

Vocations and Prayer

 The Catholic Magazine on Vocation Ministry

JANUARY - MARCH 2020

#117 VOL. MMXX NO.1



The Beauty of Consecrated Life



Editorial

I Love the Consecrated Life 3

Let Me Explain Why
It is a precious and necessary gift for the people of God.
Fr. Antonio Fiorenza, RCJ

Special Section

The Consecrated Life Today

Following Christ More Closely 4

The Consecrated Life in the Church
It is a vocation from God that awakens a response of whole-hearted gift of self.
Sister Sara Butler, M.S.B.T., S.T.L., Ph.D.

A Special Way to Holiness 7

The Evangelical Counsels
Called to be a perfect image of Jesus Christ.
Sr. Anna Lilia Frias Vargas

Prefer Nothing to the Love of Christ 8

A Reflection on the Crisis of the Consecrated Life Today
A simple synthesis of the whole Gospel.
Fr. Sandro Perrone, RCJ

Interview

Religious Women Facing the Challenges of Today's World 10

A Conversation with Sr. Teolinda Salemi, Superior General of the Daughters of the Divine Zeal
We believe in the power of prayer to obtain vocations from the Lord.
Vocations and Prayer Staff

Vocations Spotlight

A Church with Open Doors 12

Suggestions for Youth Ministry
Allowing room for a popular youth ministry.
Fr. Gonzalo Meza

Building a Culture of Pastoral Care 19

A Vocation Serving Church Communities
We can accompany people on their life's journey.
John M. Rinaldo, D. Min

Vocations Director's Corner 21

Promoting Vocations
Community Life Witness, First of All
We are called to be a community of "one heart and one soul."
Sr. M. Noemi Fuderanan, FDZ

Bible

God Would Never Forsake Us 22

Prophet Hosea's Main Message
The central idea of Hosea is the magnificent portrayal of God as a passionate lover.
Fr. Isaac Kalina, O.S.B.

Spirituality

Lectio Divina - Luke 1: 39-45 24

Following Elizabeth's Example

Attentive to what God is doing here
An invitation to see ourselves, others and the world through the lens of grace and gratitude.
Sr. Emily Beata Marsh, FSP

Blessed Ceferino Namuncurá (1886-1905) 25

"A Saint Inspires Others to Holiness"
He chose St. Dominic Savio as a model.
Fr. Peter Quinto, RCJ

Vocations Witness

Never Lacking as a Spouse or as a Mother 26

The Richness of my Religious Life
Jesus is my spouse and I feel very much like a Mother of God's people.
Sr. Elizabeth Miles, S. de M.

Feeling at Home 28

My Life-Long Vocation Decision
Educating young people to actively search for their vocation by serving others.
Sr. Sydney Moss, F.M.A.

Psychology

Shattering the Depression Glass 29

Now is the Best Time of All
Searching for a way to overcome depression.
Dr. Bruce L. Thiessen, a.k.a. Dr. B.L.T.

News

VATICAN "Exemplary Companions for the Journey" 31

USA A Message about Covid-19
Support Vocations and Prayer magazine

Insert

Holy Hours for Vocations

Fr. Antonio Fiorenza, RCJ

I Love the Consecrated Life Let Me Explain Why

By Fr. ANTONIO FIORENZA, RCJ

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

Editor-In-Chief
Rev. Antonio Fiorenza, RCJ

Contributing Editor
Mónica J. Llerena, MS

Contributing Writers
Sr. Sara Butler, M.S.B.T., S.T.L., Ph.D.
Sr. Anna Lilia Frias Vargas
Fr. Sandro Perrone, RCJ
Dr. John Rinaldo
Fr. Gonzalo Meza
Sr. M. Noemi Fuderanan, F.D.Z.
Fr. Isaac Kalina, O.S.B.
Sr. Emily Beata Marsh, F.S.P.
Fr. Peter Quinto, RCJ
Sr. Elizabeth Miles, S. de M.
Sr. Sidney Moss, FMA
Dr. Bruce Thiessen

Art Director
Nikhil Nathu

Subscriptions
Karla Legaria

Printing and Design
Challenge Graphics, North Hills, CA

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

2020 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:
Photo by Daughters of Divine Zeal

I made my first profession of vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience on September 29, 1969. As a member of the Congregation of Rogationists, I also professed a "fourth vow" called the Rogate, committing myself to pray every day for the gift of vocations, and to accompany this prayer with the service to the poor. I was 18 years old. After more than 50 years of consecrated life, my heart is full of joy and gratitude to the Lord for the gift of this special vocation.

I discover the beauty of the consecrated life day by day, also through the experience of human weakness.

I love the consecrated life. Let me explain why by highlighting some teachings of the Church that have guided and inspired my path until today.

Religious vows like martyrdom

The first teaching is from the Second Vatican Council in the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*. Following the topic on the "universal vocation to holiness" (c.V, n. 39-41), it is affirmed that charity is the way to holiness and that martyrdom is the highest expression of charity: "The Church considers martyrdom as an exceptional gift and as the fullest proof of love" (n. 42).

It is very important to note what the document states immediately after: "Likewise, the holiness of the Church is fostered in a special way by the observance of the counsels proposed in the Gospel by Our Lord to His disciples. An eminent position among these is held by virginity or the celibate state."

Therefore, religious vows like martyrdom are "an exceptional gift and as the fullest proof of love."

A precious and necessary gift

Another important document of the Church is St. John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrate*. The Pope clearly says that consecrated life in its multiple forms of expressions over the centuries "is a precious and necessary gift for the present and future of the People of God, since it is an intimate part of her life, her holiness and her mission" (n. 3).

The Pope's statement justifies and explains the perennial value of consecrated life in the Church.

Unbounded love

The same Apostolic Exhortation refers to questions that many continue to ask themselves: "What is the point of the consecrated life? [...] Is the consecrated life not a kind of 'waste' of human energies which might be used more efficiently for a greater good, for the benefit of humanity and the Church?" The answer in this document is deep and meaningful. It is the same answer that Jesus gave during the anointing at Bethany when Judas, using the needs of the poor as an excuse, complained about Mary wasting costly ointment. "Let her alone!" Jesus said (Jn 12: 3) (cf. 104).

Consecrated life is the gift of a whole life to God and his people as an expression of unconditional and unbounded love.

Witnesses of divine beauty

God is beauty because he is love. By giving their whole life to God and to their brothers and sisters, consecrated men and women become witnesses of God's beauty in the world. This is the commitment that John Paul II entrusted to consecrated people at the end of his Apostolic Exhortation: "It is above all to you, consecrated women and men, that at the end of this Exhortation I appeal with trust: live to the full your dedication to God, so that this world may never be without a ray of divine beauty to lighten the path of human existence" (n. 109).

I have always believed in this special mission of the consecrated life, no matter its different expressions over the centuries. ■



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

Following Christ More Closely

The Consecrated Life in the Church



Photo by Grant Whitty

By *SISTER SARA BUTLER, M.S.B.T., S.T.L., Ph.D.*

What does it mean to be “consecrated”? As most everyone knows, to consecrate an object or place is to remove it from ordinary or profane use and set it aside for sacred use by means of a blessing and perhaps also an anointing by a priest. When a chalice is consecrated, for example, it becomes a sacred vessel. It will contain the precious blood of Christ, and it will be used only at Mass. But what does it mean for people to be conse-

crated? There is more than one meaning. On the one hand, all who are baptized are consecrated: freed from sin and born anew as children of God the Father, made members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit. All of them are called to pursue holiness, the perfection of charity, by following Christ and observing the evangelical or Gospel counsels. In addition, however, some of the baptized are called by God to what the Church calls “the consecrated life.” This is a particular state of life, freely embraced in response to God’s invitation to follow Christ

more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit, through the profession of chastity, poverty, and obedience in a stable form of living approved by the Church.

A Fuller Expression of Baptismal Consecration

How does consecrated life differ from the baptismal vocation? According to Pope St. John Paul II: “All those reborn in Christ are called to live out, with the strength that is the Spirit’s gift, the chastity appropriate to

their state of life, obedience to God and to the Church, and a reasonable detachment from material possessions." But "Baptism in itself does not include the call to celibacy or virginity, the renunciation of possessions, or obedience to a superior in the form proper to the evangelical counsels" (*Vita consecrata*, 30). The consecrated life, then, is rooted in our baptismal consecration, but is a "fuller expression" of it (*Perfectae caritatis*, 5). One enters it by making a lifelong commitment to follow the way of life the Lord Jesus himself lived and commended to his disciples. The "door" to the consecrated life is the commitment to lifelong celibacy or virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Those who enter this "door" are also called to imitate Jesus' poverty by renouncing their possessions and his obedience by taking on the obligations of a particular way of life approved by the Church.

According to the Catechism (§915), "it is the profession of these counsels, within a permanent state of life recognized by the Church, that characterizes the life consecrated to God." "Profession" here refers to making vows. A vow is a promise made to God concerning a possible and better good (Code of Canon Law 1191 §1). Those who profess vows freely assume a serious religious obligation to do something that they are capable of doing and that is "better" (i.e., it is something they are not obliged to do). For those in the consecrated life, this means observing the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience as a testimony to their preferential love of Jesus Christ.

Not everyone is called to the consecrated life (Matthew 19:11). Those who receive and accept the Lord's invitation are said to follow Christ "more closely" and "more freely" by reason of a "new and special title" (*Lumen gentium*, 44). Their radical living out of the grace of Baptism arises from the Lord's personal call which they embrace out of love for him. This is not just a "lifestyle choice"; it is a vocation from God that awakens a response in those who long to return his love as generously and completely as they can. By their wholehearted gift of self, those who are consecrated bear witness to the love that has claimed them; in their loving service they announce the Gospel in

many different ways and profess their faith in the world to come.

History and Forms of the Consecrated Life

Christians have embraced the life of celibacy or virginity for the sake of the kingdom since apostolic times. In doing so, they both imitate the example of the Lord Jesus and follow his teaching. "Not all men can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given," Jesus said. "There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it" (Matthew 19:11-12). St. Paul commends this choice when he comments on the relative merit of marrying or remaining unmarried. Whereas married men or women are anxious about worldly affairs and how to please their spouses, the unmarried are "anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord," and "how to be holy in body and spirit." The one who marries "does well," while the one "who will refrain from marriage will do better" (1 Corinthians 7:32-33, 38).

According to the Gospels, Jesus asked his disciples to leave all behind—father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, house, and land—to follow him (Matthew 19:29; Mark 10:28-30; Luke 18:28), and they did. In the early Church, consecrated virgins and male ascetics followed their example. They were known for practicing prayer and penance, but especially for their commitment to lifelong celibate chastity for the sake of the kingdom. The virgins lived at home while the male ascetics withdrew to the desert wilderness as hermits. By the early fourth century, consecrated virgins began living in community and hermits began living near each other to receive direction from spiritual masters like St. Anthony of Egypt.

St. Pachomius was the first to found monasteries where large groups of monks lived in common and followed a rule of life. This "cenobitic" or communal monasticism, the precursor of the monastic form of religious life we know today, was adopted by both men and women. Communities in the East followed the rule of St. Basil in the East and in the West that of St. Benedict. In addition to promising lifelong celibate chastity,

monks and nuns observe the evangelical counsels of poverty and obedience. Their way of life includes contemplative prayer, study, labor, and liturgical worship under the direction of an abbot or abbess who governs according to an approved rule. Most monks and nuns spend their whole lives in one monastery.

The twelfth century saw the birth of the mendicant form of consecrated life for men, pioneered by St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic. The friars did not stay in their convents but went forth into the community to evangelize by preaching and teaching, by works of charity, and by their lives as poor men, i.e., "mendicants" or beggars who depend on Divine Providence for their material support. They established universities for the education of the clergy and struck out on mission in the New World. The mendicant form of consecrated life includes the public profession of the evangelical counsels and observance of a rule of life under the direction of a religious superior. Many friars receive Holy Orders. By their freedom to go out among the people and minister to their needs, these "regular" ("rule-based") clergy supplement the work of the "secular" or diocesan clergy. St. Ignatius of Loyola adopted still another form of apostolic life for men. The Jesuits, a clerical institute, were bound together by a common spiritual formation and strict religious obedience. They did not maintain the habit or the choral Office; their members were free to initiate schools throughout Europe and respond to the pope's call to open missions where the Gospel had never been preached.

