecclesial movements, faithful, and young people, *Vocations and Prayer* offers points of reflections and practical suggestions for vocation animation, prayer for vocations, and help in the vocational discernment process.

Subscription Options

- ☐ One Year \$18 4 issues ☐ Two Years \$30 8 issues

Your Information

Name: _____
 Organization: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Fax: _____
 E-mail: _____

Payment Information

- ☐ Bill me ☐ Check enclosed
 (Payable to **Rogationist Publications**)
☐ Credit Card ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard
☐ Discover ☐ AMEX
 Card #: _____
 Exp. Date: _____ Security Code: _____

Ways to Subscribe

Rogationist Publications

6635 Tobias Ave | Van Nuys, CA 91405
 (818)782-1765
info@vocationsandprayer.org



HOLY HOUR *Rich in Mercy*

Pray for Vocations

1. WELCOME

God promises to be close to us when we feel brokenhearted. Remember that when God came to earth as Jesus, He experienced what a broken human heart felt like as He endured suffering firsthand in our fallen world. Nothing can ever separate us from God's deep, unconditional love. He cares about what we're going through. Let us ask the Holy Spirit through this holy hour to comfort us by making us aware of His Real Presence in our lives.

2. EXPOSITION

A Eucharistic hymn is sung during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. After a short period of silent adoration, the following prayer is said:

3. ADORATION

We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, who at every moment preserve and sustain us, who has loved us with an everlasting love and given us the light of the knowledge of God's glory.

R. We praise you, O Jesus, and we acknowledge you to be the Lord.

- Though you were rich, yet for our sakes you became poor. You went about doing good and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. You were tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. You became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. **R.**
- You were dead, but now you live for evermore. You opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. You are seated at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father. **R.**
- You sent us your Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, by whom we are born into the family of God, and made members of your Body, whose witness confirms us, whose wisdom teaches us, whose power enables us, and who waits to do for us more than we ask or think. **R.**

Silent prayer/Song

4. PRAYER FOR GOD'S MERCY

Let us examine ourselves and humbly confess our sins before God.
Let us pray:

R. Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

- For self-centered living, and for failing to walk with humility and gentleness. **R.**
- For longing to have what is not ours, for misuse of human relationships, and for unwillingness to see the image of God in others. **R.**
- For jealousies that divide families and nations, for reluctance in sharing the gifts of God, and for carelessness with the fruits of creation. **R.**
- For hurtful words that condemn, and for angry deeds that harm, for idleness in witnessing to Jesus Christ, and for squandering the gifts of love and grace. **R.**

Father of mercy, like the prodigal son we return to you and say: "I have sinned against you and am no longer worthy to be called your son."

Christ Jesus, Savior of the world, we pray with the repentant thief to whom you promised paradise: "Lord, remember me in your kingdom."

Holy Spirit, fountain of love, we call on you with trust: "Purify my heart, and help me to walk as a child of light."

We pray and bless you, Father of mercy, Jesus Savior, Holy Spirit of love, now and forever. Amen.

Silent prayer/Song

5. LITURGY OF THE WORD

- **Micah 6:6-8** "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness (or mercy), and to walk humbly with your God?"
- **Ephesians 2:1-10** "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ..."
- **1 Peter 1:3-9** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..."
- **Luke 6:27-36** "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."
- **Luke 15:11-32** (shorter: 17-24) "I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.'"

6. HOMILY / SILENT REFLECTION / HOLY ROSARY

7. INTERCESSIONS

In his mercy, God sends the Holy Spirit to shine on us, so that our lives may radiate holiness and faith. Let us raise our voices and say:

R. May we be merciful as you are merciful, O Father.

- May we freely respond to your call to serve the needy of our time. **R.**
- By collaborating with others in the works of mercy, may we learn from them how to be more merciful. **R.**
- Through our works may we model mercy and justice and promote systemic change according to these ideals. **R.**
- May we witness to mercy by reverencing the dignity of each person and creating a spirit of gracious welcome wherever we live and serve. **R.**
- May those you are calling to the priesthood or religious life respond with gladness and generosity. **R.**

With longing for the coming of God's kingdom, let us offer our prayer to the Father: **Our Father...**

8. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Jesus Good Shepherd, who brought from heaven the fire of your love, give us your heart. In flame us with the desire for the glory of God and with a great love for our brothers and sisters. Make us sharers in your apostolate. Live in us, that we may radiate you in word, in suffering, in pastoral action, in the example of a good life. We offer you ourselves as docile and faithful sheep, to become worthy of cooperating in your pastoral mission in the Church. Dispose all minds and hearts to receive your grace. Come, divine Shepherd, guide us. May there soon be one flock and one Shepherd. Amen.

(Blessed James Alberione)

9. BENEDICTION AND REPOSITION

Please refer to the last page of this insert.

HOLY HOUR Works in Mercy

1. WELCOME

Brothers and sisters, the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are rooted in the command of Jesus Christ: *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you"* (Jn 15:12). The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that "the works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities" (CCC 2447). Let us ask the Lord during this holy hour to teach as to love as Jesus has loved us, and to be merciful like the Father.

2. EXPOSITION

A Eucharistic hymn is sung during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. After a short period of silent adoration, the following prayer is said:

3. ADORATION

We adore You, Lord and Creator, hidden in the Most Blessed Sacrament. We adore You for all the works of Your hands, that reveal to us so much wisdom, goodness and mercy, O Lord.

(optional) R. We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ.

- You have spread so much beauty over the earth and it tells us about Your beauty, even though these beautiful things are but a faint reflection of You, incomprehensible Beauty. **R.**
- And although You have hidden Yourself and concealed Your beauty, our eyes, enlightened by faith, reach You and our souls recognize its Creator, its Highest Good, and our hearts are completely immersed in prayer of adoration. **R.**
- Our Lord and Creator, Your goodness encourages us to converse with You. Your mercy abolishes the chasm which separates the Creator from the creature. To converse with You, O Lord, is the delight of our hearts. **R.**
- In You we find everything that our hearts could desire. Here, Your light illumines our minds, enabling them to know You more and more deeply. **R.**
- Here streams of graces flow down upon our hearts. Here our souls draw eternal life. O Lord and Creator, You alone, beyond all these gifts, give Your own self to us and unite Yourself intimately with your miserable creatures. **R.**
- O Christ, let our greatest delight be to see You loved and Your praise and glory proclaimed, especially the honor of Your mercy. **R.**
- O Christ, let us glorify Your goodness and mercy to the last moment of our lives, with every drop of our blood and every beat of our hearts. **R.**

Would that we be transformed into a hymn of adoration of You. When we find ourselves on our deathbed, may the last beat of our hearts be a loving hymn glorifying Your unfathomable mercy. Amen.

(Based on a prayer by Saint Faustina)

Continue with a worship song and/or silent adoration.

