

Praying the Rosary
for
An Increase of Priestly Vocations
in the Diocese of
Hexham and Newcastle



Vocations Sunday
4th Sunday of Easter 2020



DAILY PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

*Heavenly Father,
in Baptism you called us by name
and made us members of your family,
the Church.*

*Help all your people to know
their vocation in life,
and to respond by living
a life of holiness.*

*For your greater glory
and for the service of your people,
raise up dedicated and generous men
who will serve as priests
for the Church
of Hexham and Newcastle.*

*Send your Spirit to guide
and strengthen our communities,
our seminarians and all
who are discerning their vocation.*

Amen.

A Message from Fr Christopher Warren

*Diocesan Director of
Priestly Vocations*

During this time when our lives are affected by the global Covid-19 pandemic; the dedication and courage of those who are working on the front line is both inspiring and essential. Images of medics and other key workers in our communities; living out their vocation and not counting the cost, are visual reminders to us of the amazing courage and love which makes life worth living. Among their number are priests who are ministering to the sick, celebrating the sacraments and striving to witness to hope during what can seem a hopeless situation.

On the Fourth Sunday of Easter, the Church celebrates Good Shepherd Sunday and the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. This Sunday is a day for us to pray for good and holy priestly vocations for service in the parishes of our diocesan family. In a letter to the Church for this occasion, Pope Francis stated that: 'in the ordinary pastoral life of our communities, I ask the Church to continue to promote vocations.' The Holy Father especially encouraged our parishes to become places of prayer for vocations to the Priesthood; where our example and prayerful mission can become a seed bed for priestly vocations.

This year I encourage you to pray the Holy Rosary for priestly vocations in our diocese. Our seminarians have prepared meditations to help you to ponder upon the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary; please pray for them and for those who are currently discerning God's call in their lives. We currently have five men in formation for the Priesthood. Recently, Bishop Robert Byrne has accepted a new candidate, David Pinder from Stockton-on-Tees, who begins seminary formation in September. Please keep our seminarians and enquirers in your prayers.

I invite you to pray the Holy Rosary daily for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our diocesan family; that he may call many holy and dedicated men to the priesthood for Hexham and Newcastle.

Fr Christopher

First Glorious Mystery

The Resurrection of the Lord

He is not here, for he has risen has he said (Matthew 28. 5)

Intention: For the People and Communities of the Diocese

The Resurrection of Our Lord brings with it many surprises. Jesus is not to be found where we would of expected him to be. He isn't to be found in that new tomb in the garden for *non est hic, surrexit enim sicut dixit!* Christ is with us, he is present among his people, in different ways, if only we would truly see him.

We hear how at first Jesus isn't recognised by his disciples, by Mary of Magdala or by the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. Jesus is present to them, as he is to us, but he is in some way hidden from us. However, as soon as Jesus calls out to them and to us, we recognise who it is who is calling to us.

What is the Lord asking of us? What do we find when we come to search for him?

Throughout seminary and the placements within different parishes, I have come to recognise that Christ is not always to be found in the expected places. Some of the greatest encounters with Christ can be had in the most unusual circumstances and in the strangest of places. These experiences have, for me, affirmed my vocation. However, these opportunities to encounter the Lord could have been missed if I wasn't prepared to encounter Him.

A simple gesture or a brief few words, have brought me to a closer encounter with the risen Lord present before me. Just like those times when I have been in silent prayer before him, truly present in the blessed sacrament but hidden from our view, I have encountered Him. Our eyes and our ears must always be open to recognise who it is who is in our midst and be open to follow him wherever he may be calling us to go.

Let us pray that through this mystery of Our Lord's Resurrection, we may be renewed and brought to life, in the hope and the love which has been entrusted to us.

*Rev. Jonathan Bowes
Year 6
St Mary's College, Oscott*



Second Glorious Mystery

The Ascension

Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.” (Matthew 28:19, 20)

Intention: For our seminarians in formation

Our Lord ascends into Heaven, our redemption having been won through the mystery of his death and resurrection and his earthly mission having been completed. But he does not abandon us as orphans, nor is his ministry finished. He sends his apostles, his closest collaborators, whom he has trained and taught and led for this very purpose, into the world to be his ministers. They are to continue doing just as he did while on earth: preaching repentance; teaching and healing; baptising and spreading the Good News. They will become the Church, the Body of Christ in our world.

In the apostles, in the Church, Jesus remained with us after his ascension and even today his ministry goes on. From among his people, he still calls forth men to be his apostles and ministers to mankind. He is still with us in them, in the Church, in the Sacraments, in the hands of today's Apostles- the bishops, and their priests and deacons.

2000 years ago, his earthly life complete, he ascended into Heaven, but still he gives us his forgiveness, his salvation, his very self through the hands of his ministers, and so he truly remains with us as he promised.