Women's religious life in the West developed somewhat differently. For centuries, only nuns who professed solemn vows and observed a cloistered way of life—e.g., Benedictines, Cistercians, Carthusians, Poor Clares, Carmelites—were recognized as "religious." This tradition thwarted the efforts of women like St. Angela Merici, St. Jeanne Frances de Chantal, and Venerable Mary Ward to extend their ministry beyond the cloister. In order to serve the poor and needy, St. Vincent dePaul's Daughters of Charity declined to be regarded as Religious. Other founders, undeterred by this restriction, established congregations of Sisters and Brothers with "simple" vows



Photo by Armitas

to undertake an active apostolate, carrying out the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, at home and in mission territories. In 1900 the Church acknowledged women and men with simple vows in apostolic congregations as canonical Religious. In 1947, the Church provided a way for single women and men to live the consecrated life “in the world,” namely, in secular institutes. Members of these institutes, following the charism of their founders, profess the evangelical counsels and offer a Christian witness in their daily work and circumstances.

The Canonical States of the Consecrated Life

There are many ways of making a permanent commitment to the service of Christ and the Church, but four of them are public, canonically recognized states of consecrated life. Two—consecrated virgins and diocesan hermits—are lived by individuals under the direction of their bishop. Two others are lived in communities or juridical bodies approved by the Church: religious institutes and secular institutes. Societies of Apostolic Life, whose primary focus is on their apostolate, are ecclesial bodies without vows but closely related to religious in-

stitutes in other respects.

A consecrated virgin is a woman called to live as a bride of Christ. She receives the Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity from her bishop and pursues holiness in a public state of life “in the world.” Hermits are men or women who live alone so as to devote themselves to prayer, contemplation, and penance. They profess the evangelical counsels and follow an approved rule of life. Members of secular institutes do not generally live and work together; they are united, however, by their rule of life, spiritual traditions, and the service of their moderators.

The most common form of consecrated life, however, is the religious life. Religious men and women make public perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience according to the constitutions of their institute. Formed by the charism of their founder, they share a distinctive spiritual tradition and apostolic purpose. In a variety of ways and to different degrees, Religious are withdrawn from ordinary secular life; they are committed to the common life under the direction of a superior and to a corporate apostolate. The religious life has

different expressions, e.g., monastic, mendicant, and apostolic. It may be lay, clerical, or mixed; diocesan or pontifical. Because of the Church’s recognition of the founder’s charism and their constitutions, the witness and ministry of Religious belongs in a public way to her life and holiness. As a gift of God to the whole Church, the consecrated life in all its forms serves to encourage all of the faithful to seek first the kingdom of God. ■



**SISTER SARA BUTLER,
M.S.B.T., S.T.L., PH.D**

Entered the Missionary Servants in 1956. She is a Professor Emerita of Dogmatic Theology and author of over 60 scholarly articles and a book. Sr Sara is currently on the staff of the Mother Boniface Spirituality Center in Philadelphia.

A Special Way to Holiness

The Evangelical Counsels

By Sr. ANNA LILIA FRIAS VARGAS

The origin of Consecrated Life is founded on a profound desire to follow Christ more closely and reach sanctity by means of this style of life. The Evangelical Counsels, also known as vows, arise as the means of fulfilling this need. All consecrated men and women make vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Living these vows help us in the practice of the virtues amidst our daily struggles to be saints. I will briefly share with you what this “living of the vows” consists of.

The Vow of Poverty

The vow of poverty consists of detaching oneself from what one has. Obviously, we use material things, but never as if strictly one’s own: cell phones, automobiles, among other things, but nothing is under one’s name, and we find ourselves readily disposed of turning it in if and when asked for, or to pass it on to another sister/brother who may need it. We have access to its use but not as a possession. This permits us to practice the virtue of simplicity as Saint Francis of Assisi did, with nothing for one’s self, including the roof over one’s head. Living this vow we follow Jesus Christ Who was poor, as Saint Paul says: “Jesus Christ, rich as He was, made Himself poor for your sake, in order to make you rich by means of His poverty” (2 Corinthians 8,9). The practice of the vow of poverty brings us total detachment of earthly things so that we can fill our heart with spiritual things that bring us to life eternal.

The Vow of Chastity

The vow of Chastity does not consist simply in not getting married or having children. It consists of something more. The practice of this vow leads us in carrying out all our actions with purity of heart; and what does this signify? It is to perform all we do with love for Christ; it

is super naturalizing each and every act, which we do. Most frequently our works are focused for persons whom we do not know, who are, actually, strangers in our lives. Upon performing our acts with love with that person whom we do not know and who cannot return what we do, it is, really, at that time, when our acts and works are pure and disinterest-

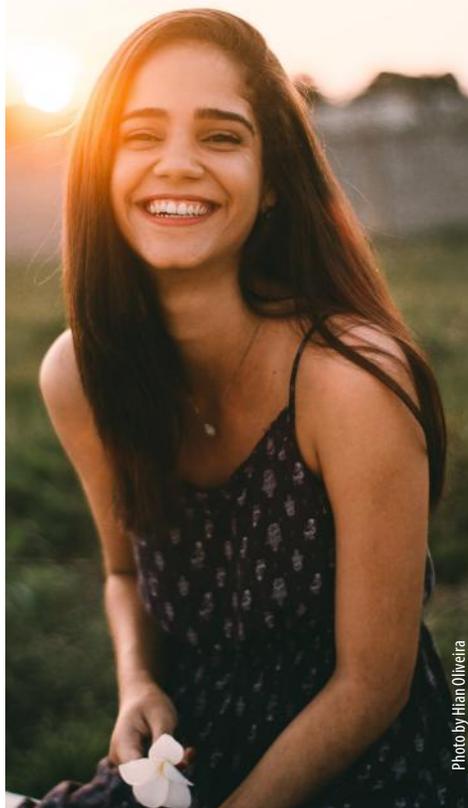


Photo by Hian Oliveira

ed, it is then when we practice chastity. Our heart is not focused on loving only certain persons, it is focused on Christ, on the love we have for Him. From this love our service for others springs forth. To be chaste implies living free, as the Apostle Saint Paul on his first letter to the Corinthians, 7, 34 says, “An unmarried woman, or virgin, concerns herself with the Lord’s work, because she wants to be dedicated both in body and spirit.”

To live the vow of chastity is to live only for Christ and preoccupied in serving the people of God.

The Vow of Obedience

In the vow of obedience we practice the virtue of humility, abandoning our lives in the arms of God our Father, in His divine will, through obedience to our superiors. Obedience helps us deny ourselves. We give up the right to make our own plans and comply with them as we wish. It is well to clarify: it does not mean that we do not speak or decide anything. No! Actually, in communicating with the superior and guided by faithful adherence to our constitutions, there exists a dialog which allows us to be heard and guided so as to walk according to our charism, responding with humility to Christ, as Saint Paul the Apostle in his letter to the Philippians tells us: He assumed human nature and appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death – His death on the cross” (Philippians 2:8-9). Our superiors always guide us in living out the commandments, our constitutions and, above all, they help us in our striving toward reaching perfect charity.

Through this living out of our vows we seek to be like Christ and reach sanctity. This is the reason for our consecration. It is in each vow which we profess where we practice the virtues which help us advance daily in becoming, as our Holy Father Founder, Fray Refugio Morales used to say and is today our theme: “To be a Perfect Image of Jesus Christ.”■



SR. ANNA LILIA FRIAS VARGAS

works in vocations ministry for the Congregation of Franciscan Sisters of The Immaculate Conception. She studied business and worked at a hospital prior to entering her congregation.

“Prefer Nothing to the Love of Christ”

A Reflection on the Crisis of the Consecrated Life Today

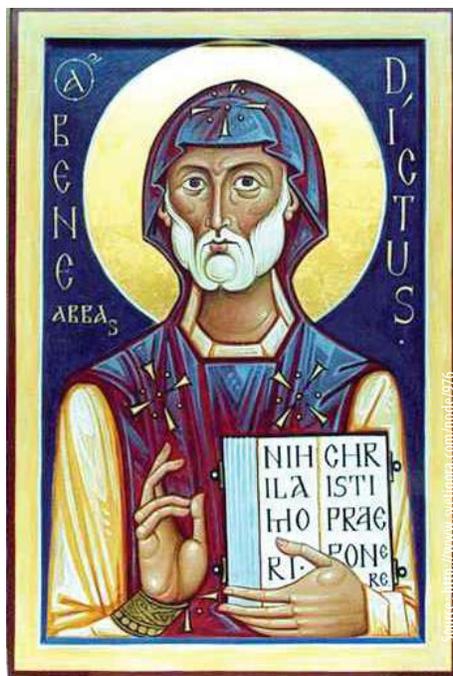
By Fr. SANDRO PERRONE, RCJ

It is known that entire libraries have been written on the “crisis” of the consecrated life and religious life in particular, starting from the years of the Second Vatican Council. Indeed, there are also those who affirm that the cause and responsibility of the crisis itself is to be attributed precisely to the Council. It is above all a numerical crisis. At the beginning of the 1960s, there were more than one million Roman Catholic religious; today, twenty years after the beginning of the new century, most likely there are not even 500,000!

Some religious Institutes of brothers have almost disappeared, while the great majority of Institutes, both male and female, suffer from a strong numerical shrinkage, which is getting worse and worse. In recent decades, there have been few Institutes and Congregations (especially the numerically smaller) who, under the illusion of finding easy solutions, have gone in search of vocations in distant countries where vocations are more abundant. These Institutes attract young men and women and send them to the West, putting into practice what Pope Francis has not hesitated to call “the trafficking of vocations.” They make a serious mistake and their solution, in the vast majority of cases, creates more problems than solutions. The archives of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA) are full of painful and even dramatic cases, especially about the women religious Institutes. This is only an example, albeit partial, of the vast and complex vocations problem in the Western world.

The task of vocational animators has never been easy or simple, but today it has become much more problematic and difficult than in the past. The storm of secularization in the Western world has swept and continues to sweep centuries of Christian traditions with murderous fury, creating a desert behind it. A large part of Europe,

and of the whole Western world, is now ex/post Christian and needs the first evangelization, no longer the new evangelization. Often, vocation animators work a lot but collect little. Yet, there is good news. Today, associations and movements such as the Focolare, Communion and Liberation, Opus Dei, Community of Sant’ Egidio, The Neocatechumenal Way, Community of Abraham, Fraternity Evangelii Gaudium, and others are flourishing.



New Forms of Consecrated Life

Another phenomenon showing great growth is the new forms of consecrated life. The first census of new communities by the Urbaniana University Press, Rome 2010, offers direct information on 775 new Institutes, in addition to basic information on another 56. The census reveals that 205 are American, 200 Italian, 161 French, 47 Canadian, 44 Brazilian, and 20 Spanish. They have proposed and continue to offer a fantasy, bordering on hysteria, a new way of living the Gospel in fraternity, without any “canonical” distinction, and with

groups where men and women, religious, consecrated, celibate and married, lay people and whole families, and more, live together. Sometimes, it almost seems as the only characteristic they share is the “weirdness” of their outfits, making reference to the times of the prophets, the apostles, the Middle Ages, Francis of Assisi, the Crusaders, and more. In these rapidly expanding groups, there seems to be no vocation crisis: their number grows continuously with ever wider and more complex ramifications.