4. LITURGY OF THE WORD

- **Isaiah 58:1-12** *"This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own."*

- **Matthew 5:1-12** *"Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy."*
- **Matthew 5:13-16** *"Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."*
- **Matthew 25:31-46** *"Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."*
- **John 13:12-16** *"If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet."*

5. HOMILY / SILENT REFLECTION / HOLY ROSARY

6. INTERCESSIONS

Christ the Lord gave us a new commandment, of love for each other. With faith let us cry out to him, saying:

R. Lord, show us your mercy.

- That many more men and women will be called to the priesthood and religious life for our (Arch)diocese, we pray.
- That those who are being called to serve God as priests and religious may generously respond, we pray.
- That those who are being called and are facing obstacles in answering the call may persevere in their commitment, we pray.
- That the parents of those who are being called or will be called may be encouraging in their support of the vocation of their son or daughter, we pray.
- That our seminarians and those in religious formation may persevere through all difficulties and grow in holiness and fidelity to the Church, we pray.
- That Catholic families may seek holiness and fidelity to Christ above all else and thus foster good and holy vocations, we pray.
- That our Blessed Mother may intercede for all priests and religious so that the holiness of their lives may foster many more vocations, we pray.

Remember us, Lord, when you come to your kingdom and teach us how to pray: **Our Father...**

7. PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him. Show us your face and we will be saved.

You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God. Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind. We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy, you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Based on the prayer for the Jubilee of Mercy by Pope Francis I)

8. BENEDICTION AND REPOSITION

Please refer to the last page of this insert.

HOLY HOUR

Prayer for Vocations

1. WELCOME

Pope Francis in his message for the 53rd WDPV states: "It is my great hope that, during the course of this Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, all the baptized may experience the joy of belonging to the Church and rediscover that the Christian vocation, just like every particular vocation, is born from within the People of God, and is a gift of divine mercy. The Church is the house of mercy, and it is the "soil" where vocations take root, mature and bear fruit."

Let us pray during this holy hour that many may respond to the call to discipleship and mission.

2. EXPOSITION

A Eucharistic hymn is sung during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. After a short period of silent adoration, the following prayer is said:

3. ADORATION

Lord Jesus Christ, you were sent to us by our heavenly Father. You are the ultimate Prophet who speaks the Truth and accomplishes the Father's saving love for us. Strengthen us by the power of your Holy Spirit so that we may fulfill our vocation and ministry as Christian prophets in the world today. May we never fail to recognize your daily coming in our lives, for we hunger for truth and the revelation of the divine abounding, compassionate love. May we thus commit ourselves deeply to you, the Prophet sent to proclaim the Good News of salvation to all peoples and nations. You live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Silent prayer/Song

4. PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Grateful for all his gifts, let us praise Jesus Christ and say:

R. We give you thanks, Lord Jesus

- For all who give you a face by spreading your love in the world. **R.**
- For all who give you hands by doing their best toward their brothers and sisters. **R.**
- For those who give you a mouth by defending the weak and the oppressed. **R.**
- For all who give you eyes by seeing every bit of love in the heart of man and woman. **R.**
- For all who give you a heart by preferring the poor to the rich, the weak to the strong. **R.**
- For all who reveal you simply by what they are because they reflect your beauty in their lives. **R.**

O Lord Jesus, we recall your words: "I came not to be served, but to serve." You saw our needs, and you ministered to us in love. We thank you for calling us to follow in your footsteps. We ask you to keep our eyes open to the possibilities around us, and to grant us strength and courage, and the willingness to continue to serve you and all our neighbors. Form us in your likeness and deepen your life within us, so that the world may know, love and serve you, and give glory to the Father who is in heaven. Amen.

5. LITURGY OF THE WORD

Suggested readings:

- **Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8** "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,

'Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?' 'Here I am,' I said; 'send me!'"

- **Jeremiah 1:4-10** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you."
- **Luke 5:1-11** "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."
- **Luke 4:16-21** "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."
- **John 8:1-11** Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more."

6. HOMILY / SILENT REFLECTION / HOLY ROSARY

7. INTERCESSIONS

Our Lord Jesus Christ has saved us from our sins. As his people, let us call out to him:

R. Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us.

- May our bishops, priests, and deacons grow daily in the grace of their ordination. **R.**
- May our hearts be free from anxiety and fear and full of self-surrender. **R.**
- May we trust in God's providence during times of doubt and difficulty. **R.**
- May we restrain our greed for earthly goods and have concern for the needs of others. **R.**
- May the life and death of our patron saint N., continue to call us to embrace the spirit of hospitality and service. **R.**
- May all who are nearing the time of their own death be comforted by the hope of eternal life. **R.**

Now let us pray as the Lord taught us: **Our Father...**

8. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Father of mercy, who gave your Son for our salvation and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit, grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous, which are fonts of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelization. Sustain these communities in their commitment to offer appropriate vocational catechesis and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration. Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment, so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth. May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus, intercede for each Christian community, so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit, it may be a source of true vocations for the service of the holy People of God. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pope Francis

9. BENEDICTION AND REPOSITION

Please refer to the last page of this insert.

The Holy Rosary

After each mystery, the following invocation may be said:

V. Send, O Lord,

R. **Holy apostles into your Church.**

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

1. The Agony in the Garden

This mystery teaches us that in times of darkness and anguish, God is present to give us strength against the temptation towards weakness. May we be comforted by our trust that God's mercy and justice will prevail.

2. The Scourging at the Pillar

This mystery teaches us to stand strong in the face of ridicule, criticism, and persecution. May we find in Christ the peace and the strength to defend our faith.

3. The Crowning with Thorns

This mystery teaches us of the unspeakable humiliation Christ endured for reparation of our sins. Through Christ's humiliation, may we uphold the dignity of those who are demeaned by violence.

4. The Carrying of the Cross

This mystery teaches us that we are to bear our trials with patience and pure acceptance of God's will. With Christ living in us, may we take up our cross and follow Him.

5. The Crucifixion

This mystery teaches us to forgive those who offend us. Christ lovingly bore the persecution that hatred caused. May we too forgive the injuries we face from the hatred of others.

V. O Mary, Mother of the Church,

R. **Pray for us and obtain for us many and holy vocations.**

LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

1. The Baptism of our Lord

This mystery teaches us of the extraordinary gift of faith. In baptism, by no claim of our own, we are invited into God's family. May we be filled with the spirit of gratitude for the gift of faith.

2. The Wedding at Cana

Through this mystery Jesus raises the dignity of Christian marriage to the level of a sacrament. May we give ourselves in complete obedience to God's will and share in the same love that Christ has for His Church.

3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom

This mystery teaches us of the immense love that Christ has for his children. He is the shepherd who is willing to die for his sheep. May we strive to live this selfless love in our lives.

4. The Transfiguration of the Lord

This mystery teaches us that God's glory can shine even in the darkest places of our lives. May we allow that light of faith to shine in us and through us.

5. The Institution of the Holy Eucharist

Through the mystery of the Eucharist, Christ gives us true life. May we allow Christ to reside in us and we in Him.

