

For Those Who Feel Drawn to a Religious Vocation

Reference (No longer available from this site):

<http://www.daughtersofstpaul.com/johnpaulpapacy/prolificpope/religiousvoc.html>

'A question therefore is directed to each one of you personally: are you capable of giving of yourself, your time, your energies, your talents, for the good of others? Are you capable of love? If you are, the Church and society can expect great things from each one of you.'

'The vocation to love, understood as true openness to our fellow human beings and solidarity with them, is the most basic of all vocations. It is the origin of all vocations in life. That is what Jesus was looking for in the young man when he said: 'Keep the commandments' (cf. Mk. 10:19). In other words: 'Serve God and your neighbour according to all the demands of a true and upright heart.' And when the young man indicated that he was already following that path, Jesus invited him to an even greater love: 'Leave all and come, follow me' leave everything that concerns only yourself and join me in the immense task of saving the world' (cf. v.21). Along the path of each person's existence, the Lord has something for each one to do.'

"Dear young people, Christ is the 'sought-after person,' the 'one who is desired and makes himself available,' who can give you true joy—a joy that is never lacking because it is destined to continue in the fullness of life, transcending death."

"To everyone, proclaim Christ who is the only fully satisfying answer to human expectations."

"Today I would like to repeat: Blessed are you, young people, if you can believe without seeing, without touching, attracted only by the beauty and truth of the Gospel witnessed to by the saints."

"Blessed are you, if your trust in the love of God is stronger than your skepticism and prejudices; if it enables you to overcome the temptation to succumb to disappointment, discouragement and surrender."

"Blessed are you, young people, if you have the courage not to flee the encounter with Jesus, but can meet him in a loving spirit of fidelity, mercy, forgiveness and sacrifice."

"Blessed are you, if your gaze does not just skim over people and things, but is able to penetrate to the heart of events; if through the visible and tangible you can grasp the essential, which is always hidden and veiled, since it is given and accepted in freedom. Blessed are you!"

"Dear young people, you do not need to meet Jesus physically. The witness of Thomas, of the other apostles and of the Church is enough to make you believe. May Jesus become for you the person to whom it is worthwhile dedicating your whole life. Let him enter your plans and all your activities. You will thus be missionaries in daily life, in your relationship with the members of your family, with your school and work companions, with your friends in your free time and sports activities and in your social involvement. Follow Jesus in the important decisions of life: the choice of marriage or that of virginity for service to God's kingdom. May all who are called to the priestly ministry accept this vocation with humble gratitude and respond generously."

"Youth of the whole world, it is along the paths of daily life that you can meet the Lord!"

"Dear young people, like the first disciples, follow Jesus! Do not be afraid to draw near to him, to cross the threshold of his dwelling, to speak with him, face to face, as you talk to a friend. Do not be afraid of the 'new life' he is offering. He himself makes it possible for you to receive that life and practice it, with the help of his grace and the gift of his Spirit."

"It is true: Jesus is a demanding friend. He points to lofty goals; he asks us to go out of ourselves in order to meet him, entrusting to him our whole life; 'Whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it' (Mk. 8:35). The proposal may seem difficult, and, in some cases, frightening. But – I ask you – is it better to be resigned to a life without ideals, to a world made in our image and likeness, or rather, generously to seek truth, goodness, justice, working for a world that reflects the beauty of God, even at the cost of facing the trials it may involve?"

" "Come and see." You will meet Jesus where men and women are suffering and hoping: in the little villages, scattered across the continents and seemingly on the fringe of history, as Nazareth was when God sent his angel to Mary; in the huge metropolises, where millions of human beings live often as strangers. In reality, every human being is a "fellow citizen" of Christ."

"Jesus is living next to you, in the brothers and sisters with whom you share your daily existence. His visage is that of the poorest, of the marginalized who, not infrequently, are victims of an unjust model of development, in which profit is given first place and the human being is made a means rather than an end. Jesus' dwelling is wherever a human person is suffering because rights are denied, hopes betrayed, anxieties ignored. There, in the midst of humankind, is the dwelling of Christ, who asks you to dry every tear in his name, and to remind whoever feels lonely that no one whose hope is placed in him is ever alone.