It is not easy to give an answer to this contradiction: On one hand, the “traditional,” historical Institutes see their ranks decrease more and more, while on the other hand, the “new forms,” multiply, continuously increasing their numbers. It cannot be denied that the New Forms, despite the extravagance and fantasy of their outfits, sometimes really extreme, immediately strike the eye and the curiosity of people, especially young people, for austerity of life, poverty, intense and prolonged rhythms of common life, and diurnal and nocturnal prayer, often celebrated with pre-conciliar liturgy. Such experiences inevitably demand questions: How and why do they do it? Why are they different from other religious and consecrated? How can they live on charity if not on alms, without literally possessing anything? How do they live the Gospel sine glossa in a Christianity à la carte like a grocery store and disposable, in a Church that seems to have lost its compass, with no more certain rules? How do they practice obedience perinde ac cadaver in a secularized society, which encourages individualism, self-fulfillment, absolute independence and autonomy of the person? How do they cope with the rhythm of many hours of prayer and adoration, even at night? It would seem impossible, yet hundreds, thousands of young people are irresistibly attracted to this form of life in desert Convents and religious Institutes.



Photo by Archdiocese of Tuam, Ireland

Some Merits of the Second Vatican Council

If you try to find valid answers to all these questions, you are in trouble; however, it is perhaps still possible to attempt to respond. This is what we will try to do. Let us try to start from the quality of the spiritual life. Among the many merits of the Second Vatican Council, there is undoubtedly that of the rediscovery of the universal vocation to holiness (Lumen Gentium, V). In short, the Council Fathers announced to the people of God that holiness is not an exclusive prerogative of religious and/or priestly life: all Christians, by virtue of their baptism, are called by the Lord to a life of holiness and of evangelical perfection.

Many faithful have taken seriously this teaching of the Church, engaging in a path of holiness, which seems to have no equal in history. But, paradoxically, this extraordinary and prophetic rediscovery of holiness seems to have put many religious men and women in crisis, who felt they were robbed by the exclusive prerogative of their own via perfectionis, which for centuries seemed to be a trademark of consecrated life. If the martyred saints of the first centuries of Christianity are excluded, in fact, the great majority of the saints belong to religious and monastic life.

On the contrary, beginning with the

Vatican II, as the initiatives of lay Christians (Christifideles Laici) grow to take holy possession of the sacred treasures of the Church (Word of God, Lectio Divina, Liturgy of the Hours, Sacraments, Celebration of the Eucharist, etc), it seems to be a progressive impoverishment in the religious Institutes, which have limited themselves to re-proposing, often with monotony and fatigue, the traditional rites, no longer enlivened by the regenerating breath of the Spirit and their charisma. If this is the case, why on earth a young man or a woman should leave his/her spiritually and pastorally very active group, to enter an institution that no longer tells him anything and, above all, can no longer transmit a beautiful image of the new life that Christ came to bring on earth?

There is absolutely no intention to generalize, but there is no doubt that in large segments of consecrated persons and a leveling in a growing bourgeoisie, this is the result of the reduction, if not the disappearance of fraternal life in community, the prevalence of individualism of piety, inattention to the rule, orientation towards social, political, and ecological issues, rather than towards the announcement of the Kingdom, and the first and new evangelization. In a word, the lack of communion with God and with their brothers and sisters. Without any doubt, the New Forms show many flaws and raise some perplexities,

but they manage to give a living, beautiful, fresh image of the Gospel, lived today with joy and enthusiasm. And perhaps, here is the explanation and the answer to the questions I asked and why they have so many followers.

In conclusion, I think that a further and final question is opportune, indeed necessary: What prevents men and women religious, consecrated men and women from being like the New Forms? And without any clumsy attempt to imitate them, that is to be simply themselves, proud and joyful of their vocation, glad to have left everything to find the One who is All, happy with their new family's brothers and sisters? St. Benedict continually repeated to his monks: "Prefer nothing to the love of Christ." This Benedictine rule is simply the synthesis of the whole Gospel. If it were accepted and lived to the end, there would be no crisis for the consecrated life! ■



FR. SANDRO PERRONE, RCJ

Is the Provincial of the St. Hannibal Italian Rogationist Province. He worked at the Dicastery for Consecrated Life for Religious Men in the Vatican for 11 years. He has a degree in Philosophy, Theology, and Canon Law.

Religious Women Facing the Challenges of Today's World

A Conversation with Sister Teolinda Salemi, Superior General of the Daughters of the Divine Zeal

By VOCATIONS AND PRAYER STAFF

Sister Teolinda's vocation first manifested itself while she was a very young student at the Sisters Daughters of Mary Help of Christians school in Italy. Their joy gave her the beautiful sense of God and of life with him. As a teenager, she abandoned the thought of becoming a religious sister, but her desire to "make Jesus known" and to dedicate her life to the poor, especially to lonely and abandoned children, became insistent. At the age of eighteen, she learned about the Congregation of the Daughters of the Divine Zeal and the charisma of Father Hannibal Di Francia, father of the orphans and the poor. After her years of initial formation, she received the assignment of teaching in the school of her Institute in Messina. Later, she studied theology, obtaining a specialization in Catechetics at the theological university of San Tommaso in Messina. In those years, while studying, she taught religion at a science and arts High School. The weekend was dedicated to vocational youth ministry in the parishes of the Diocese of Messina, Patti, and Reggio Calabria. She completed her studies obtaining a degree in Psychology in Turin. In 1998 she was part of the general council of her religious family. Sister Teolinda worked as general secretary, and currently, she serves as the general superior of the Congregation of the Daughters of the Divine Zeal.

Describe in few words the mission and charism of your Congregation

The charism of the Daughters of Divine Zeal is based on the words of Christ: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his harvest." It is a charism of prayer and charity, expressed with an ecclesial word: Rogate, praying and working for vocations at the service of humanity. Rogate makes us live with compassion for those tired and disoriented, almost



as "sheep without shepherd." It makes us believe in the power of prayer to obtain vocations from the Lord in the service of the Gospel, commits us personally to form and educate youth, even the lost, and in search of one's own vocational identity.

Where is your Congregation present around the world?

The Congregation is present in 16 countries: Italy, Australia, Albania, United States, Philippines, Brazil, Bolivia, Angola, Cameroon, Rwanda, Korea, Spain, Mexico, Vietnam, Indonesia, and India.

How many communities are there in the United States?

There are 2 communities.

What kind of work do they do?

The sisters' work takes place in the educational field and in the service of parish ministry.

In which places of the world have your congregation seen the greatest increase in vocations?

The countries with vocational growth are currently: Rwanda, Vietnam, India, and Indonesia.

What about vocations (in your congregation) to religious life in the United States?

I recognize that in past years we have invested little energy in vocational promotion and accompaniment, allowing ourselves to be absorbed by our congregation's commitments at the schools where our sisters serve. Today we are aware that



Photo by Daughters of Divine Zeal

we must take care of young people and their life's choice, building an apostolate with life proposals that speaks directly to young people. When we manage to do this we realize that young people in the USA are interested in religious life and spirituality.

As a general superior you have several meetings with superiors of other congregations around the world. What is your impression about the general trend of vocations and specifically the vocation to religious life?

In the international meetings held by the UISG some elements are emerging. Young women who today choose religious life do it on a path of self-awareness. Together with the typical weaknesses of today's time, there are positive elements such as the search for authentic spirituality, the desire to be women at the service of the Gospel, and to engage in the challenges of today's world.

According to your experience and charism, what are the main points for an effective pastoral care for vocations to religious life today?

It is important to take care of the whole human being on a path of integration towards a profound spirituality and to accompany young people in a way they become aware of the great gift of life, and to open themselves to listening to the One who calls. The choice of one's personal vocation is possible within a journey of self-awareness and love of ecclesial life, of listening to the Word, of free service to the poor and the least of society.

How are the activities of the pastoral care for vocations organized in your congregation?

We are working on a journey that involves the sisters of the community so that they all feel committed to serving young

people with the testimony and sharing of what the religious vocation is all about. One of the most significant experiences is "Come and see," a day during which we welcome young people who want to spend time with us. They share prayer, meals, work time with us, offer testimonies and answer their questions. We conclude the day with time of fraternity and an evening prayer. This experience enriches us consecrated and offers young women the opportunity to experience a lifestyle choice that they often ignore.

The care of vocations must be the primary commitment for religious congregations, as well as in Catholic parishes and associations. ■

A Church with Open Doors

Suggestions for Youth Ministry



Photo by Diego Villegas

By Fr. GONZALO MEZA

Chapter VII of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “Christus Vivit” (published on April 2, 2019 by Pope Francis) focuses on youth ministry. The richness of the 45 paragraphs of this chapter, from points 202 to 245, consists of the different ideas and suggestions to promote this ministry at the diocesan and local levels. The ideas were the result not only of the works of the Synod from Oct 3-28, 2018. Those ideas reflect inputs from many thousands of young people who took part in the Pre-Synod works, especially the Facebook meeting and a pre-survey of the Synod. This chapter VII, and in general the Apostolic Exhortation, contain the best Catholic practices for youth ministry from all around the world. The text is a sort of compilation of success stories expressed in terms that can be applied to any cultural background. These practices for Catholic youth ministries are not worldly practices but Catholic ones, permeated by the Scripture, doctrine and tradition.

Popular youth ministry

Point 230 of Christ Vivit talks about a “popular” youth ministry. In this section of the text, the Pope calls dioceses, parishes, and Catholic institutions to go further, to go beyond their well-planned pastoral youth ministry “to allow room for a popular youth ministry, with a different style, schedule, pace and method. Broader and more flexible, a youth ministry that goes out to those places where real young people are active, and fosters the natural leadership qualities and the charisms sown by the Holy Spirit. It tries to avoid imposing obstacles, rules, controls and obligatory structures on these young believers who are natural leaders in their neighborhoods and in other settings. We need only to accompany and encourage them, trusting a little more in the genius of the Holy Spirit, who acts as he wills.”

The Well-Planned Established Youth Ministries

The United States Conference of Catho-

lic Bishops (USCCB) has set three interdependent goals to guide the Church ministry with the youth: 1. To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world. 2. To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community. 3. To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person (The USCCB defines “youth” as “persons from ages 12-18, who are in junior high or high school.” The age group considered by the Synod in Christus Vivit ranges from 16-to 29 years old).

In the USA there are many examples of well-organized programs for young people. Most, if not all dioceses and parishes have ministries exclusively devoted to the youth, from middle school to young adults (12-29). These established ministries are extraordinary ways to attract, work and form young people in the Church. Those ministries are spaces for them, guided by people who speak their language, understand their problems and organize activities according to their

age. Apart from those ministries there are other independently-run ministries in the US, which are a great support to dioceses and parishes. One example is "Life Teen," which runs the "Edge program" (intended for Catholic Middle Schoolers) and "Life Teen" (addressed to High School students). Since 1985 Life Teen has reached more than 100,000 people and is present in more than 1,800 parishes in the US and abroad. Another example of ministry for the youth is "Net Ministries," which is a group of young people (18-28 years old) who travels in teams across the US during 9 months to share the Gospel. Every August, 175 young Catholics leave behind their jobs, school, family, and friends to devote nine months to serving with the National Evangelization Teams (NET). Since 1981, NET teams have led over 34,000 retreats and ministered to more than 2.1 million young Catholics.

Going beyond the well-structured ministries

In *Christus Vivit* Pope Francis asks dioceses, parishes, and religious congregations and Catholic institutions to go beyond their well-established youth ministries. One example of this "going beyond" was given on the last weekend of the Synod of Bishops. On the evening of Friday October 26, the youth who took part in the Synod organized a show in the Paul VI Hall of the Vatican. The event aimed at thanking the Pope and the Synod fathers for the opportunity to be part of that historic event. It was a joyful event which included poetry, dance with colorful lights, music and even classical piano pieces played by Cardinal Lorenzo Baldissieri, who is a professional pianist and has recorded various CD's. During the festive gathering in the Vatican the youth gave the Pope a message: "New ideas need space and you gave it to us. Today's world has unprecedented opportunities but also a lot of suffering, and it needs new answers and new power of love. There is a need to rediscover hope, and live the happiness that is experienced in giving more than receiving, working for a better world. We want to affirm that we share your dream: an outgoing Church, open to all, especially the weakest, a field hospital Church."