V. O Mary, Mother of the Church,

R. **Pray for us and obtain for us many and holy vocations.**

PRAYER FOR VOCATION

O Lord, during this Lenten Season, we ask you to change our hearts. Give us the grace to see these Lenten days as golden oppor-

tunities, that we may see you more clearly amidst the cloudiness of daily routines and pressures. Help us to pray more fervently, fast more meaningfully, and give alms more generously. Amen.

O God, the source of creation and love, you invite each of us to serve you through the life which is your gift. May your grace encourage men and women to heights of holiness through service to the church as priests, sisters, brothers, and lay ministers. Make me an instrument to encourage others to give of themselves and challenge me to do the same. Amen

BENEDICTION

V. You have given them bread from heaven,

R. **Having all sweetness within it.**

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, forever and ever.

Or,

Lord our God, teach us to cherish in our hearts the paschal mystery of your Son by which you redeemed the world.

Watch over the gifts of grace your love has given us and bring them to fulfillment in the glory of heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

REPOSITION

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 Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in His angels and in His Saints.

Or,

Blessed be God, Father and Creator.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, Son of God and our Brother.

Blessed be his Word that will never fail.

Blessed be his Body given up for us.

Blessed be his Blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, our Advocate and Consoler.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(ALL) May the Heart of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament be praised, loved, and adored with grateful affection every moment in the all the tabernacles of the world, even to the end of time.

Amen.

By Fr. PETER QUINTO, RCJ



By BR. JONATHAN BEEBE, CSC

Modern psychology tells us that people struggle to learn new information when it does not fit easily into their existing schema, or framework, for how the world works. Our schemas – developed and reinforced over years of personal experience – can be resistant to change. Misperceptions result from our inability to adjust how we think about a new situation.

The role and responsibilities of the vocation director have evolved over the years, particularly after Vatican Council II and the downturn in the number of new entrants to religious life. But how religious women and men think about what a vocation director does – or should be doing – has not always kept pace with the times.

My exchange with Brother Joseph is a case in point. After a recent house chapter, I fielded questions about my vocation plans for the upcoming year. Brother Joseph, in his 90's and with hearing difficulties, told me about his own vocation after the meeting. He said that he began to think about the possibility of having a vocation to religious life after reading a 1931 article entitled "A Monk's Life" in *The American Mercury* magazine. Guided by a priest, he wrote to the vocation director of the Congregation of Holy Cross who promptly responded to his inquiry. Once again the quintessential teacher, he raised his finger to instruct me, and summarized his experience of discernment, "I searched for them. No one searched for me."

Brother Joseph's journey to Holy Cross parallels my own. I vividly recall the day I first risked saying out loud that I was interested in religious life. I was in high school sophomore biology class and my lab

partner and I were dissecting a grasshopper, meticulously separating and labeling each part of the insect's body. Sister Mary walked over to our table and, leaning down to watch our work, began to chat with us, asking us what we hoped to be doing after graduation in a couple of years. I suspect she hoped we would become science teachers like she was. For the first time, I said that I was curious about the life of the Holy Cross Brothers who founded my school. Sister stood upright, smiled, and replied, "If you don't mind giving up a few things, you will see the world." What a wonderfully inspiring response, one that sent my youthful imagination into a million directions at once. I was hooked. Of course, it was only years later that I finally realized what I had to give up!

Like Brother Joseph, I searched for them. No one searched for me.

For many of my predecessors, vocation ministry was a function of "gatekeeping." Many were let in, some were sent away. The gate opens, but it can also remain closed. This pattern would continue throughout formation, ensuring that the community had a sufficient workforce to staff an ever-growing number of schools. We find this same dynamic operative in developing sectors of religious congregations around the world.

Today, the fields are nearly empty and the gate creaks loudly when, and if, opened. A legacy of abundance haunts not just me, but many of my co-workers in this ministry. We search... and then we search some more.

My searching takes me to places and events I never imagined when I worked in mental health as a licensed clinical social worker. Throughout the course of the year, I travel from California to Connecticut, vis-

iting freshman and junior religion classes of our nine secondary schools. I orient new students to the history and charism of my congregation and share my vocation story with upperclassmen, hoping to inspire even one student to consider religious life as a viable option for his future. I beckon with the invitation that both begins and ends our Holy Cross Constitutions, "Come. Follow me."

Back on the road, my search continues into the heartland in places such as Kansas City and Indianapolis. As a New England Yankee, I bless my GPS many times over throughout the year. "Recalculating" has come to be a comforting word as I navigate unfamiliar routes. Now I am at a convention of over 20,000 students, setting up a table and banners, hawking Starbursts and lollipops to attract any perusal of my wares – wristbands, prayer cards, a newly designed brochure. Searching. Most of my professional life as a therapist has taken place in quiet, lamp-lit rooms with adults. With Christian rock music blaring in the background, God's sense of humor is not wasted on me! A few days later, I am stepping over exhausted teens that have literally dropped to the floor, their sugar high long gone. Even before this event ends, I am on my obsolete Blackberry organizing my next trip – Hayward, California, then New Orleans, Louisiana.

The searching continues. ■



BR. JONATHAN BEEBE, CSC

Has been a Holy Cross Brother for almost 30 years. He currently serves as Vocation Director for the Moreau and Midwest Provinces. He is also a licensed clinical social worker who works with a variety of people in need.

“Follow Me”

The Charm of a Vocational “Call” in the Gospels



By Fr. GIUSEPPE DE VIRGILIO

It all starts with the “calling”

In almost all the New Testament writings (148 occurrences) the vocation experience is marked by the use of the verb “to call” (in Greek: *kalein*) with different shades of meaning. The theological use that the verb “to call” has in the Gospel’s accounts appears more relevant when the subject of the call is God or Jesus Christ. Jesus’ calling refers primarily to “vocation stories” and describes the theological and existential dimension of the call to “discipleship.” The public mission of Jesus of Nazareth begins with “vocation stories” and the Evangelist Mark presents the debut of the ministry of Jesus with this exemplary story:

“After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God and saying: ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the gospel.’ Passing by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me, I will make you fishers of men.’ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. Going a little farther, he saw on the boat also James son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were mending their nets. He called them. And they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him” (Mk 1:14-20).

Jesus sees and calls the first disciples to follow him (Mark 1:20), inviting them to

free themselves from the bonds that constrain vocational response and to move decisively to follow him, sharing the adventure of evangelization (cf. Lk 9:57-62 ; Mt 8:19-22). The story of the calling of Levi follows the call of the first disciples and culminates in the subsequent “bridal” banquet (cf. Mk 2:19) of Jesus with publicans and sinners (Mk 2:13-17). The story ends with the logion on the universal “call” to conversion: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mark 2:17). Vocation and conversion are part of the same proposal of Jesus: the appeal to every believer is to “respond” to this call with a clear choice of life.

