

Homily notes for Vocations Sunday 2017

People give and receive calls the whole time. “I’ll give her a call” we say or we tell somebody “the neighbours called by to ask after you” or people are called to account. So it’s no surprise that the one in whose image we are made also gives and receives calls. God receives our prayers when we call out to him. However, do we have the same faith that God calls out to us? If we want more people to hear God’s call to be priests and religious we must become a local church community that enables everybody to hear God’s call. We need to be people who listen to God, who respond to him love and who live out that response day to day.

Listen

If God is calling then the first task is to listen. The Bible tells the story of young Samuel who heard God’s call but didn’t realise at first that it was the voice of God. ‘Speak Lord your servant is listening’ said Samuel eventually and that prayer is a simple model for those seeking to know God’s will. A regular rhythm of prayer is the foundation of all vocations.

Love

“Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being’ said Pope St John Paul. For the Christian, the first expression of this love is to follow Jesus in daily life and in the sacraments. Being a disciple of Christ is the foundation for discovering the shape of a person’s individual vocation and living it out.

Live

A disciple follows Christ through living as a consecrated person or as an ordained minister (priest or deacon) or as a lay person, single or married. Alongside their way of life is a person’s work which is another vital part of anybody’s vocation. So when every Catholic has a vivid sense of the call of God in their lives then all vocations will be celebrated and we can expect that in such a setting more people will hear the call of God to the priesthood or consecrated life.

A single Catholic man or woman who wants to be a disciple of Christ, who lives a Christian way of life and who works fruitfully may well be called to the consecrated life or the priesthood. They don’t have to be heroic nor do they have to feel completely at ease with the idea. They must simply open their heart to the Holy Spirit and believe that God calls people like them to be priests and religious. If they sense that call directed to them, they should discuss it with a religious or priest. It’s a discussion that can bring great joy.

Today the Church celebrates the call to the priesthood and the consecrated life. We remember other callings at other times but it is right that on one Sunday we pray especially for those God is calling to be consecrated or to be ordained as priests and deacons. The people God calls to these ways of life are people who put the extra into ordinary. Priests and religious are not extraordinary, they/we are ordinary people called to make visible the extra dimensions of ordinary life.

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Vocations Sunday