Photo by Diego Villegas

That festive gathering and the participation of the youth in the Synod is an example of what the Pope mentions in *Christus Vivit*: the Church needs "to allow room for a popular youth ministry, with a different style, schedule, pace and method." Certainly this festive gathering in the Vatican was absolutely unusual. Never before had someone organized a party with dancing, music and colorful lights in this hall intended for Papal audiences. Some people raised their eyebrows. However, Pope Francis opened that space to give to the youth the opportunity to express themselves in new contexts, according to their style, pace and method. It is not that those young delegates of the Synod who organized the show were only interested in partying and dancing. Absolutely not. As a matter of fact, everyday from Oct 3 to Oct 28 their routine included prayer, Mass and a lot of hard work until late at night.

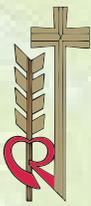
An outgoing church

Corina F. Mortola a teacher of drama (theater) in Jalisco Mexico, took part as delegate in this Synod. In October 2018 I had the occasion to talk to her in the Vatican. Reflecting on her role as an evangelizer she said: "I do not search to convert people by preaching in the Church building. I work to convert people and bring them to God with my witness. How do I do it and where? I teach in Art Colleges, high schools and in the seminary. Those are the places and contexts where I am called to Evangelize to bring people to God. I evangelize in my classes with the testimony of my life, and I make every effort so

that through the subjects I teach, through the Art I can get people to God. My goal is also to get more people involved... but involved with passion." Corina is the type of leader that Pope refers to in *Christus Vivit* 231: "We are speaking of truly popular leaders, not elitists or those closed off in small groups of select individuals," leaders who are able to create a popular ministry to youth in their own contexts (work, family, school) and in their state of life.

Reaching out the existential peripheries

One of the key themes of the Pontificate of Pope Francis are the "peripheries." The Holy Father has insisted on the fact that the Church must reach out to both the geographic and the existential peripheries of our society. A good number of the youth today live in those peripheries. And many have abandoned their religious beliefs and declared to have no religious affiliation. Bishop Robert Barron, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles, CA refers to them as the "nones." Young people who have left their faith, "people who are not going to come to our institutions; nor going to our parishes and programs." An instrument to reach out to the "nones," -and thus reach out to the existential peripheries- is social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.). Unfortunately, these powerful instruments have not been used with creativity by the Church. Bishop Barron, who was part of the Synod, said: "I love the fact that I can do a video or a presentation and [through social media] it goes way beyond the con-



ROGATIONIST PUBLICATIONS

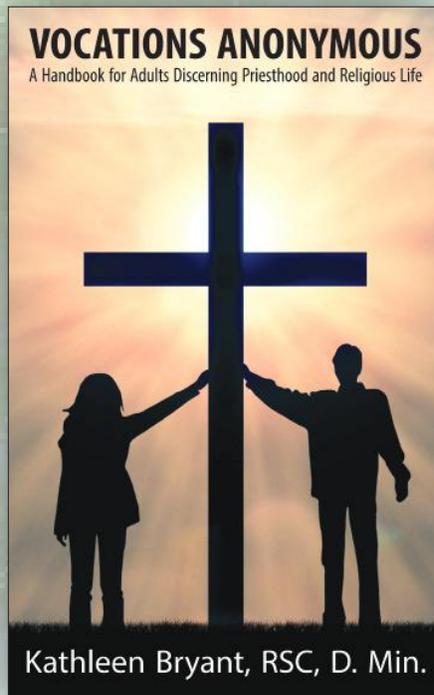
PRESENTS

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

finest of the Church. And I know that because you hear back from people. Even if many of the comments are negative, it is still positive because it means that these media are getting us out to the existential peripheries, and once you get that contact, you can engage with people. We have the means to reach out to the nones," said Barron during an interview with Vatican Media. Social media can reach out to all kinds of young people. And it can be a space "to show that we are a Church with open doors with an open mind towards all those who have the desire and willingness to be encountered by God's revealed truth" (Christus Vivit 234).

In Christus Vivit, Pope Francis mentioned the case of a great young Evangelizer who used the digital world to spread the Gospel to reach out to the peripheries: the Venerable Carlo Acutis who in 2006 died at the age of 15 from fulminant leukemia. He was best known for documenting Eucharistic miracles around the world and cataloging them all onto a website that he himself created in the months before his death. In Christus Vivit, the Pope says "Carlo was well aware that the whole apparatus of communications, advertising and social networking can be used to lull us, to make us addicted to consumerism and buying the latest thing on the market, obsessed with our free time, caught up in negativity. Yet he knew how to use the new communications technology to transmit the Gospel, to communicate values and beauty." (Christus Vivit 104, 105). If used correctly and with creativity, social media are examples of new spaces to reach out to the existential peripheries of our society. ■



FR. GONZALO MEZA

Is a priest of the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia. As a contributing journalist for secular and religious media in Mexico, France, Spain, and the U.S.A., he has traveled with the Pope to different countries. Fr. Meza has nearly 15 years of experience as a journalist.
Twitter: [@frgonzalomeza](https://twitter.com/frgonzalomeza)

Called to Share the Mission of the Church

1. Introduction

The Church celebrates the renewal of our baptismal promises each year at the Easter Vigil. "Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life," states the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1213). It means that Baptism is the basis of each ministry and vocation in the Church. Let us pray to the Lord Jesus, present among us in the sacrament of the Eucharist, to help us to rediscover our baptism and strengthen our personal vocation in the Church.

2. Exposition/Eucharistic song

Brief silent adoration prayer kneeling before the Holy Sacrament.

3. Liturgy of the Word

The presiding minister then goes to the chair, where he prays the following opening prayer:

Opening Prayer

O God, whose Only Begotten Son has appeared in our very flesh, grant, we pray, that we may be inwardly transformed through him whom we recognize present among us in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*

A Reading from the Letter to the Ephesians (4: 1-16)

Responsorial Psalm (or an appropriate song)

Psalm 104:1b-2, 3-4, 24-25, 27-28, 29-30

R. O bless the Lord, my soul.

Lord, my God, you are great indeed!
 You are clothed with majesty and glory,
 robed in light as with a cloak.
 You spread out the heavens like a tent. R.
 You raised your palace upon the waters.
 You make the clouds your chariot;
 you travel on the wings of the wind.
 You make the winds your messengers;
 flaming fire, your ministers. R.
 How varied are your works, Lord!
 In wisdom you have wrought them all;
 the earth is full of your creatures.
 Look at the sea, great and wide!
 It teems with countless beings,
 living things both large and small. R.
 All of these look to you
 to give them food in due time.
 When you give to them, they gather;
 when you open your hand, they are well filled. R.
 When you hide your face, they are lost.
 When you take away their breath, they perish
 and return to the dust from which they came.
 When you send forth your breath, they are created,
 and you renew the face of the earth. R.

4. Meditation

A Reading from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (see p. 18, #1)

Homily

5. Adoration/Prayer time

Silent Prayer (The Rosary may also be said here, whole or part)

Intercessions

Because of our baptism, we are able to offer these petitions to God as our Father. We therefore pray with confidence saying: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

That the Church may effectively lead all peoples to acknowledge Christ as the Son of

God, we pray to the Lord:

- That nations may resolve their conflicts by seeking the justice and peace brought to the world by the Lord Jesus, we pray to the Lord:
- That the Christian community, made one by our common baptism, may always welcome the unborn, the stranger, and all who are vulnerable, we pray to the Lord:
- That each of us may renew the commitment of our own baptism, renouncing sin and promising to serve God faithfully in his holy Church, we pray to the Lord:
- That those who are ill may, as sons and daughters of God, offer their sufferings to him with patience and trust, we pray to the Lord:
- That those who are called to the consecrated life and the priesthood may be faithful to their special vocation, we pray to the Lord:
- That those who have died may share the glory of eternal life, we pray to the Lord:

(Other intercessions may be offered here)

Our Father...

Father, we thank you for making us your children. Answer the prayers we have offered today with confidence and trust. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Community Prayer for Vocations (kneeling before the Holy Sacrament)

Gracious God, you have called me to life and gifted me in many ways. Through Baptism you have sent me to continue the mission of Jesus by sharing my love with others. Strengthen me to respond to your call each day. Help me to become all you desire from me. Inspire me to make a difference in others' lives. Lead me to choose the way of life you have planned for me. Open the hearts of all to listen to Your call. Fill all with Your Holy Spirit that we may have listening hearts and the courage to respond to You. Enkindle in my heart and the hearts of others the desire to make the world a better place by serving as Lay Minister, Sister, Priest, Brother or Deacon. We ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen*

6. Benediction/Reposition

Loving the Poor

1. Introduction

Love for the poor is not something optional for Jesus' disciples. It is an integral part of the vocation and mission of the Church. Jesus, present in the sacrament of the Eucharist, invites us not only to share our goods with those in need, but to live with them and to spend our life for them. Let us beseech Jesus to make our community grow in love for the poor and arouse vocations capable of dedicating their full lives to the service of the needy.

2. Exposition/Eucharistic song

Brief silent adoration prayer kneeling before the Holy Sacrament.

3. Liturgy of the Word

The presiding minister then goes to the chair, where he prays the following opening prayer:

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, in the sacrament of the Eucharist you are Emmanuel, the God with us! We lift up to your mercy the poor of our community and around us. In your goodness, O Lord, help us to be generous and to work to alleviate the suffering and pain of the needy. You who lives and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. *Amen*

A Reading From the Prophet Isaiah (58:7-10)

Responsorial Psalm (or an appropriate song)

Psalm 10: 12-14, 16-18

R. Rise up, Lord! Do not forget the poor.

Rise up, Lord! God, lift up your hand! Do not forget the poor! Why should the wicked scorn God, say in their hearts, "God does not care"? **R.**

But you do see; you take note of misery and sorrow; you take the matter in hand. **R.**

To you the helpless can entrust their cause; you are the defender of orphans. **R.**

The Lord is king forever; the nations have vanished from his land. **R.** You listen, Lord, to the needs of the poor; you strengthen their heart and incline your ear. **R.**

You win justice for the orphaned and oppressed; no one on earth will cause terror again. **R.**

4. Meditation

A Reading from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (see p. 18, #2)

Homily**5. Adoration/Prayer Time**

Silent Prayer (The Rosary may also be said here, whole or part)

Intercessions

Confident that God always hears the cry of the poor, we lift up the following needs, saying: *Generous God, hear our prayer.*

- Give the church the grace to be a "poor church for the poor," and so become an even greater sign to the world of Christ's

charity for the least and those in need, we pray:

- Give the people of our nation the collective will to make the economic, social, and political choices to reverse the human-made disaster of poverty, and so offer a new vision of life and society, we pray:
- Give us open hearts that we might willingly share our gifts with others, follow Jesus in his own poverty, and seek his face in the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters, we pray:
- Open the hearts and minds of our young people to the needs of others, make them sensitive to the needs of the poor, capable of spending time, energy and resources for the less fortunate, especially their peers, we pray:
- Arouse, O Lord, young people capable of dedicating their whole life to the service of the poor as priests or consecrated men and women, we pray:

(Other intercessions may be offered here)

Our Father...

God of bounty, your son Jesus embraced poverty and taught that the poor are blessed, for "theirs is the kingdom of God." Help us to step out of our certainties and comforts and keep our eyes fixed on him, so we can both see and serve him in the faces of the poor. Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Community Prayer for Vocations (kneeling before the Holy Sacrament)

Gracious God, you have called me to life and gifted me in many ways. Through Baptism you have sent me to continue the mission of Jesus by sharing my love with others. Strengthen me to respond to your call each day. Help me to become all you desire from me. Inspire me to make a difference in others' lives. Lead me to choose the way of life you have planned for me. Open the hearts of all to listen to your call. Fill all with your Holy Spirit that we may have listening hearts and the courage to respond to you. Enkindle in my heart and the hearts of others the desire to make the world a better place by serving as lay minister, consecrated person, deacon, or priest. We ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

6. Benediction/Reposition

United with Christ in Unceasing Prayer

1. Introduction

Like Moses who raised his arms in an unceasing prayer of intercession to God for his people, Christ's arms are constantly open in prayers on the cross to intercede for us. Hence, the Church calls us to join Christ in this unceasing prayer without fainting. If we want to have any success in our respective vocation and mission, we must make prayer the foundation of our life.