He calls and anoints the “Twelve”

The call of Jesus is constitutive of the apostolic status in the passage of Mk 3:13-

19, where Jesus ‘summons’ some men chosen from among those who followed him (Mark 3:13) and calling twelve by name, he anoints them (vv. 17-19). They will be the first to follow the example of Christ the servant, in a “new” style of common life and evangelical preaching, avoiding “being called” benefactors (Lk 22:25-27). The call to conversion and entrance into the Kingdom is placed within the vocational process more broadly, (cf. Mt 5:19). Jesus enters as “guest” into people’s homes (Lk 7:39; Jn 2,2) and the sharing of his life becomes an appeal of salvation “(Lk 19:9). In the broadest sense of the whole mission of Jesus, “a prophet mighty in deed and word” (Lk 24:19), is a ‘call’ to the existential conversion and reception of the mystery of the Kingdom (Lk 5:32).

The call on the road

The narrative of the “rich young man” has a particularly expressive force (cf. Mt 19:16- 22; Mk 10:17-31; Lk 18:18- 23), which is an unprecedented and memorable icon of vocation for youth ministry. The poignant scene of the dialogue between the anonymous young man and the Lord, who “looks inside” him and loves him (Mark 10:21), remains engraved in the imagination of the Gospel, as a “lost opportunity” of happiness and fulfillment. To be truly happy, the young man needs to follow the Lord unconditionally. What has not happen in the life of the rich young man happens in the story of Bartimaeus (Mark 10:45-52) and of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). They have answered the call and the Lord has transformed their lives.

“The Call” in the Stories of the Parables

A singular use of the theological verb “to call” appears in the stories of the parables. In Luke’s version of the parable of the banquet, the Gospel presents the dynamics of the call in two ways: the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame are “invited to enter,” while the first guests do not accept the “call” (Lk 14:16-20 ; cf. Mt 22:3-5), and so are excluded from the Kingdom. Expanding the story with the second parable of the wedding garment

(cf. Mt 22:11-13), Matthew wants to inform his interlocutors, who felt invited and called by God in the Christian community, the need for moral disposition to live according to the demands of the Kingdom. Even for them is Jesus’ warning: “many are called, but few are chosen” (Mt 22:14; 24,22-31).

Likewise in the parable of the master who sends workers into his vineyard (Mt 20:1-16), the evangelist emphasizes the persistent calling to work (v. 4.5.7); although he uses the verb “to call” in verse 8 only to indicate the duty of the steward to pay the workers at the end of the day. In the parable of the ten virgins the call to come to the wedding becomes an “eschatological cry” (Mt 25:6). We can find an

“They have answered the call, and the Lord has transformed their lives.”

additional vocation value in the parable of the talents when the three servants are called to be responsible for their gifts (cf. Mt 25:14).

In the parable of the merciful Father (Luke 15:13-32) the verb “to call” indicates the inner path of the protagonist’ wounded identity, the awareness of his sin, which leads him to take the road to the house of his father, “no longer worthy to be called his son” (cf. Lk 15:19-21). It is his birth right that allows the young man to look inward in order to understand himself and to feel the need to get out of the abyss into which he has fallen. It is understandable that the idea of the call, evoked by the theological use of the verb “to call” connects the action of the caller to the identity of the called in a decisive relationship.

To Call by Name

Drawing from the traditions of the Old Testament, also the Gospels highlight the anthropological vocation meaning of:

- “To be called by name” (cf. Marta: Lk 10:41; Mary Magdalene: Jn 20:16; Simon the Pharisee: Lk 7:40; Zacchaeus: Luke 19.5; Lazarus: Jn 11,43; Philip: Jn 14.9; Simon Peter: Mc 14,37; Lk 22:31; Jn 21,15-17).
- To name an unborn child (cf. Lk 1,13.21; Mt 1:21; cf. Gen 16.11 to 12; 17,19; Isaiah 7:14).
- To rename a disciple (cf. Jn 1:42).
- To invoke the name of the Father (Mt 6,9).

For his part, the believer must be careful not to thwart the invocation of the Lord by making his prayer in vain: “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but not do what I command?” (Lk 6,46; cf. Mt 6 ,7). It will be in the name of the Lord that the disciples will make deeds (cf Mt 7,22), for his name will be persecuted (Mt 10:22), as builders of peace “will be called” sons of God (Mt 5,9), and persevering in fidelity to “his name” (John 1:12), will get life (Jn 20,30-31).

The icon of the response to the divine call is certainly the Virgin Mary. In the story of the Annunciation (Lk 1.26 to 38) it is described the whole mystery of the divine call and the positive response of the believer. Three words sum up the vocation dynamism of Luke’s scene: “Fear not,” “Here I am,” and “Let it be.” The call of God through the angel is the full and free response of Mary, confirming her unconditional “yes” to the Word, who becomes “flesh” in her womb (Lk 1:38; cf. Jn 1 , 14). ■



FR. GIUSEPPE DE VIRGILIO

Is a professor and doctor of New Testament exegesis and biblical theology. He is also a faculty member at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome.

A Dignified Touch

The Spirituality of Mercy



© Halpout

By Fr. EUGENE HEMRICK

As I passed the young man standing on the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Third Street in Washington, DC, I felt the needed help and flipped him a five dollar bill. “Get something to eat,” I told him as I walked away.

When I looked back at him from across the street, there he was; he wasn’t begging but just stood there looking lost. Suddenly I remembered Pope Francis saying: “When we encounter the poor stop and touch them.”

I returned to the young man and asked him how he was doing. He told me he tried to commit suicide and had just been released from the hospital. From the bandage on his wrist I knew he was telling the truth.

“Do you have a job?” I asked.

“No,” he replied, “I don’t have the right credentials for getting one.”

I pointed out a way for getting employed and encouraged him to speak with some people I thought would help him. As we conversed his eyes lit up, no longer looking lost and empty.

As I left him, I didn’t “flip” him money, but placed several five dollar bills gently in his hand and thanked God for a profound lesson in mercy: more than anything else mercy is a dignified touch.

Why feel compassion and the compulsion to touch that young man?

I wish I could say it’s because priests are expected to do this. Not true, as we see in the Good Samaritan story; the priest doesn’t stop to help. How then explain it? The words of Isaiah best explain that moment, “The spirit of the Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted.” It was a moment of grace!

Grace leaves us free to either cooperate with it or not. When the poor are in our

midst, it’s easy “to get them off our back” by flipping them something and moving on. It is also easy to justify bypassing them by thinking, “he or she is working the crowd,” or to feel “I have enough problems of my own; I don’t need any others at the moment.”

As noble as is mercy, it requires enormous strength. Theologian Fr. Romano Guardini tells us, “Life is full of suffering; if a person is well disposed toward life then the suffering touches him and makes itself felt. But that is wearing. Suffering demands our understanding; and that requires exertion.”

When I looked into the empty eyes of that young man, I remembered words in the Spanish psalms I sometime recite, *rostro di Dios* [the face of God], which encourages us to seek God’s face and look into God’s eyes. In inspiring us to touch the poor, Pope Francis goes to the heart of mercy: it is best practiced through eye to eye contact and front to front encounter.