'Let yourselves be loved by Christ, in order to respond bravely in turn, by loving him and loving your brothers and sisters.'

'When Jesus calls, it is not to restrict a personality but to make it unfold in its true essence so as to achieve the ideal which motivates it.'

'St. Paul admonishes us: 'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect' (Rom. 12:2). Do not be afraid to live in a way contrary to fashionable opinions and ways of life in conflict with God's law. The courage of faith is costly, but you cannot lose love! Do not let anyone enslave you! Do not let yourselves be seduced by illusions of happiness for which you will have to pay a price that is too high, the price of often incurable wounds or even of a life destroyed – one's own and that of others! I want to repeat to you now what I said to young people on another occasion on another continent: 'Only a pure heart can love God fully!'

'Young people, my friends, do you too want to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, the Savior, the Teacher, the Leader, the Friend of your life, as your peers did long ago? Remember: Jesus alone knows deeply what is in every human being (cf. Jn. 2:23); he alone teaches us to be open to the mystery and to call God our Father, 'Abba'; he alone makes us capable of selfless love for our fellow human beings, accepted and recognized as 'brothers' and 'sisters.'

'Dear young people, go joyfully to meet Christ, who gladdens your youth. See him and meet him by clinging to this word and his mysterious presence in the Church and the sacraments. Live with him

in fidelity to his Gospel: demanding, it is true, but at the same time the only source of hope and true happiness. Love him in the face of your brother who needs justice, help, friendship, and love.'

'Vocation means thinking of one's whole life as a response.'

'Communion means living in Christ and letting Christ live in me, as the Apostle Paul expressed it so powerfully (cf. Rom. 6:10; Gal. 2:20), to become, like him and in him, effective instruments in the loving plan of the Blessed Trinity, who through the Church wants to make one family of all people.'

'The vocation to be 'holy, as he is holy' (Lv. 11:44) is brought about when God is given the place which is his due. In our time, which is secularized yet also fascinated by the search for the sacred, there is a particular need of saints who, by living intensely the primacy of God in their lives, make visible his loving and provident presence.'

'Holiness, a gift to be constantly requested, constitutes the most precious and effective response to the modern world's hunger for hope and life. Humanity needs holy priests and consecrated souls who live out daily the total gift of self to God and neighbor; of fathers and mothers who can give witness within the home to the grace of the sacrament of matrimony, reawakening in all those with whom they come into contact the wish to carry out the Creator's plan for the family; of young people who have personally discovered Christ and have been so attracted by him as to move their contemporaries to the cause of the Gospel.'

'Jesus said, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work' (Jn. 4:34). With these words, he reveals that the personal project of existence is written in the provident plan of the Father. To discover it we have to abandon a too earthly interpretation of life and place in God the foundation and meaning of our own existence. Above all, vocation is a gift of God: it is not about choosing, but being chosen; it is the response to a love that precedes and accompanies. For the one who bows to the will of the Lord, life becomes a good received, which by its very nature tends to transform itself into an offering and a gift.'

'With St. Paul I say to you: 'Strive for perfection'! Such a demanding invitation presumes that its recipients are capable of enthusiasm. Is this not typical of people your age? So I say to you: know how to think big! Have the courage to dare! With God's help, 'strive for perfection'! God has a plan of holiness for each of you.'

'Each of you has a special mission in life, and you are each called to be a disciple of Christ. Many of you will serve God in the vocation of Christian married life; some of you will serve him as dedicated single persons; some as priests and religious. But all of you must be the light of the world. To those of you who think that Christ may be inviting you to follow him in the priesthood or consecrated life I make this personal appeal: I ask you to open your hearts generously to him; do not delay your response. The Lord will help you to know his will; he will help you to follow your vocation courageously.'

'Dear young people, how I would like to make all the wonder of the Christian message resound in each one of you today, that amazement of the Gospel whose explosive power of liberation began precisely from the Mediterranean world. God revealed himself in Christ, in him he offered himself to man as his true destiny, as his lasting dwelling place in time and in eternity. Dear young people, open your minds and hearts to him. Accept him in your lives and follow him with faithful and loving docility. You know well that the Gospel proclaims God as man's destiny, and man as God's destiny!'