2. Exposition/Eucharistic song

Brief silent adoration prayer kneeling before the Holy Sacrament.

3. Liturgy of the Word

The presiding minister then goes to the chair, where he prays the following opening prayer:

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we adore and praise you. We confidently raise up our arms to you and implore you: give us a true spirit of incessant prayer; bless us with the gift of abundant vocations to the priestly ministry and consecrated life, so that there are never missing intercessors for your people. You who lives and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. *Amen*

A Reading from the Book of Exodus (17:8-13)

Responsorial Psalm (or an appropriate song)

Psalm 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8.

R. Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

I lift up my eyes toward the mountains;
whence shall help come to me?

My help is from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth. R.

May he not suffer your foot to slip;
may he slumber not who guards you:
indeed he neither slumbers nor sleeps,
the guardian of Israel. R.

The Lord is your guardian; the Lord is your shade;
he is beside you at your right hand.

The sun shall not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night. R.

The Lord will guard you from all evil;
he will guard your life.

The Lord will guard your coming and your going,
both now and forever. R.

4. Meditation

A Reading from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (see p. 18, #3)

Homily

5. Adoration/Prayer Time

Silent Prayer (the Rosary may also be said here, whole or part)

Intercessions

Blessed be Jesus, our Savior. Through his death he has opened

the way of salvation for us. Let us pray: *Send, O Lord, holy apostles into your church.*

- Jesus, in the Eucharist you are the Pontiff and Eternal Priest, transform us into you, so we may offer ourselves to the Father, let us pray:
- Jesus, Lord of the harvest, enriches your Church with the great treasure of good evangelical workers, let us pray:
- Jesus, Good Shepherd, you have given yourself in the bread of life and in the cup of salvation; may those who break the Eucharistic Bread for your people never be lacking, let us pray:
- Jesus, Divine Spouse, confirm the virgins consecrated to you in their holy commitments; so that they may serve you with ardent and faithful spirit, let us pray:
- Jesus, Lamb of God, make us capable of listening to your voice; instill in our young people the desire to put themselves at the service of evangelization, let us pray:

(Other intercessions may be offered here)

Our Father...

Grant, we pray, O Lord Jesus, that schooled through your example and nourished by your word, we may be your faithful disciples ever united in prayer. You are God and live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. *Amen*

Community Prayer for Vocations (kneeling before the Holy Sacrament)

O, God, You have asked us to pray for vocations; that there might be young men and women willing to give their lives for the sake of your people. Hear our prayer and the prayers of your Church and send us good and holy priests, deacons, consecrated people and lay ministers. We offer you our daily life, all we shall think, do or say for this intention. Through Christ, Our Lord. *Amen*

6. Benediction/Reposition

Readings for Meditation

1. A Reading from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

(1267-1270)

Incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ

(1267) Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: "Therefore . . . we are members one of another."⁷¹ Baptism incorporates us into the Church. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."⁷²

(1268) The baptized have become "living stones" to be "built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood."⁷³ By Baptism they share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission. They are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that [they] may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called [them] out of darkness into his marvelous light."⁷⁴ Baptism gives a share in the common priesthood of all believers.

(1269) Having become a member of the Church, the person baptized belongs no longer to himself, but to him who died and rose for us.⁷⁵ From now on, he is called to be subject to others, to serve them in the communion of the Church, and to "obey and submit" to the Church's leaders,⁷⁶ holding them in respect and affection.⁷⁷ Just as Baptism is the source of responsibilities and duties, the baptized person also enjoys rights within the Church: to receive the sacraments, to be nourished with the Word of God and to be sustained by the other spiritual helps of the Church.⁷⁸

(1270) "Reborn as sons of God, [the baptized] must profess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church" and participate in the apostolic and missionary activity of the People of God.⁷⁹

2. A reading from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

(2443-2444)

Love for the poor

(2443) God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them: "Give to him who begs from you, do not refuse him who would borrow from you"; "you received without pay, give without pay."²³¹ It is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize his chosen ones.²³² When "the poor have the good news preached to them," it is the sign of Christ's presence.²³³

(2444) "The Church's love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition." This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor.²³⁴ Love for the poor is even one of the motives for the duty of working so as to "be able to give to those in need."²³⁵ It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty.²³⁶

3. A reading from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

(2742-2745)

Persevering in Love

(2742) "Pray constantly . . . always and for everything giving thanks

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father."¹³³ St. Paul adds, "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance making supplication for all the saints."¹³⁴ For "we have not been commanded to work, to keep watch and to fast constantly, but it has been laid down that we are to pray without ceasing."¹³⁵ This tireless fervor can come only from love. Against our dullness and laziness, the battle of prayer is that of humble, trusting, and persevering love. This love opens our hearts to three enlightening and life-giving facts of faith about prayer.

(2743) It is always possible to pray: the time of the Christian is that of the risen Christ who is with us always, no matter what tempests may arise.³⁶ Our time is in the hands of God:

It is possible to offer fervent prayer even while walking in public or strolling alone, or seated in your shop, . . . while buying or selling, . . . or even while cooking.³⁷

(2744) Prayer is a vital necessity. Proof from the contrary is no less convincing: if we do not allow the Spirit to lead us, we fall back into the slavery of sin.³⁸ How can the Holy Spirit be our life if our heart is far from him?

Nothing is equal to prayer; for what is impossible it makes possible, what is difficult, easy.... For it is impossible, utterly impossible, for the man who prays eagerly and invokes God ceaselessly ever to sin.³⁹

Those who pray are certainly saved; those who do not pray are certainly damned ⁴⁰.

(2745) Prayer and Christian life are inseparable, for they concern the same love and the same renunciation, proceeding from love; the same filial and loving conformity with the Father's plan of love; the same transforming union in the Holy Spirit who conforms us more and more to Christ Jesus; the same love for all men, the love with which Jesus has loved us. "Whatever you ask the Father in my name, he [will] give it to you. This I command you, to love one another."⁴¹

He "prays without ceasing" who unites prayer to works and good works to prayer. Only in this way can we consider as realizable the principle of praying without ceasing.⁴²

71 ⇒ Eph 4:25. 72 ⇒ 1 Cor 12:13. 73 ⇒ 1 Pet 2:5. 74 ⇒ 1 Pet 2:9. 75 Cf. ⇒ 1 Cor 6:19; ⇒ 2 Cor 5:15. 76 ⇒ Heb 13:17. 77 Cf. ⇒ Eph 5:21; ⇒ 1 Cor 16:15-16; ⇒ 1 Thess 5:12-13; ⇒ Jn 13:12-15. 78 Cf. LG 37; ⇒ CIC, cann. 208 223; CCEO, can. 675:2. 79 LG 11; cf. LG 17; AG 7; 23.231 ⇒ Mt 5:42; ⇒ 10:8. 232 Cf. ⇒ Mt 25:31-36. 233 ⇒ Mt 11:5; cf. ⇒ Lk 4:18. 234 CA 57; cf. ⇒ Lk 6:20-22, ⇒ Mt 8:20; ⇒ Mk 12:41-44. 235 ⇒ Eph 4:28.236 Cf. CA 57.33 ⇒ 1 Thess 5:17; ⇒ Eph 5:20. 34 ⇒ Eph 6:18. 35 Evagrius Ponticus, Pract. 49: PG 40, 1245C.36 Cf. ⇒ Mt 28:20; Lk 8:24[ETML:XC/]. 37 St. John Chrysostom, Ecloga de oratione 2: PG 63, 585. 38 Cf. ⇒ Gal 5:16-25. 39 St. John Chrysostom, De Anna 4, 5: PG 54, 666. 40 St. Alphonsus Liguori, Del gran Mezzo della preghiera. 41 ⇒ Jn 15:16-17. 42 Origen, De orat. 12: PG 11, 452c

*Source: <http://www.vatican.va/archive>

By Fr. Antonio Fiorenza, RCJ

Building a Culture of Pastoral Care

A Vocation Serving Church Communities



Photo by Archdiocese of Los Angeles Vocations Office

By JOHN M. RINALDO, D. MIN

In the late summer of 2015, I invited my best friend to Happy Hour at a local restaurant. I needed to chat. I needed an ear. I needed someone who would listen and support me. Because, for all intents and purposes, I was done.

Over the course of the last year prior to my Happy Hour gathering, I had gone through a lot of turmoil and transition. After trying for 4 years, my wife was finally pregnant with our second child and we were very excited! At the same time, my father was diagnosed with Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and was given a timeline to live anywhere from 1 to 5 years. As excited as I was about my wife being pregnant again, that excitement was tempered by my Dad's diagnosis. And there was good reason for that. He began to decline quickly.

During that year, I struggled to balance all the expectations that were placed on me. I tried my best to support my wife during her pregnancy, be there for my first daughter, manage the home, fulfill my responsibilities at work, and also be there for my Mom and Dad as they dealt with

the diagnosis of ALS and all the ongoing medical appointments and needs that my Dad had.

I tried to be the strong father, strong husband, and strong son that was expected of me. I attempted to balance all these aspects of my life and manage to do it with a smile and positive attitude.

In short, I was faking it. I was running on fumes. All aspects of my life suffered as I could not be the man I thought I had to be. I was not sure I was giving my wife enough of my time and energy that she needed during the pregnancy as my attention kept being pulled towards my parents. I was doing the bare minimum at work, and my boss knew it.

On May 3, 2015, my wife gave birth to my second daughter. It was a time of joy!

On May 20, 2015, my Dad passed away after being bed-ridden for more than a month.

On May 21, 2015, I celebrated my birthday (although "celebrate" is not the word we used that year).

Over the course of that summer, my wife and I dealt with having a newborn in the house again, which was exhausting. In the meantime, I helped my Mom plan my Dad's funeral service and tried to be present to my Mom who was clearly hurting after being married for almost 40 years.

I had nothing left to give. Not to my wife, my kids, my Mom, or myself. I was done. For about a year, I tried my best to pour into others. And, at that time, I had nothing in my life that was pouring into me.

That brings me back to my Happy Hour excursion with my best friend. As we enjoyed our beverages, I shared with him how I was feeling. Then I said to him something that changed my life: "I need a group of men who I can journey with in my life."

From there, our conversation turned from focusing on the past to envisioning the future. We sat on those bar stools for two hours as we brainstormed the development of a Men's Group for our parish. We talked about the why, the vision, the format, the topics, and even began to brainstorm some of the men we wanted

to invite.

In short, I couldn't do this journey of life alone anymore. I needed to be intentional about building a community, a support group, that would allow each of us to thrive as husbands, fathers, sons, and men.

I needed their pastoral care and support. And, as I found out later, they needed mine.

As a Catholic Church, our faith is not just built on our personal relationship with God. Although that is important, just as important is the community we surround ourselves with. Being part of a community together means that we begin to experience both the joys and tribulations of their journey.

The Gospel calls us to accompany others. Time and time again, Jesus was called to heal and feed people who were in need. We are all in need.

As Jesus did, so should we.

We live in a broken and hurting world. We don't even have to leave our own hearts to know this is true. Yet, in this world of social media, we hide behind a fake version of our lives that suggests all is well. All is not well.

Depression, addiction, abuse, and pain are a part of the lives of every individual that walks into the doors of the Church. The Church, not the building, but it's people, is measured by how we respond to the hurting of others. Do we support? Or do we ignore?

My natural temptation is to ignore. After my turbulent 2015, I discovered that I could no longer afford to ignore. This is the basic tenant of the Church's pastoral care efforts.

So how do we go about building a culture of pastoral care in our parishes?