The German word *Wahrnehmen*, which

means to perceive denotes the intensity contact requires. It means to receive another into our self, to submit to his or her influence on us, to place our self within their grasp, to have an I-thou relationship in which “I” become one with “thou.”

To achieve this, Christoph Cardinal Schoenborn of Vienna would add, “We should do it [mercy] simply and immediately, without asking how we will benefit from it.” Simply put, mercy requires putting aside our ego.

Schoenborn goes on to say, “Jesus does not want us to treat others, our brothers and sisters in need, merely as instruments of our own sanctification, as means to a pious end.” Treatment of others must be “selflessly, for the neighbor’s sake, not for reward, recognition, and feeling good about our self.” In other words, mercy’s ultimate goal is not for my sake or even getting a higher place in heaven; it’s for bringing dignity and God’s comfort to “another.”

May I suggest a spiritual exercise to keep our mercy invigorated? It is Theological Reflection in which we reflect on the significant relationships we experienced throughout the day and the heart we put into them? Mercy [Misericordia] in Latin contains the word heart. Theological Reflection prompts us to ask; when we are inspired by God’s grace to touch another in need how well did we cooperate with it? Even though our own heart may be burdened did we pray for God’s grace to lift its burden by extending our heart to another in greater need? In a war torn world that encourages hardness of heart, how often do we pray for deeper understanding and a compassionate heart for expand understanding? God is forever prompting us to open our hearts wider. Throughout the day how often do we look into God’s eyes and say “fiat?” ■



FR. EUGENE HEMRICK

Is a priest of the diocese of Joliet and holds a Ph.D. in education from the University of Notre Dame. Fr. Eugene is the Director of the National Institute for the Renewal of the Priesthood.

The Holy Year of Mercy

(December 8, 2015–November 20, 2016)

Understanding the Logo



The logo and the motto together explain what the Jubilee Year is all about:

- The motto Merciful Like the Father (cf Luke, 6:36) invites us to follow the merciful example of the Father who asks us not to judge or condemn but to forgive and to give love and forgiveness without measure (cf Lk 6:37-38).
- The logo – the work of Jesuit Father Marko I. Rupnik – expresses the profound way in which the Good Shepherd touches the flesh of humanity and does so with a love with the power to change one’s life.
- The eyes of the Good Shepherd are merged with those of man.
- The scene has the shape of an almond. It calls to mind the two natures of Christ, divine and human.
- The three concentric ovals suggest the movement of Christ who carries humanity out of the night of sin and death.

Matthew 5:1-12

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy



By SR. EMILY BEATA MARSH, FSP

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy

The Sermon on the Mount is a famous and often-quoted moment in Jesus' ministry, and the Beatitudes are certainly a high point of the Sermon on the Mount. In many of the film versions of the life of Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount is a grand, sweeping scene with shots of a huge crowd around Jesus, who is seated on top of a great hill. He begins in a loud, clear, convincing voice: "Blessed are the poor in spirit...." (Mt 5:3).

The Beatitudes are truly a wellspring for the spiritual life—we can meditate on them again and again, and continue to draw new insights. As we know, they are a sort of spiritual program for all followers of Jesus. Religious men and women, who follow Jesus in a radical way, are called to live the Beatitudes in a deep and radical

way as well. In fact, the Gospel passage of the Beatitudes is one of the options for the Gospel at Mass on feasts of saints who were religious, as well as at Mass on the occasion of profession or renewal of religious vows.

Each of the Beatitudes deserves its own Lectio Divina! But since we are within the first months of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, let us consider the fifth Beatitude: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" (Mt 5:7). For me, this Beatitude immediately brings to mind another saying of Jesus: "Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36). There is a clear call to mercy here. But what exactly does this mean?

First, it means that we need to draw nearer and nearer to God, our merciful Father. Recently, one of our Sisters said to me, "Mercy is not natural, you know. It's natural for God, but not for us. We have to learn it—we have to pray to learn it." The first part of being merciful, of practicing mercy, is opening ourselves to receive mercy from God. Pope Francis wrote about this when he declared the Jubilee Year of Mercy: "we are called to show mercy *because mercy has first been shown to us*" (MV no. 9, emphasis added).

Mercy, according to Pope Francis, is the foundation of God's relationship with us. Mercy spills over from God's heart; God cannot but be merciful with us. He loves to show mercy to us! Because it is so foundational, Pope Francis says, "We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy... At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy" (MV no. 2-3). One way to gaze on mercy is through a daily examen—pausing at the end of the day to reflect on God's presence in our lives that day. What happened in my day? How was God present? Can I see that he was present? Do I believe that he was? His very presence is a manifestation of his overflowing mercy.

There is a second part to this call to mer-

cy that we hear in the Beatitudes. Opening ourselves to God's mercy in our own lives is an ongoing process. But the more we do, the more we are freed to live mercifully and show mercy toward others. Pope Francis wrote about this, too: "Jesus asks us also to *forgive and to give*. To be instruments of mercy because it was we who first received mercy from God. To be generous with others, knowing that God showers his goodness upon us with immense generosity" (MV no. 14). The stream of God's mercy pouring into our lives flows through us to others through the very words, gestures, and actions we use toward others.

Pope Francis' words, and indeed the Beatitudes, are not meant to stay on the page—we are called to live them out and make them concrete. Indeed, concrete acts of mercy draw us closer to God and closer to our brothers and sisters. And drawing closer to God is the heart of discernment. As we begin this Jubilee Year, perhaps we can take some time to reflect on how Jesus is calling us to live his words, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" and "Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful." Bring this reflection to Jesus, and see what He says!

I would like to suggest that this Beatitude could be our prayer during the Year of Mercy. *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Heavenly Father, blessed are you, for you are merciful. You have shown us mercy. Blessed are we, because we have received the Father's mercy. Blessed are we when we are merciful, for we become the Father's mercy to others!* ■



SR. EMILY BEATA MARSH, FSP

Is a Daughter of St. Paul. She is currently studying theology at The Catholic University of America, as well as serving in the Pauline mission of evangelization in Alexandria, Virginia.

A Consecrated Life at the Service of Immigrants

An Interview with Sr. Norma Pimentel, M.J.



By Sr. LOU ELLA HICKMAN, IWBS

"Fr. Tom, can I borrow your parish hall for a couple of days?"

Sometimes it just takes a simple question and a simple response that can help resolve a complex problem. In this case, the problem was the need for an organized system of humanitarian care for the immigrants flooding into the Rio Grande Valley.

For the last several years, the Valley had become a corridor for people fleeing the poverty and violence of their home country on their way to connect with family members in other parts of the United States. But before they moved on, these people needed help. They were tired, hungry, and scared. That help now has become internationally known for its outreach to so many of God's poor arriving from Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico.

