



Words of Vocation:

pain, gratitude, encouragement and praise

The 5th Week of Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations

Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God

27 April - 3 May 2020



ORDINE OSPEDALIERO
SAN GIOVANNI DI DIO



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Introduction

Together with our warmest wishes for a HAPPY EASTERTIDE, the General Commission on Vocations Promotion and Formation of the Hospital Order of St. John of God is the material for the 5th Week of Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

We are living through difficult times because of the health emergency all over the world, and are therefore suggesting that together with our prayers for vocations, we should also pray for the present situation and for the many people who are suffering so much at this time. We believe it important to keep this intention prayerfully in mind and unite it to the Week of Prayer for Vocations which this year will run from 27 April to 3 May. We wanted to link the last day with the 57th World Day of Prayer for Vocations which the entire Church celebrates on the fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday).

Our daily prayer suggestions are flexible so that you can use them at whatever time of day you consider appropriate. We have drawn on Pope Francis's message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, several biblical texts, some vocational reflections, and excerpts from the *Formation Programme for the Hospitaller Brothers of St John of God* book.

During this pandemic, many people are being treated by Brothers and Co-workers in the Order's Centres. We are convinced that the vocation to Hospitality continues to be a calling which the Church and the world need. We believe that we must continue to offer it and propose it so that many others will discover this vocation in their lives and are able to welcome it.

God comes to the encounter in each of three ways: the experience of God affecting and imbuing the mission, the community and the innermost being of the person concerned. The central core of this concept of consecrated life is a passion for God, attraction to the person of Jesus Christ, and solidarity with the poor, with a mutually interdependent personal and community life in a given historical context, taking on and manifesting the mind of Christ.

We invite you, as a community, to join in our prayers to ask God to send the gift of vocations to the Church, and in particular to the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God.

May St. John of God and St. Richard Pampuri pray for us all.

**General Commission on Vocations Promotion and Formation
of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God**



IT IS COMPREHENSIVE- **Monday, 27 April**

Introduction

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On 4 August last year, the 160th anniversary of the death of the Curé of Ars, I chose to write a letter to all those priests who daily devote their lives to the service of God's people in response to the Lord's call.

On that occasion, I chose four key words – pain, gratitude, encouragement and praise – as a way of thanking priests and supporting their ministry. I believe that today, on this 57th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, those words can be addressed to the whole people of God, against the backdrop of the Gospel passage that recounts for us the remarkable experience of Jesus and Peter during a stormy night on the Sea of Galilee (cf. Mt 14:22-33).

After the multiplication of the loaves, which had astonished the crowds, Jesus told his disciples to get into the boat and precede him to the other shore, while he took leave of the people. The image of the disciples crossing the lake can evoke our own life's journey. Indeed, the boat of our lives slowly advances, restlessly looking for a safe haven and prepared to face the perils and promises of the sea, yet at the same time trusting that the helmsman will ultimately keep us on the right course. At times, though, the boat can drift off course, misled by mirages, not the lighthouse that leads it home, and be tossed by the tempests of difficulty, doubt and fear.

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 2020 WORLD DAY OF VOCATIONS

Biblical text: *John 3, 5a. 7b-15*

Jesus explained, 'I am telling you what is true. Unless a person is born by water and by God's Spirit, he cannot come into the kingdom of God. People give birth to what is human. But God's Spirit gives birth to spirit. I said to you, "You must be born from above." What I said should not surprise you. When someone is born by God's Spirit, it is like the wind that blows. The wind blows where it wants. You can hear it. But you cannot say where it came from or where it is going.'

Nicodemus asked, 'How can this happen?' Jesus replied, 'You are an important teacher of people in Israel. You ought to understand these things! I am telling you what is true. We speak about things that we know. We tell you about what we have seen. But even then, you people do not believe our message. I have told you about things that happen in this world. And you do not believe me. But now I am telling you about things that happen in heaven. So, I do not think that you will ever believe me about those things. The Son of Man came down from heaven. Nobody else has gone up to heaven except him. Long ago Moses lifted up the metal snake in the wilderness to save his people. In the same way, people must lift up the Son of Man on a cross. As a result, everyone who believes him will be able to live for ever with God.'

Reflection

"Being born again," being new, green shoots, new buds, able to bring back to life what is dying inside us, being new people as the light of each day makes us sense the taste of something new, of something beginning... Nicodemus fails to understand it, he sees it as impossible and cannot grasp anything outside his own capabilities. Jesus urges you to understand and trust him. You can do it if you leave it to Him. If you look to Him, he heals you, if you listen to Him and let yourself go, if you put Him before you and follow in his footsteps. "Being born again" means letting his Spirit bring to life what has died in us, setting out to become ourselves once again. It is an invitation to understand that rebirth is not some particular event, but a permanent state. Being born of the Spirit means putting God in our lives and putting down our roots in Him so that there is no soil but His, no other seed but His Word, no other food than His love. Being born again means wishing to be children of the Spirit, and this makes us bearers of something new -- new meaning, life, strength, and truth to offer this ageing world in times like the present, with this coronavirus pandemic, where people are tired of waiting and believing that something new will be born, and are forgetting Him.