*Joseph O'Brien
Year 2
Venerable English College, Rome*



Third Glorious Mystery

The Descent of the Holy Spirit

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. (Acts 2:4)

Intention: That our parishes may be places where priestly vocations are inspired and cherished.

Following the excitement and joy of the Resurrection and the wonder of the Ascension, we now find the Apostles back in Jerusalem, with Mary, in the upper room, waiting for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

At the last supper Jesus promised, the Apostles that he would send an Advocate, a helper, “who will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

When the Spirit descended on them at Pentecost, it filled them with such great power and love, that it swept them away and burned within their hearts. It was by being filled with the Holy Spirit that Peter could boldly go to the waiting crowd outside and speak to them about Jesus, and begin the work of evangelisation, giving birth to the Church and its mission.

The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. It is the Spirit, who explains to the faithful the deep meaning of the teaching of Jesus and of His mystery. Through our Confirmation, we all become members of the Church’s visible mission, to share our faith in Christ, to bring others into the life of the Church, to evangelise.

Priests have a special role in encouraging others to use the gifts, given to them by the Spirit, to share the Gospel, to celebrate the Sacraments with the faithful and for the good of the Church. So that everyone is filled with the Holy Spirit, can grow in their love of Jesus, and help Him in His mission to make the Father known; “to go and make disciples of all the nations.”

Paul Kilduff
Year 1
St Mary’s College, Oscott



Fourth Glorious Mystery

The Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven

“The woman brought a child into the world, a son who was to rule all the nations with an iron sceptre, and the child was taken straight up to God and to his throne, while the woman escaped into the desert, where God had made a place of safety ready” (Apocalypse 12: 5-6).

Intention: For the sanctification of priests

In this mystery we come to understand Mary’s lifelong vocation of putting her trust in God and being fully obedient to His will. During her time on earth, we hear of her ‘Yes’ to the angel Gabriel in complete acceptance to becoming the Mother of Jesus, knowing all of the responsibilities and sacrifices that it would entail. We know that she was with her Son at both His birth and His death and remained faithful to Him following His Passion by remaining with the apostles even in a time of great fear. However, even after Jesus’ ascension into Heaven, Mary continued saying ‘Yes’ by being assumed into heaven. She freely accepted God’s will to leave her earthly life for an eternal one in heaven, so it is fitting that she should have a share in the Lord’s resurrection and benefit from the many heavenly rewards after her life of sacrifice.

Discerning a vocation to the priesthood requires a similar wisdom to recognise the many sacrifices that we may have to temporarily endure with knowledge that we will receive much greater joy in return. Just like Our Lady, we have to be able to discern the quiet voice of God calling us in the busyness of daily life and to respond by giving our full ‘Yes’ to what He is asking of us. In order to grow in our relationship with Him we have to remain close to God by serving Him and those He has entrusted to us in our daily life. This can be extremely difficult as His voice sometimes seems to disappear and we can often feel unworthy, lonely and afraid. However, like Mary, if we remain close to Christ we will eventually know all of the many graces and gifts we have received to carry out His unique task for us, so we too can have our share in Christ’s resurrection. Therefore, let us fully trust God’s Providence and accept the vocation He is asking of us.



*Benjamin Sinclair
Propaedeutic Year
Royal and Pontifical College of St Alban, Valladolid*

Fifth Glorious Mystery

The Coronation of Our Lady in Heaven and the Glory of all the Saints

Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, loud noises, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. (Revelation 11:19-12, 11)

Intention: For those priests who are sick or have died

The Fifth Glorious Mystery of the Rosary reminds us of our ultimate vocation, the vocation we each received by virtue of our baptism: the vocation to holiness. God desires each of us to join with Mary in heaven. He wants to number us among that glorious band of Apostles and Martyrs, to stand alongside those great figures of our faith and to be united for eternity with Him, with them, in perfect charity.

Reflecting upon this mystery we are called to lift up our spirits, He who raised the poor handmaid of Nazareth to highest glory of the saints can do great things in us as well. This great vocation is woven through every aspect of our lives, and it unfolds in a variety of ways. Those who are called to the Sacrament of Matrimony live out the call to holiness through an act of lifelong self-gift to their spouse, those called to the religious life are called to seek out communion with God in solitude and service and those called to the service of the Church in the Priesthood are entrusted by God with the power to act in the very person of Jesus so that He might be with His people all throughout the Church's long journey through history.

When we pray the rosary and reflect on this mystery, let us lift up our hearts to heaven, and ask that God might reveal our vocation more clearly to us, that He might help us walk its winding path, that He might raise up holy married couples, holy religious, holy priests and a great many holy saints.



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Is God calling you to be a priest?

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