Sister Norma Pimentel, M.J., Executive Director of the Catholic Charities Rio Grande Valley, asked Rev. Tom Luczak, O.F.M., pastor of Sacred Heart Church in McAllen, Texas for the use of his hall just "for a couple of days." This was to help ease the chaos both at the city's bus station and at the Office of Refugee Resettlement. The Border Patrol could only house 300 people; however, the population numbers had soared until the building contained close to a thousand individuals. There was more to the problem than just numbers. Escaping the violence in their own country and experiencing danger along their journey, the people were fearful at first to respond to the invitation to relocate to the hall. That is, until they learned the invitation came from "una monjita" (a little nun). Thus, Sister Norma's vocation as a religious sister was able to cross the cultural divide making trust as well as help possible.

Sister Norma's work has led her to speak at the 58th session of the Commission on

the Status of Women, as well as at the United Nations. She has been honored with the national "Keep the Dream Alive" award (Catholic Charities USA), a finalist in the Texan of the Year Award, and was personally thanked by Pope Francis as a representative of all religious sisters in the United States. Her story has appeared in such magazines as America Magazine, The Global Sisters Report, and Texas Monthly. While the media helps her to help others, her bottom line I discovered during our interview is her Catholic faith and her vocation as a religious sister.

Her Vocation Story in her own words

While both of my parents were from Mexico, I was born in the United States and I lived on both sides of the border. My father was very protective and he didn't want me to associate with others he thought were liberals. As a young person, I wanted to pursue a profession in art. I knew I

had a profession—something different so I decided to study at Pan American University and later at the University of Texas in Austin. There was a friend my father liked and I asked her if I could go out with her for pizza. She told me sure but you have to come with me to a prayer meeting first and that meeting changed my life. I had a headache because I was very stressed due to what I was experiencing at home. I was prayed over and the headache left.

I continued to attend the prayer meetings. I wanted more, to learn more about the Bible, to learn more about God. After one of the meetings, a religious sister in the group asked me to attend a retreat at her convent. She also asked if I had ever considered a religious vocation. I prayed about it and I chose to enter on March 21, 1974 which was the first day of spring. After I entered, I told one of the sisters I had to go home as I had not told my parents about my decision. When I did, I told my father that he was wrong and that God is right.

Sr. Juliana became my mentor. She was a person of great faith and she helped me become who I am. Later, I applied to St. Mary's University to study theology. She told me to hang in there even though I thought it was too hard at the beginning.

From day one I was involved with immigrants. Sometimes women, children or families would stay at our convent. When Bishop Fitzpatrick opened Casa Oscar Romero, he asked our community to staff it. At the time the home was a very controversial issue. Ten years later the war in El Salvador ended and the home was not needed for those fleeing from violence.

The bishop then asked me to be the director of catechesis for the diocese. I needed more skills so I asked to go to school and I chose Loyola in Chicago. After I finished its two year program, I worked as a counselor for Catholic Charities. When the director retired, I was asked to replace her.

For you, what is the best part of religious life?

Religious life is the opportunity to become what God calls us to be, that is, to

connect and help others.

What is the best part of your ministry to God's poor?

For me, the best part is being that voice for what they most need and to help them speak for themselves.

What advice would you give to someone considering religious life?

Stay true to yourself. Don't be afraid to answer the call. We find true fulfillment when we become what we are. Women today have so much to offer yet there are so many things [distractions].

What is the most important thing you have learned in your ministry to immigrants?

They have touched my life profoundly. They are very fragile yet they have great faith, great strength in looking for a better life. God has put me in the right place at the right time and it has reaffirmed my calling. It feels good when I fall asleep knowing one person felt the love of God today.

What is the one thing you would want people to know about the immigrants?

They are people just like you and me. They are people of faith looking for an opportunity. We are better people just by their presence. The respite center is holy ground when some [a group] comes in. Some even kneel to pray in gratitude.

Conclusion

The interview finished; Sr. Norma gave me a tour of the respite center. As one would expect for a shoe string budget, the furnishings are simple, functional and orderly. The room is divided into several designated sections: a children's play area, another for mothers with babies, and still another is an eating area which is located next to the kitchen. There is also space for donated clothes that have been sorted and hung on clothes racks. At one point, I turned her to her, "This is my highest compliment—this place doesn't smell like

a second hand store." (If you have been in that type of second hand store, you will understand what I mean.) She replied with a bit of pride, "It takes a nun." I laughed and told her I wish one could be elected president. When we exited the building, Sr. Norma shared that a number of other faith communities have stepped in to help; notably the Salvation Army with their in kind donation of portable showers and tents. She also mentioned that her responsibilities extend beyond overseeing the respite care center itself; she also organizes the volunteers. That, too, can be a massive project in itself. During the 4th of July week-end, a thousand people showed up to help.

After we finished touring the parish hall turned respite center, Sr. Norma asked, "Well, Lou Ella, what do you think?" I paused. "I was going to say, impressive but . . . alright!" Then I went on, "I noticed during our interview, you mentioned 'don't be afraid' several times in terms of a religious vocation. I plan to conclude my article with one of William Wallace's lines from the movie Braveheart: 'they will follow courage.'" I was not surprised when she replied, "He's my hero."

If you feel called to follow Sr. Norma's lead, be forewarned. While she is very present and unhurried when she listens to someone, she hits the floor running when she moves on. Like her hero, William Wallace, she has a mission and she's not afraid to respond. I pray you may be able to do the same. ■

If you want to help, contact Sr. Norma's office at:

400 N. Nebraska Ave.
San Juan, TX 78589
956-702-4088
www.catholiccharitiesrgv.org



SR. LOU ELLA HICKMAN, IWBS

Is a Sister of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament. She has published over 150 articles and poems and holds a degree in Theology.

slehickman@netscape.net

*"As each one has received a gift,
use it to serve one another as good
stewards of God's varied grace."*

1 Peter 4:10



Rogationist

LEGACY SOCIETY

By including the *Congregation of Rogationists* in your will or another form of planned giving, our mission to work for the poor and to promote vocations in the Church will continue.

Become a distinguished member of the
Rogationist Legacy Society and be a blessing
to children and seminarians in need.



If you would like to be a part of the *Rogationist Legacy Society* or have already included the *Congregation of Rogationists* in your estate plan, please contact Monica Llerena at (818)782-1765 or llerenam@vocationsandprayer.org.

Please note when writing your will, our legal title and address are: *Congregation of Rogationists, 6635 Tobias Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91405.*



A Teen Never Seen

The Psychology of Adolescence

By DR. BRUCE L. THIESSEN, PH.D.

*A teen never seen
Inside silent screams
She's working on a scheme
To get noticed is her dream*

*She spikes up her hair
She's added some flair
But still no one notices
They don't seem to care...*

Do you know a teen immersed in such a struggle for validation? Maybe you are such a teen. Everyone needs to be noticed---to be loved, and to be affirmed, but there's something about the teen years that seems to bring this issue to the forefront. It is often a time of self-consciousness, and insecurity. There is peer pressure, and there is pressure from

adults---mostly authority figures.