Although I highly recommend looking in to developing extensive and organized programs like Stephen's Ministry,

the reality is that pastoral care can happen on a much simpler level.

Here are 3 simple strategies that we can engage in to begin to develop a culture of pastoral care:

1. Prayer Partners at Mass

Before Mass begins, or during the Greeting after the Sign of the Cross, the Presider invites everyone in the congregation to meet just one new person that is sitting around them. It can't be a relative or family member. The Presider invites them to introduce themselves, find out their name, and ask their new partner what is one thing that they need prayers for. They are invited to remember the name and prayer of the individual they just talked to. During the prayers of the faithful, after all the standard prayers are prayed, the presider invites everyone in the congregation to quietly say a quick prayer for their prayer partner.

2. Pray Over People

At the end of Mass, before the final blessing, the presider invites trained prayer leaders in the Church to come forward to the front. The presider then invites the congregation to consider coming forward after the final procession to receive a prayer by one of the prayer leaders. After Mass is over, people come forward to the prayer leaders and receive a prayer. The prayer should be spoken out loud, but quietly, so that only the person being prayed over can hear. The prayer can be preceded by the prayer recipient sharing something they are in need of prayer for. It is highly encouraged that the prayer leader either put their hands on the shoulder or head of the individual who is being prayed over.

These first two strategies are profound and impactful for many reasons:

- We begin to build community and to know the names of the people around us;
- We begin to understand that we all need prayer, because we are all

broken people in need of God's mercy;

- We embrace the call of the Confiteor at the beginning of Mass that states, "...and I ask you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord, our God;"
- We begin to normalize that we should always be praying for each other.

The last strategy is a bit more complex:

3. Develop a Small Group Ministry

Like my introductory story depicted, my small group became how I received pastoral care from my parish. The reality is that parish leaders and priests are unable to know, let alone understand all the needs of the congregation they shepherd. Small groups become an extension of the pastoral care arm of the parish because they will often know first what care their small group member needs. The small group can inform the pastor or pastoral staff right away to the needs of this individual, but they become the front lines of pastoral care ministry.

I highly encourage parishes to look into more formal pastoral care ministry options like Stephen's Ministry or developing a paid position for Pastoral Care. But the strategies above begin to lay out a foundation for developing a more long-term approach to pastoral care.

As we begin to embrace these strategies, we can begin to accompany people on their journey of life through their joys and tribulations. That is, after all, what being in a Church community is all about. ■



JOHN M. RINALDO, D. MIN

Is a coach and trainer for the Parish Success Group and an Adjunct Lecturer for Santa Clara University. He holds a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Organizational Development and a Master's in Pastoral Ministry. John is the co-host of "The Church Podcast."

Promoting Vocations

Community Life Witness, First of All



Photo by Daughters of Divine Zeal

By Sr. M. NOEMI FUDERANAN, FDZ

We are the Daughters of Divine Zeal of the Heart of Jesus, a congregation of women religious consecrated to live with zeal and compassion the command of Jesus, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; PRAY, therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Mt. 9,35-38). This is our charism, spirituality and fundamental apostolate, which calls us to a life commitment of prayer for an increase of holy vocations in the Church and of charity to meet the diverse needs of the poor.

Our community in Mexico is located in the Archdioceses of Guadalajara, specifically in the community of the Parish of Santa Sofia in Tlaquepaque, Jalisco. We are involved in the parish life particularly with young people, being present and collaborating in their human and Christian formation. Also, we assist them in their liturgical commitments and make our convent available to some of these activities, which give a leeway to relate with them in friendship.

We offer to young people a monthly recollection and prayer experience every last Saturday of the month. The purpose of these encounters is to give them an opportunity to grow in their communion and knowledge of God and with oneself. The

activities are guided mainly by the Word of God, prayer and common reflection. The community also welcomes young women who are discerning on their vocation and who wish to know more about our life as consecrated women. They stay with us from one weekend to one month for this wonderful vocation experience.

At the Diocesan level, we participate in the Vocation Ministry Program of the Archdiocese of Guadalajara throughout the year, working in communion with the diocese and other religious congregations. We participate in monthly vocation promoters meetings to organize different activities. We join in "Jornadas Vocacionales," "Pre-vidas," "Procesos Vocacionales Juveniles," and in "Holy Week Mission." The Jornadas Vocacionales consist of one week in either a parish or a school wherein we do vocation catechesis to students and families. Pre-Vidas are held on a weekend in a particular parish house where young women who are discerning on their vocation are guided to make their specific decision as to which Congregation they are meant to belong. Procesos Vocacionales Juveniles consist of five stages of vocation formation wherein young men and women are accompanied to know themselves in the context of their families, society, the Church, and to discern a specific state of life in their life.

Vocation Promotion is done also together with our brother Congregation, the Rogationists who are present in the same Archdiocese of Guadalajara. Together we visit parishes, schools and towns with the aim of promoting our charism and religious families. The Rogationist Fathers help us promote vocations to religious life and. In a reciprocal way, we promote vocations to priesthood. During the year, we celebrate together moments of prayer and particular Rogationist days of celebration. This brotherhood among ourselves strengthens our union and mission in the Rogate charism.

Finally, we are convinced that the best means of promoting vocations for our Congregation is to give witness of being a community "of one heart and of one soul" as Fr. Hannibal used to say to us, his spiritual sons and daughters. ■



SR. M. NOEMI FUDERANAN, FDZ

Is the Mother Superior of the Daughters of Divine Zeal Community located in Tlaquepaque, Jalisco, México. She is from Buhol, Philippines. Sr. Noemi professed her first religious vows in 1983 and her perpetual vows in 1989.

God Would Never Forsake Us

Prophet Hosea's Main Message



By Fr. ISAAC KALINA, OSB

Among the prophets Whom God called throughout our salvation history were some wild and crazy guys. They were not saints, but they were chosen to accomplish a saint's job for God and His people. Just as the Twelve Whom Jesus called to be his closest disciples, the prophets of old were all too human, as unlikely as the Apostles who followed them in a providential sequence. These prophets were just as motley as the Apostles, just as sinful and unruly as the people to whom they were

sent to preach; and, they were no different from those whom God calls today, you and I, who are riddled with our own human stubbornness and faults which God utilizes in creative ways to make the Word known & get the message across. Whether they blatantly fled from God, hard-headedly went into hiding or proclaimed a portion of "the good news," God used their own unique gifts and weaknesses, their very human situations and circumstances, to mold and conform the people into a sacred community of believers that would

one day in time be more ready to receive and become the Body of Christ.

It is too bad when we have to remember one such prophet who lived 800 years before Jesus, not for some splendid, good deed, but rather for an action regarded not only nowadays but also back then as an insidious evil, our first candidate for review is the Prophet Hosea, son of Beer, a northern Israelite who went and married Gomer who was a well-known harlot & prostitute. Well, wouldn't you know it,

God planned to use Hosea to announce to his people that they, like his own wife, had become prostitutes toward God; they were forever running after other gods, false idols in their thirst for power & success, thereby forsaking the Only One God there is.

The Prophet Hosea was the one who used himself & his own unfaithful wife as a symbol for the people who believed there was only One God, that no matter what we idolaters might do, no matter how oppressive we might be to our own neighbors, that God would still be there for them. Hosea knew in the end that God loved him & always would! The example he made of Gomer the prostitute holds a key to understanding the Scriptures; that in her inconstancy and her troubled life (returning to her old career after giving Hosea three children...conspicuously named) God would never forsake us, no matter what!

Hosea tells the people that God looked and found no faith, no steadfast love or knowledge of God in their land. God freed his people from slavery, gave them Torah, brought them into the promised land, all for the purpose of blessing everyone else on earth. In return, God expects the people to create a community characterized by generosity. One can only wonder about Gomer's reception among the other women of the community. As she drew water from the well or collected firewood, they shunned her in a way that was felt deeply by the prophet as well. We can read the story of Hosea & Gomer from a very human frame of reference. It should be seen as a love story that teaches a valuable lesson to Hosea, making him more human, more formable, like soft clay in the hands of the divine potter.

In this unique story of unrequited love, we see the unfolding of God's ways and the revelation of God's character to us as a process that slowly unfolds. After the Great Flood, the knowledge of God was lacking on earth. So, God would begin a process to restore faith & knowledge beginning with His call to Abram & Sarai. The story of God's gradual self-revelation to a chosen people finds its culmination & fulfillment in the life & death of Jesus Christ.

The central idea of Hosea is the magnificent portrayal of God as a passionate lover and his desire for intimacy & communion with his children. In this book, God's relationship with Israel is described in terms of a marriage arrangement. A story like this could only be written by one who was likewise capable of intense, passionate love. Having endured the painful experience of a spouse who deserted him, taking action to publicly divorce her, Hosea repents & continues to love, care & provide for her. This experience gave Hosea the background to envision Israel from God's perspective. Buying her freedom & seeking to gain her affections again gives Hosea the spiritual insight and prophetic motivation that God needed to convey his own intentions toward Israel. In a painful process, Hosea sensed the connection between his deep feelings for Gomer and his realization that God must feel just like this when it comes to His people.

In plain language, Hosea puts these words in God's mouth: I made you, I saved you, I brought you to a new land & gave you life. If you continue to sin, you will know crisis upon crisis, pointing out to them the direct link, the immediate connection between faith & practice, between turning away from God & the lack of peace & social justice in the world. It is best to see Gomer as chaste at the time of her marriage to Hosea, becoming later in life involved once again as before 'in harlotry & whoredom.' His role as a prophet was to call people back into covenant & communion with God; his mission took on a new dimension as he wove his personal experience into his message of impending judgment and repentance. God was able to take Hosea's mess & disaster of a marriage situation to discover a message of encouragement. God inspired Hosea to recast his personal experience into an allegorical format, allowing Hosea to preach with persuasive power and eloquence that spoke to both the minds and hearts of his people. God convicted Hosea with the thought that just as his wife had adopted a life of idols & harlotry, so His Chosen People have gone into spiritual darkness & adultery with the idols they served. In that moment Hosea's tears became a gift, like a telescope or other conduit through which he saw more clearly the very heart of the

infinite love of God, the best Lover. Hosea tried time after time to convince the people, arguing that God was a God of love, who would be contradicting Himself if His activity was other than love. God wanted the people to see what they were doing to themselves, and that the only way He could get them to listen, to pay attention, was to make things rough and unpleasant for them. Our Prophet Hosea learned the Gospel through his tears, acquainted with disappointment. He spoke to the people from the depths of his own emptiness and suffering, his utter brokenness and shame. Hosea was imitating God's gesture in His Christ, a willingness to travel into a sinful environment, a world of immorality to reclaim his unfaithful bride. He was willing to pay the price to get her back, so tender was his heart for Gomer despite the shame her sin brought to him. The restored relationship of Hosea & Gomer supplied this unfaithful people with an illustration of God's Love for them. Just as the prophet Hosea still loved his wife, though she was unfaithful, God still loved Israel through one infidelity after another.

The love we see demonstrated in Hosea, was not only an example of the steadfast love God had for Israel, but it was a foreshadowing of the great Love that God would reveal in Jesus Christ. God in Christ traveled willingly to the environment of sinful man that this world is, to pay the ransom, the price. At the cross we would see not only the forgiving love of this God, but also the holiness of such a love. ■



FR. ISAAC KALINA, OSB

Is a native Californian who became a Benedictine monk at St. Andrew's Abbey in Valyermo in 1984. He has worn many hats: Prior, Subprior, Kitchenmaster, Youth Director, Asst. Novicemaster, Vocation Director & Juniormaster. Fr. Isaan holds a Master's in Addictions Counseling.

Luke 1:39-45

Following Elizabeth's Example Attentive to what God is doing here

By Sr. Emily Beata Marsh, FSP

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled"

Luke 1:45

The founder of my community, Blessed James Alberione, often used the Gospel story of the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth as an image of evangelization, saying: "Blessed are the imitators of Mary, who bring Jesus to the world.... Mary begins immediately to carry out her mission on behalf of humanity. Her visit to the house of Elizabeth and Zechariah is a model for [evangelization]." Bl. Alberione exhorted us to be like Mary, whose first action after receiving Jesus was to bring Jesus to another person. This is really the mission of every Christian—to receive Jesus and to bring him to others.

