

Message for Vocations Sunday 2026

The recent death of a very good friend has made me think once more about vocation. Julie, who I had known for almost 60 years, had a very strong vocation to be teacher. That was her wish from a young age, and she stayed committed to teaching through a long career both in Catholic and community schools until retirement. Then she went on to teach adults in a voluntary capacity especially those people who had never learnt to read and write as children. God had called Julie to be a teacher and she responded wholeheartedly. Such a powerful example has made me reflect on my own vocation especially as I have now retired from full time ministry.

You see, I never had the same strength of conviction as Julie. It would be at least an exaggeration and probably downright wrong to say I knew I had a vocation to religious life and priesthood when I was a teenager or a young adult. In fact, my vocation dawned on me just few months before I entered the Dominican novitiate, and even then, I was not sure that I had made the right move. Due to the patience and kindness of my Dominican brothers who put up with when I was unsettled and who helped me with my studies when I wasn't doing as well as my contemporaries I got through. But most importantly my vocation grew and firmed up. Now as a retired archbishop I still find that my vocation is growing as I answer God's call in a different way.

So, my message to you on Vocations Sunday is a very simple one. Be brave and try your vocation. We are all called by God to a life of holiness; a life with God at the centre of what we do, but the way that works out is very different for each of us. Some people have a certainty about their call, others like me are prepared to take cautious steps along the way but in both cases the important thing to remember is our calling is more about God and the people we serve than ourselves.

May God bless you as you discern God's will for you.

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