Reaching the teen years is an accomplishment, and something to be celebrated. But the teenage years can also greet one with much confusion, and trepidation. It's an awkward time in one's life, to say the least. Upon reaching the teen years, an adolescent has not traveled very far, in the time trek, away from childhood, and yet, adulthood is clearly visible on the horizon. Sometimes you, as a teen, you may act as a child. Other times, as a teen you may feel the pressure to present a more mature image, and act as an adult. On the other hand, you may simply have abandoned some of your childhood impulsivity, based on reaching a higher level of maturity.

Birth order can also complicate matters. The oldest child tends to feel like a lot of

responsibility has been placed on his/her plate. He or she may feel more responsibility to mature, more rapidly, and completely, than younger siblings. He or she is likely to demonstrate leadership skills, and, and also struggle with the need to control others. By the time parents have their last child, the initial fear-based strictness that they may have imposed on the oldest child, could become relaxed, freeing up the youngest child to be more of a risk-taker. On the other hand, parents, seeing the youngest as "the baby" of the family, may actually become more protective, and stricter. There is no hard-fast rule, and there are certainly exceptions, but the youngest child tends to feel more at-ease, more socially uninhibited, and perhaps even manipulative and self-centered.

Enter the middle child. I am one of those. We tend to have to fight to be no-

ticed. We do that by being rebellious or quirky, in some cases---anything that will make us stand out. We may be more introspective, yet, creatively more expressive, as we seek to release a host of bottled-up emotions. The “M” in middle child can also stand for mediator, because we tend to be uncomfortable with conflict, and prefer to seek ways of making peace with others.

Only children---well that’s another story entirely. I have an only child. Her mother and I pour all of our love, and all of our parenting efforts into her. She becomes the sole recipient of our successes and failures, as parent, and of our expectations, which can often be based on standards that are unreasonably high. When she becomes a teen, she will likely feel a strong need to become independent, and yet a strong obligation to parents, and other adult authority figures. And since she was the sole recipient of all of our attention, and she didn’t have to share that with siblings, she may have an even greater need to be noticed than teens that are subjects of other birth-order scenarios.

Birth-order factors can become all the more pronounced, conspicuous and salient during the teen years. But whether you are a first-born teen; a middle. Oldest children may seek attention through leadership opportunities and achievement. Middle children may find that the identity crisis that is so central to the teen experience is even more evident and real for them. In the pre-industrial era, the identity of teens was not so elusive, as families generally worked together on the farm, or within a small, family business, and each member had a clearly-defined function within the family hierarchical, mostly patriarchal structure.

Moreover, sex roles have changed significantly over the years---men were once the sole bread-winners, and women supported the men as housewives who spent most of their time cooking, cleaning and taking care of children. Now those roles are often equally, or more evenly distributed. Some of this has led to role ambiguity and confusion, further compounding the identity issues associated with adoles-

cence, and the manner in which birth order intersects with that experience.

So much for research-based findings that have relevance for today’s youth. Let’s go back to how it feels to be a teen, not seen. Technology has become increasingly advanced over the years, and the teens of the 60s and 70s, who would sit around and talk, or hold jam sessions, or go out to play hockey or football, are more likely to spend more time relatively isolated from one another, tethered to electronic devices like the rest of us. Social media allows for a form of social interaction, and Facebook is a means of getting noticed. But the

*“See yourself as
you’ve been told
God sees you.”*

same struggle to avoid being a teen not seen remains, and as a teen, you may find yourself gaining attention for the wrong reasons, as teens did prior to the advent of technology. There are plenty of ways to get noticed, based on one’s appearance. In the 60s, teens wore bell-bottoms, and guys grew their hair long. Today, teens can get tattoos, or body-piercing. Teenage girls can solicit the attention of male companionship by dressing in a provocative manner, and by trying to model after folks like Miley Cyrus. That will almost guarantee a way to get noticed, but it’s also a way to get used, abused, and excused by guys who only see you as an object of their raging adolescent hormones.

The first thing to realize, if you are a teen, not seen, is that, though the need can be magnified, according to birth order, or an insecure childhood, by personality, or

by a number of environmental or genetic factors, it is normal to want to be noticed, to want to be loved, and to want to be accepted and validated. You may not be a wild child, a party-goer, or Miley Cyrus fan. You may be a catechism-graduate and a Sunday-school pleaser of religious authorities. And yet the assurance that “His eye is on the sparrow,” and he loves you so much that he died for you, may not go far enough to create in you a sense of being loved. You may have been told a thousand times that you are created in God’s image, yet you don’t feel like that at all---you feel ugly, unwanted, useless, and alone in an unkind world.

Maybe before putting all of your eggs in one basket, and trying so hard to earn the approval and validation of others, you need to begin by looking upon yourself as lovable, and stopping yourself before engaging in bitter self-criticism. Remind yourself of those qualities in yourself that you admire. Become the author of your own self-confidence. Hold your head up high. See yourself as you’ve been told God sees you. When you seek the attention and validation of others without first valuing and validating yourself, you come to them as an empty shell, and no other person will ever be able to fill that. Instead, present them with a cup that is already partially-filled by you, and you may find willing companions that would be more than happy to fill it up just a little more. Are you a teen, not seen? Some are too self-absorbed to ever see you---in all of your beauty and for all that you have to offer. Just keep on being the best you that you can be, keep it real, and keep abandoning false projections that don’t match the person you really are. Are you a teen, not seen? You will begin to be seen when you look in the mirror, and love the person that looks back at you. ■



DR. BRUCE L. THIESSEN, Ph.D.

Known by patients as Dr. B.L.T. is a Christ-centered psychologist, and a singer/songwriter. He presently works as a clinical psychologist for the California Department of Corrections.

drblt@drblt.net

NEWS

Compiled by Monica Llerena



Vatican City

Pope Francis' Answer to the Vocation Crisis

"Pray tirelessly for vocations"

Pope Francis spoke candidly about the decline in vocations during a meeting with 5,000 men and women members of religious orders and secular institutes on February 1, 2016 in the Vatican.

Recalling several occasions when Bishops told him about the scarcity of seminarians and women discerning a vocation, the Holy Father asked "Why has the womb of consecrated life become so barren?" He explained how tempting it was to lose hope and the importance of prayer. "We must pray. We must pray tirelessly," Francis said.



"The Church, Mother of Vocations" 53rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations

The 53rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations will be observed on Good Shepherd Sunday on April 17, 2016. On this day, the Church pays attention to all vocations, but especially to vocations to priesthood, diaconate, religious life, societies of apostolic life, and secular institutes. Pope Francis' message for this year's World Day of Prayer for Vocations is "The Church, Mother of Vocations."

To see the Holy Father's entire message, visit:

<http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/vocations.index.html>



International Union of Superiors General *Catholic Women Religious in Communication and Communion*

The International Union of Superiors General (UISG), created toward the end of the Vatican Council II in 1965, promotes dialogue among superiors general of Catholic women religious and encourages collaboration within the church and society at large. The UISG "provides an international forum where superiors general can share experiences, exchange information, and mentor one another in their role as leaders."