The life of the blind man of Jericho is totally transformed when his destiny crossed paths with the destiny of Jesus, when he heard people say: 'Take courage, get up, he is calling you!' (Mk. 10:49).'

'Destiny is 'vocation', that is a call to bind oneself and to remain united with God, who desired to unite himself with us so that we might have life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10).'

'Young people of Catania, may you discover that your destiny is a vocation, and that this vocation has a name and a face: Jesus.'

'Think of all the young people who have given their lives for the Gospel! They form ranks which cannot be counted, of every race, of every people and tongue. This is truly the 'new generation': that of the saints! Therefore do not be afraid of joining this wonderful host. Those who lose their life for Jesus' sake find it, and those who wish to save it for themselves, see it slip through their fingers (cf. Mt. 16:5).'

'O Virgin of Nazareth, the 'yes' spoken in youth marked your existence and it grew as did your life itself.

'O Teacher of life, teach young people to pronounce the 'yes' that gives meaning to existence and brings them to discover the hidden 'name' of God in the heart of every person. Amen!'

'It is in the following Jesus that youth displays all the richness of its potentiality and acquires its full meaning.'

'It is in following Jesus that the young discover the sense of a life lived as a gift of self, and experience the beauty and truth of growing in love.'

'It is in the following Jesus that they feel themselves called to communion with him as living members of a single body, which is the Church.'

'It is in following Jesus that it will be possible for them to understand the personal call to love: in matrimony, in the consecrated life, in the ordained ministry, in the mission ad gentes.'

'The Church needs your talents, your gifts, your enthusiasm. Be able to say 'yes' to Christ who is calling you to be holy. 'Holiness' is a demanding world, but should not frighten you. It does not imply doing extraordinary things but rather, living your own vocation really well, with the help of prayer, the sacraments and a daily effort to be consistent. Yes, we need a generation of young people fascinated by the ideal of 'holiness', if we wish to build a society worthy of man, a civilization of love.'

'Each one of you is being challenged to listen to the words of the Lord' 'whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day and follow in my steps' (Lk. 9:23): the cross of rejecting desires and behaviour which are not worthy of the followers of Christ. You are being invited to allow the transforming grace which flows from the Cross of Christ to enter your lives – especially through the reception of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.'

'Beloved ones, sisters and brothers: build your lives on the one model that will not deceive you! In invite you to open the Gospel and discover that Jesus Christ wants to be your 'friend' (cf. Jn 15:14). He wants to be your 'companion' at every stage on the road of life (cf. Lk. 24:13-35). He wants to be the 'way', and your path through the anxieties, doubts, hopes and dreams of happiness (cf. Jn. 14:6).

He is the 'truth' that gives meaning to your efforts and your struggles. He wants to give you 'life', as he gave new life to the young man of Nain (cf. Lk. 7:11-17), and gave a whole new future to Zacchaeus who was dead in spirit through ambition and greed (cf. Lk. 19:1-10). He is your 'resurrection', your victory over sin and death, the fulfillment of your desire to live forever (cf. Jn. 11:25). Because of this he will be your 'joy', the 'rock' on which your weakness will be turned into strength and optimism. He is our salvation, our hope and happiness and peace.

'Christ! Christ! Christ! I speak without abbreviation. Worse! I am adding something.'

'When Christ becomes all of this for you, the world and the Church will have solid reasons for hope for the future. For on you will depend the third millennium, which sometimes appears as a marvelous new epoch for humanity but which also raises not a few fears and anxieties. I say this is one who has lived through a large portion of the 20th century which is now coming to an end. In this century many sad and destructive things have happened, but at the same time we have experienced so many good things which sustain our hope and optimism.'

'Be ready to respond generously to Christ's call! Especially you, dear young people who have received the gift of a vocation to the priestly or religious life.

'You too, dear young people who are called to marriage and family life, must be ready to respond to Christ's call. This is also a magnificent vocation! Lean true love from Christ, a love which is demanding, not closed in the search for selfish pleasure, but open to the giving of self. With this interior disposition you will be able to form families which are authentic sanctuaries of love, where human life is welcomed and cared for from its very first moments to its natural end.'