There is, however, another element to contemplate in the account of the Visitation, and that is the reception that Elizabeth offers to Mary. The Gospel of Luke tells us that three things happened when Mary greeted Elizabeth: John the Baptist "leaped in her womb"; Elizabeth was "filled with the Holy Spirit"; and Elizabeth said to Mary, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb." In response to what happened outside of Elizabeth, something happened inside her. John the Baptist recognized the Savior and communicated this to his mother. Elizabeth was attentive to what was happening inside her; that is, she was attentive to the physical sensation of her unborn child leaping inside her. This was a signal to her to be attentive to what God was doing in and around her.

For us, it is not always a physical sensa-

tion that clues us in, although it could be. God also gives us plenty of emotional and spiritual sensations to pay attention to. Think about the last time you felt joy. Or the last time you felt sadness, anxiety, relief, satisfaction, or peace. What was going on around you at those times? What was going on within you? What we feel is usually a reaction to something that is happening within us or around us. These reactions are signals for us to pay attention because God is doing something in our lives. As we pay attention to what God is doing, we can talk to him about it, and in this way we grow in relationship with him. "Elizabeth... filled with the Holy Spirit..." The second thing that happened to Elizabeth when she heard Mary's greeting is that she was filled with the Holy Spirit. We know this because the Gospel tells us; we also know this from what Elizabeth says to Mary immediately following. The reality is that Elizabeth was being filled with the Holy Spirit throughout her life. Every time grace was working in her life, she was being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The same is true for us. We were first filled with the Holy Spirit at our baptism, and we have been continuously filled with the Holy Spirit throughout our lives, whether we know it or not. It is the Holy Spirit who prompts us to conversion and repentance when we have been falling into sin. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the strength and courage to avoid sin and pursue holiness. It is the Holy Spirit who inspires us with ideas, who moves us into relationship with God and with others, who breathes life into us every moment of every day. The Holy Spirit is much closer to us than we know. Let us embrace how the Holy Spirit wants to fill us, even (and especially) in the small ways.

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." Elizabeth calls Mary blessed. She

calls her blessed for being "the mother of my Lord" and because she "believed what was spoken by the Lord." Elizabeth is able to recognize the blessing and grace of the Lord's action in another person, and she praises God for it. In doing so, she helps Mary to recognize the nature of God's blessing and grace. Mary knows that she has been abundantly blessed by God, but Elizabeth helps her to see the blessing of believing in the gift that God has offered her.

Often God sends an "Elizabeth" into our life—someone who is able to help us recognize, name, and give thanks for God's grace in our life. Sometimes we are called to be an "Elizabeth" for others. It is an invitation to see ourselves, others, and the world through the lens of grace and gratitude. We can practice doing this by stopping every so often to notice what is happening within us and around us and asking, "What is God doing here?" Then, like Elizabeth, we can respond with praise and thanksgiving.

Jesus, you come to visit me just as you came to visit Elizabeth. Make my heart leap for joy. Fill me with your Spirit. Help me to see you everywhere, and to live in gratitude for your presence. Amen. ■



Sr. Emily Beata Marsh, FSP

Professed her final vows in June 2018. Sister Emily is currently the National Vocation Director for the Daughters of St. Paul.

Blessed Ceferino Namuncurá (1886-1905)

"A Saint Inspires Others to Holiness"

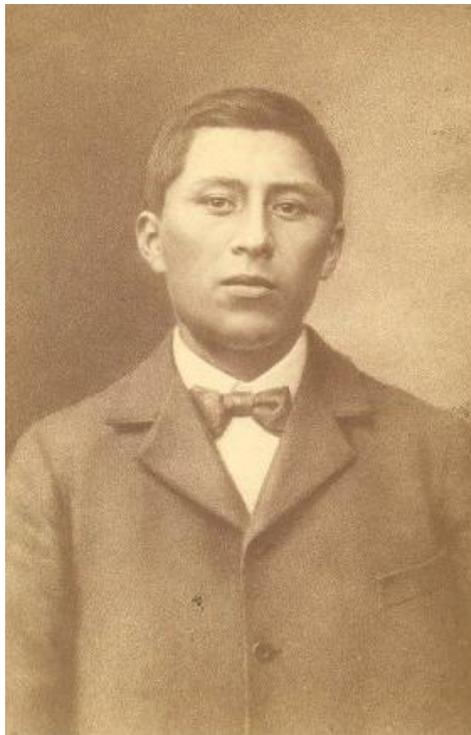
By Fr. PETER QUINTO, RCJ

Pope Francis, in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Christus Vivit," wrote that "The heart of the Church is also full of young saints who devoted their lives to Christ, many of them even to dying a martyr's death. They were precious reflections of the young Christ; their radiant witness encourages us and awakens us from our lethargy." Inspired by the example of Saint Dominic Savio, who died at the young age of 14, one of those who had devoted their lives to Christ is Blessed Ceferino Namuncurá, beatified at Chimpay, Argentina, on November 11, 2007, by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, a Salesian of Don Bosco and the Vatican's Secretary of State. It was one of the few beatification ceremonies held outside the Vatican and in the blessed's own land. Known popularly as "The Lily of the Patagonia," Ceferino became the first indigenous native of South America to achieve this category and the second in Latin America, after the Mexican Saint Juan Diego, messenger and witness to the apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Three years before Ceferino's birth on August 26, 1886, a decisive battle took place in which his mother, a Chilean, and four siblings were captured along with approximately 2,000 Indians. At this point surrender was the only alternative to extermination. Arbitration with the Argentine Government gave the Indians their tribal lands and granted their chief, Manuel Namuncurá, Ceferino's father, the role of colonel in the Argentine army.

The Salesian missionary priest Domingo Milanesio baptized Ceferino. Through the advice of a friend, Ceferino's father sent him to study with the Salesians of Don Bosco in Buenos Aires so he could be prepared to serve his people, the Mapuches. The family spirit in the Salesian school brought Ceferino to love Don Bosco. The spiritual dimension of life began to grow in him. Choosing St. Dominic Savio as a

model, he himself became another Dominic Savio, excelling in his piety, charity, daily duty, and self-sacrifice. It was at this time that he discovered his vocation: to be a priest in order to bring to his own people the message of the Gospel. When he finished his studies, his father wanted him back home, to serve as interpreter and secretary, but Ceferino was already enthusiastic about becoming a Salesian priest.



At the age of seventeen, Ceferino entered the seminary. He was also growing in virtue and was often found in front of the Blessed Sacrament. In 1903 Ceferino contracted tuberculosis, and in 1904 he traveled to Rome to continue his study for the priesthood. However, within a year his health took a sudden turn for the worse. His director wrote, "He got worse day by day, yet he was never impatient. He suffered, but he held onto his cross generously."

Ceferino succumbed to pulmonary tuberculosis on May 11, 1905, at the age of eighteen, surrounded by several of the

brothers who were praying for him. He was buried in Rome, but at the insistence of his people, to whom he had sought to bring the Gospel, his body was taken back to Patagonia in 1924 and was buried at the Salesian school of Fortin Mercedes in the southern part of Buenos Aires Province. In 1945, a request for his beatification was forwarded to the Holy See. The Church officially started the process for the canonization of Ceferino Namuncurá in 1947, with 21 then-living witnesses giving evidence of his virtues.

The devotion to Ceferino Namuncurá, the saintly young Mapuche, became very extensive in Buenos Aires and throughout Argentina. In particular the indigenous people recognize him as one of their own. But while his first legacy is to his own nation and people, his example is offered to all the world, especially the youth, of someone who took his faith seriously and wanted to share it with others. ■

Sources:

Vatican News Services
 Agenzia Info Salesiana
 Salesians.org
 www.sdb.org



FR. PETER QUINTO, RCJ

Is a Rogationist priest and assistant pastor at St. Jane of Chantal Catholic Church in North Hollywood, California.

Never Lacking as a Spouse or as a Mother

The Richness of my Religious Life



By Sr. ELISABETH MYLES.

My name is Sister Elizabeth Miles from the congregation Servants of Mary, Ministers to the Sick. I have been in the religious life for 19 years. Looking back on my years as a consecrated religious Sister, I can see, in different ways, how God has shown me the gift of my vocation. Sometimes focusing on my ministry and my daily responsibilities, I forget what an honor it is to be able to dedicate myself completely to Christ, His Church and His people. Through my life of prayer, living in community, in my ministry and by my living of the evangelical counsels, I have grown in my relationship with our Lord, and I can honestly say that He is my BEST FRIEND.

Called to Have a Personal Relationship with Jesus

I knew from the beginning of my religious life that without prayer I would not persevere in my vocation. Being a contemplative in action, there can be a temptation

to get so involved in the ministry and neglect times of prayer. It is easy to justify it by thinking that our ministry is a form of prayer so God understands. But, my first obligation is to love, praise and worship God. The consequence of that is my mission with the sick; not the other way around. I am called to have a deep intimate prayer life so when going from the chapel to the bedside of the sick, my dialogue with Christ will not be interrupted. Yes, serving and helping others is a form of prayer but it should never take the place of my time alone with Jesus. Just like a husband and wife need time to be together, so it is for our Lord and I. How can I bring Jesus to God's people if I do not know Him myself?

One of the many gifts I have received with my vocation is living in community. I lived many years on my own before entering the convent. I believed in God and loved Him but I never had a personal relationship with Him as I do today. Through my Sisters, I experience the Lord everyday whether it is in a smile, in the laughter and

conversations we share, or in the eyes of my Sister when she looks at me with compassion and understanding when I am having a hard day. Also, when I receive corrections from a Sister, Jesus gives me the opportunity to be humble, lets me know when I am doing wrong or shows me a better way, always wanting what is best for me. Even when I feel hurt and misunderstood Jesus is letting me participate with Him when, during His life, He was hurt and misunderstood allowing me to be more like Him.

Then I go from the convent to the homes of our patients and Jesus is there. As it says in our Constitution #71 "The sick is the visible image of the suffering Christ and it is He we serve in the person of our patient." I have received so much more from my patients and their families than I could ever give.

Loving and Serving Jesus with an Undivided Heart

Professing the vows of poverty, chastity



and obedience is a gift in itself which helps me to remove obstacles that can prevent me from striving to love and serve Jesus with an undivided heart. Some people have expressed to me that they feel sorry because I will never marry or have children. Each time I heard this; I was surprised at their concern. I can honestly say that I have never felt like I was lacking as a spouse or a mother. Jesus is my Spouse and I feel very much like a spiritual mother to God's people. My being called to be a spouse of Christ is something that I cannot fully understand with my human mind. Why did our Lord choose me? I do not know, but it is what it is. Thanks be to God!

One memory that comes to mind in regards to my consecration was back in 2004 when I was a temporary professed Sister in the Intensive Juniorate in Kansas City, Kansas. I was assigned to help the Sister in the sacristy. One day she was teaching me how to purify the sacred vessels, and she

noticed that I was nervous when picking up the chalice. I remember her looking up at me with a smile and saying, "It's okay, you can touch it. You're consecrated too." It was like Jesus was looking at me through her eyes. I felt His presence in a special way that day and He continues to surprise me through my Sisters and the people He places in my life.

Living in the Same House with Jesus

Also, I cannot forget to mention what an honor and privilege it is to be able to live in the same house with our Lord. To think that He is always there for me in the chapel! Thanks be to God for the great gift of my faith in Jesus' presence in the Holy Eucharist! I know that during those moments in my life when I feel alone, I can go before the tabernacle, and like when Mary found the Child Jesus in the temple, I can find Him, whether I feel Him or not, because it is

by faith that I know He is there. I am never alone.