In addition to its involvement in support of women religious, the UISG participates actively in policy making as a member of international organizations such as WUCWO (World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations), KAIRE, and WCRP (World Council of Religions for Peace).

The next Plenary Assembly of the UISG will be held from May 9 to 13 in Rome.

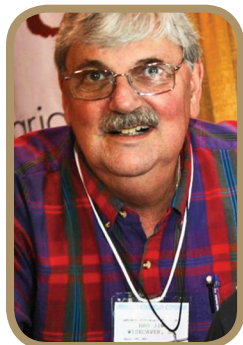
Visit their website for further information:

www.internationalunionsuperiorsgeneral.org





United States



Brother Jim Wisecaver, SM

A Trusted and Inspiring Collaborator

Brother Jim was a contributing author of *Vocations and Prayer* magazine and for many years he shared with us his experience promoting vocations, his passion for photography, and above all his friendship. Brother Jim passed into eternal life last October after 54 years of religious profession. Brother Jim would stop by the offices of *Vocations and Prayer* and encourage us to continue working for vocations.

The Staff of *Vocations and Prayer* magazine extends our condolences to his family and the Marianist community. May Brother Jim rest in peace.

National Catholic Sisters Week

March 8-14, 2016

During National Catholic Sisters Week, the Church celebrates women religious and their invaluable contribution to society. There are approximately 50,000 religious sisters dedicated to serve the underprivileged and vulnerable in hospitals, churches, schools, shelters, and other charities in the United States.

"What would the church be without you?" Pope Francis asked a group of 800 religious women in 2013. Then he replied: "It would be missing maternity, affection, tenderness, and a mother's intuition." Since 1727, the religious sisters have worked in the U.S. to improve the quality of life of millions of Americans. For information on events celebrating women religious in your area, please visit:

www.nationalcatholicsistersweek.org

MEET A **SISTER.**
BE **INSPIRED.**

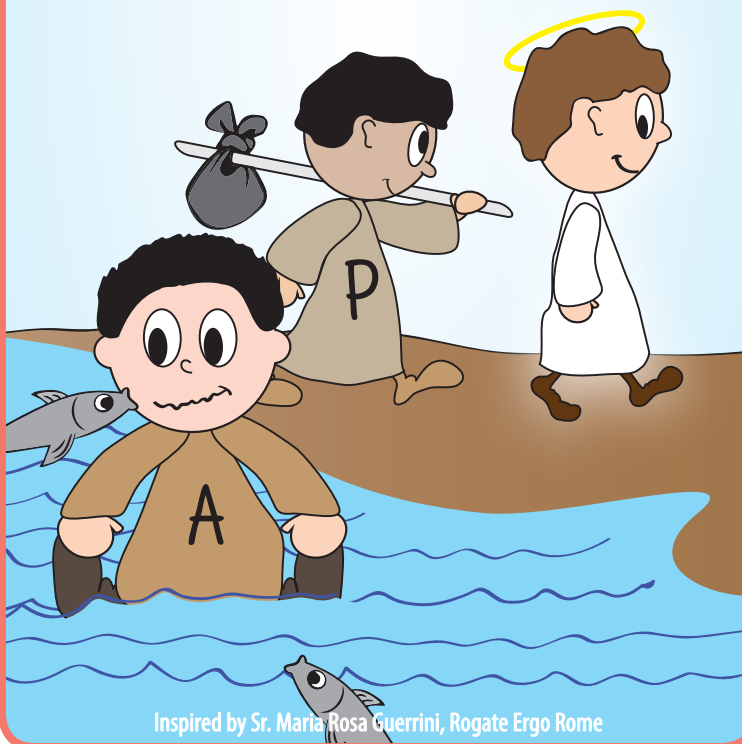


NATIONAL CATHOLIC
SISTERS WEEK

CORNER MESSAGE

**"And then, they left the
nests and followed him."**

(Mk 1,17)

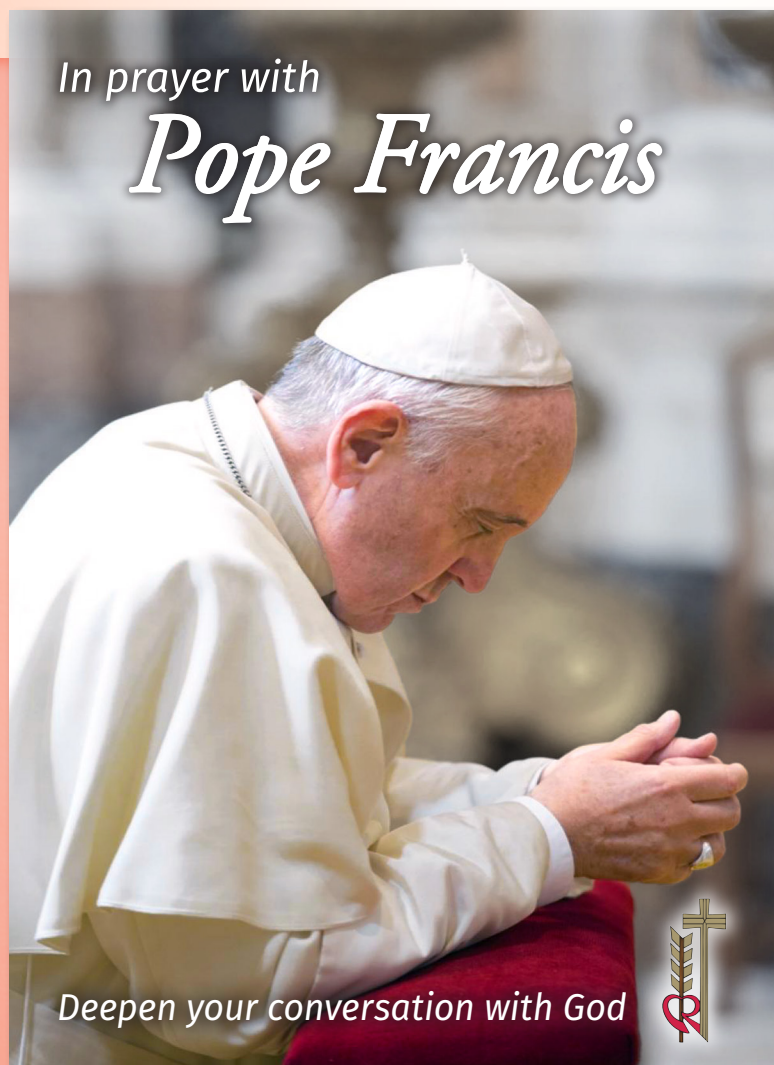


ROGATIONIST PUBLICATIONS

presents

In prayer with

Pope Francis



4"X5.5"

- Compact and portable 38-page color booklet
- Pope Francis' Five Finger Prayer
- Basic prayers with the Pope

\$2.99 each

"Deepen your conversation with God"

ROGATIONIST PUBLICATIONS

6635 Tobias Ave, Van Nuys CA 91405 • Tel: 818.782.1765 • Email: info@vocationsandprayer.org