These are just some of the many gifts I have received in my religious life. Everyday I am surrounded by our Lord whether it is in my interactions with my Sisters, our patients and their families, or when I am with Him in the chapel. Jesus is always saying, "Here I am, I am with you, if you just take the time to pay attention." Please pray for me that I never stop paying attention. Because without Jesus my religious life has no meaning. ■



SR. ELISABETH MYLES

Entered the convent in the Year 2000 and made her Final Profession of Vows to God in 2009. She has her LVN and is presently the vocations director, along with Sister Cecilia Lopez, for their community in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Feeling at Home

My Life-Long Vocation Decision



Photo by Robin Spielmann

By Sr. SYDNEY MOSS, F.M.A.

Growing up in Phoenix, Arizona I never met religious Sisters. So the thought of consecrating my life to God never occurred to me. After college, I moved to Washington, DC where I did a year-long service program with the Capuchin Franciscans and met religious Sisters for the first time. Even though I was very attracted to them (they were young, missionary, worked with kids, AND played basketball!), everything inside of me resisted the idea of being a Sister. It took many years of prayer and wrestling with God to finally accept his will.

A big turning point in my discernment was when I did another year-long service program with the Salesian Sisters and lived in El Salvador. I had always wanted to go to another country and volunteer, and I found the possibility of living in community with the Sisters to be very appealing. I would be able to see what religious life was like from the inside without being labeled a discerner! At the end of my year of service I had fallen in love with El Salvador and was not ready to come home, so I stayed for a second year. The real reason I stayed, however, was that I still wasn't ready to make a life-long vocation decision. I decided I would stay in El Salvador until my heart was ready to say yes to God's plan. That happened

about eight months later. I finally realized I would be happy consecrating my life to God and felt at peace to pursue his will as a religious Sister. The ironic part is that during my two years with the Salesian Sisters in El Salvador, I was very convinced that God was not calling me to be a Salesian. However, when I came back to the States and visited their house of formation in Los Angeles, it finally felt normal and I knew I was at home. I entered with the Salesian Sisters in 2010 and made my perpetual vows on August 5, 2019, forever espousing myself to Christ.

God has always been good to me, but he has been especially good to me these past six months when I was asked to be a youth minister at a predominantly Central American parish in downtown Los Angeles and the director of our lay volunteer program. Being immersed in the Central American culture and preparing and accompanying young adults as they prepare to go on mission – God had been preparing my heart for this for the past 12 years! As the director of VIDES (Volunteers International for Development, Education and Solidarity), it has been a true blessing to accompany young adults who are discovering God's plan for their lives. For most young adults, the thought of making a life-long commitment to either marriage or religious life is very

overwhelming. But committing to a three or six-month term of service is much easier! Most of the returned volunteers have shared that their experience of mission prepared them for the next step in their vocational journey. We have had several former volunteers become priests and Sisters, but also several who met their future spouse while serving! As the Church stated in *Gaudium et Spes*, "man cannot fully find himself except through the sincere gift of himself" (24). While prayer and spiritual direction are essential to vocational discernment, we also need to continue encouraging young people to actively search for their vocation by serving others. By giving of themselves they discover the gifts and talents God has given them and also the way in which he wants them to use them. Let us not miss the opportunity to invite the young to serve with us as a means of vocational accompaniment! ■



SR. SYDNEY MOSS, F.M.A.

Is a Salesian Sister of St. John Bosco and currently lives in Los Angeles where she is a youth minister and director of the Sister's lay volunteer program, VIDES (www.vides.us)

Shattering the Depression Glass

Now is the best time of all



Photo by Fares Hamouche

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

*one blue mornin'
I looked outside my window
and saw you walkin' away
one blue mornin'
my heart leaped out that window
it lay broken and bleeding in the rain*

*window pain, window pain
my heart lies bleedin'
in the pourin' rain
window pain, window pain
my heart lies bleedin'
in the pourin' rain...*

From the song, Window Pain by Dr BLT
© 2020

People that know me, know that, while every relationship takes work, my wife and I have a pretty solid relationship. So when people ask how I write so many great heartbreak songs, I tell them, "It's simple. I just look at my CD sales."

Heartache stemming from the breakup of a once-romantic relationship can lead to a sense of grief that evolves into an extended depressive episode. But breakups and divorces are not the only personal losses that feed depression. I see patients all of the time that have had multiple losses. Some have lost one or both parents or parental figures in childhood; and that may be followed by additional losses of relationships, jobs and or a loss of health. Multiple losses in life or a single profound loss, can trigger depression. Childhood trauma, also experienced as a loss, on multiple levels, can trigger depression.

Not everyone manifests depression in the same way. However, common symptoms include deep sadness and/or hopelessness, lack of motivation for activities previously enjoyed (playing music; watching or participating in sports; art; taking in concerts, plays or movies, or going out for dinner); listlessness, insomnia; and irritably. One person

may turn inward and become angry at oneself, while another person may take it out on others. Either way, depression is extremely painful and difficult to endure—so difficult that some turn to suicide as a way out.

*I'm shattering depression glass
that's what I'm doing, in case you ask
shattering, that is my task
I'm shattering depression glass...*

From the song, Shattering Depression Glass, by Dr BLT © 2020

Depression glass is a special type of machine-pressed, often thick, and tinted glass, that was distributed free or at a low cost during the Great Depression. When you try to look through it, your vision often becomes blocked, and/or blurred. The "depression" glass, in my song is, of course, used in a metaphoric sense.

When we are depressed (and I say "we," because even I, along with many other

mental health providers, have struggled with depression during certain periods of life), our focus, and our sense of purpose and meaning is often blurred, as is often the case when looking through depression glass. Moreover, as with depression glass, when we go through periods of depression, the light is often partially, or fully blocked, along with our ability to find meaning in the midst of our suffering. Drawing meaning from our experiences becomes an oft-illusory endeavor, at best. Who knows? Maybe the Apostle Paul's "thorn in the flesh," was a struggle with depression. In any case, he did say that we "see through the glass darkly," or, to quote the entire verse:

1 Corinthians Chap 13: 12: "For now **we see through a glass, darkly**; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

In this verse, we see a way out of depression, and a means by which we can shatter the "depression glass," that darkens our perspective and robs us of our joy. Though depression leaves feeling hopeless, this verse offers hope. It is the hope of a glorious kingdom that awaits all children of God.

*It ain't so hard to imagine
been doin' it for years
imagine a world,
where there will be no tears...*

From the song, Imagine a Song,
by Dr BLT © 2020

So, do we have to wait until we get to heaven to break the glass? The answer is, unequivocally, NO! In fact, NOW is the best time of all, to begin finding relief from "window pain," and shattering to bits, the "depression glass" that leaves you depleted and defeated.

The following are a number of ways that you, with a little help from above, can begin to participate in the amelioration of your own suffering.

- Distract and process

Though remaining in a continuous state of distraction is counterproductive and contraindicated as a way of overcoming depression, going from periods of distraction,

to periods of processing is clearly a beneficial path to take.

Many patients (whom I call mental health athletes), and many people, in general, experience depression as being trapped in one's head. And that head, while consumed by the demon of depression, is not a pleasant place to live. Distraction can play a key role in getting a depressed person out of his/her head.

Some surf, some paint, some cook, some (like me) write songs. Some hit the gym or swim, to get slim. Some read. Whatever your go-to method of distraction is, go for it. Anhedonia will be your biggest obstacle. It is a symptom of depression in which the activities that you once loved, and found pleasure in, now longer offer much in the way of appeal.

So you may need to force yourself, at first, to engage in your go-to distraction activity. But, as the verse goes, "I can do all things, through Christ, who strengthens me." You'll find this to be especially true if you set baby goals and take baby steps towards accomplishing distraction.

It is doubtful, though not impossible, that you will be able to distract yourself completely out of a depressive episode. Because depression is often fueled, in part, by unresolved internal conflict, the unresolved conflict, and difficult emotions that often accompany such conflict, must be addressed, and that must occur through processing, not distraction, or denial. So, what can you do to address and to process this mental and emotional baggage? How about journaling?

Journaling is like creating a thought/feeling diary. It is a record of your innermost thoughts and emotions.

For those who, like me, prefer to journal with songwriting, you will not get an argument against that, coming from me. The same goes for those artists that prefer to journal with pictures. Be my guest. Let it out!

When you are writing, be it with words; with music and lyrics, or with photos, drawings, or paintings, using these as means of processing difficult often uncon-

scious material involves something called sublimation. Sublimation is the process of channeling what could otherwise become negative, toxic and destructive, and turning into something beautiful and expressive.

Your Body: A temple and a foundation for mental health

Eating healthy, exercising, avoiding excessive stress, and getting regular medical checkups will prove exceedingly beneficial for your mental health. Your body is a temple. When you fit it with toxins, you'll reap what you sew, and that horrible harvest may include the rotten grain of depression and its dreadful symptoms.

Finally, you can smash depression glass by swallowing your pride, and reaching out to trusted family members, and friends. Get it out. Constant catharsis is what it's all about. If the depression glass is too much to bear, even with the support of family and friends, it may be time to seek out professional help, by reaching out to priests, pastoral counselors and mental health professionals.

Of course, all along, never stop reaching out to Jesus, the Great Physician. ■



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

VATICAN



"Exemplary Companions for the Journey"

Responding to their Life's Calling

Pope Francis prayed in a deserted St. Peter's Square on March 27, 2020. He delivered a message of hope, reminding us that in the midst of this difficult time, there are people who carry on selfless acts of love responding to their life's calling.

"We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial. It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people – often forgotten people – who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves. In the face of so much suffering, where the authentic development of our peoples is assessed, we experience the priestly prayer of Jesus: "That they may all be one" (Jn 17:21)."

To read the complete text of Pope Francis' blessing, please visit www.vatican.va

USA



A Message about Covid-19

Dear Beloved Vocations and Prayer Family,

We are experiencing a testing time due to the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic. The Rogationist Fathers and the Staff of Vocations and Prayer magazine invite you to remain united in prayer to the Lord of the Harvest:

With the confident trust that he walks with us and never leaves us alone, even when we walk through a dark valley (Ps. 23). He will rescue us from the destroying plague (Ps. 91); he is our guardian who does not sleep. The Lord will guard us from all evil. The Lord will guard our coming and our going both now and forever (Ps. 123). Amen.

Our commitment to continue working and praying for vocations in the Church remains strong. At the same time, we are ready to offer spiritual support to you and your loved ones. You can reach us at: info@vocationsandprayer.org or afiorenza@rcj.org.

Blessings,

The Editor and Staff of Vocations and Prayer Magazine



The Catholic Magazine on Vocation Ministry

Your Information

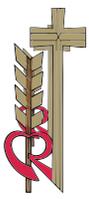
Name: _____
 Organization: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 E-mail: _____

Annual Donation

- Member: \$10.00
- Friend: \$20.00
- Supporter: \$30.00
- Sponsor: \$50.00
- Patron: \$100.00
- Free Gift: \$ _____

Payment Options

- Cash
 - Check Enclosed
(Payable to Rogationist Publications)
 - Visa
 - MasterCard
 - Discover
 - Amex
- Card #: _____
 Exp. Date: _____ Security Code: _____



Vocations and Prayer

ROGATIONIST PUBLICATIONS

6635 Tobias Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91405-4614

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Rogationist
Fathers

Aveni Foundation

Aveni Foundation is committed to expediting the development of gene-targeted therapies for metastatic cancer. Fr. Joseph Aveni was a Rogationist priest who experienced significant clinical benefit from this therapy. His cause of canonization is ongoing.

Alternatarnatives for Cancer Patients



Support Aveni Foundation by sending donations to:

Aveni Foundation
2811 Wilshire Blvd #777
Santa Monica, CA 90403
www.avenifoundation.org

For info email to: info@avenifoundation.org



*“There is
nothing better
than doing
God’s will
because He is
our Father.”*

Fr. Joseph Aveni

Rogationist Publications

Questions? Give us a call ☎ 818.782.1765 or e-mail us to ✉ info@vocationsandprayer.org

Visit our wesbite www.vocationsandprayer.org