A feature of our formation model

It is comprehensive: A type of Formation based on the Comprehensive Paradigm involves all the postulates of Christian anthropology and the essential elements of the Consecrated Life. A vocation can only be lived in a balanced and harmonious fashion if the person concerned is capable of discovering that God indwells and loves him. It is through our vocation that we discover the power of our calling so that we can reach the point at which we can say for certain "I am called, therefore I am". All the dimensions of the personality (corporeity, affectivity-sexuality, sociability, psychology, spirituality, worldliness...) are integrated, developed and analysed in the light of God's call and in terms of the fullness to which we aspire as persons in the Formation process.

Petition for the day

Our society is going through a period of upheavals and confusion and needs people who can offer it values and a different way of life. Let us pray for the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God, that, led by the Holy Spirit and enriched by the testimony of life of each of its members, it may be a sign of the Gospel of mercy. Let us pray.

Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

Father of mercy,
who gave your Son for our salvation
and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,
grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,
which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young
the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation.

Sustain these communities in their commitment
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis
and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration.
Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,
so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth.

May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus,
intercede for each Christian community,
so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit,
it may be a source of true vocations for the service of the holy People of God.





IT IS AN ONGOING PROCESS – **Tuesday, 28 April**

Introduction

Something similar takes place in the hearts of those who, called to follow the Teacher of Nazareth, have to undertake a crossing and abandon their own security to become the Lord's disciples. The risk involved is real: the night falls, the headwinds howl, the boat is tossed by the waves, and fear of failure, of not being up to the call, can threaten to overwhelm them.

The Gospel, however, tells us that in the midst of this challenging journey we are not alone. Like the first ray of dawn in the heart of the night, the Lord comes walking on the troubled waters to join the disciples; he invites Peter to come to him on the waves, saves him when he sees him sinking and, once in the boat, makes the winds die down.

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 2020 WORLD DAY OF VOCATIONS

Biblical text: *John 14,6-14*

Jesus answered, 'I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. Nobody comes to the Father except by me. If you really know me, you will also know my Father. From now on, you do know him, and you have seen him.'

Philip said, 'Lord, show the Father to us. That is all that we need.' Jesus answered, 'I have been with all of you for a long time. But still you do not seem to know me, Philip! Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. So why do you say, "Show the Father to us"? I am in the Father and the Father is in me. You should believe that. The words that I say to you do not come from me myself. But the Father lives in me, and he is doing his work. I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Believe me when I say that. You have seen the things that I have done. So, if you do not believe my words, believe because of my work. I am telling you what is true. Whoever believes in me will do the same things that I have been doing. Yes, he will do even greater things than these, because I will go to my Father. Ask me to help you. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it for you. In that way, the Son will show everyone how great the Father is. Yes, you should ask me for anything in my name. I will do it for you.'

Reflection

I have been with you for a long time, and you still you do know me, Philip? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do we know Jesus? Are we in the same position as Philip? We have been following him for so long and we have given our lives to him, but ... Do we know him? If we're honest with ourselves, we don't know how to reply. It is not enough to know part of his Word or to comply with the precepts of the Church. To know someone well, someone we care about, someone we want to remain friends with, and have a relationship with, we must nurture a habitual relationship with him, sometimes even knowing what he wants before he asks, offering him what he likes.

Philip, like us, knew Jesus, but he had missed something fundamental... Are we aware that Jesus is offering us a different God, a God to call our Father? Are we aware that what he is proposing is not a cult but a new way of life? Are we content merely to read his Word, or do we want to make it a life project? To know Jesus is to love Jesus and to discover what is new about him every day. What new things is Jesus proposing to me in this Eastertide? Don't be afraid to come to know him; on the contrary, let us enjoy being and living with him.

A feature of our formation model

It is an ongoing process: Throughout our lives we develop our vocation through a gradual process in which we integrate all the experiences and dimensions that foster personal maturity and growth. Our Formation model is based on the model of the person of Christ, the "free man" who, throughout the whole of his earthly life knew that he had been called, wished to do the will of the Father, and gave himself up to fulfil His Father's plan for the salvation of mankind. Like the Good Samaritan "he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil".[48] Christ, as man, underwent a growth process in his own life from his Incarnation to his glorification.

Petition for the day

Lord we pray for those who govern us, to rule over the people in a spirit of Service and not use power for their own benefit, seeking to listen to the voice of the people and promoting the rights of the most disadvantaged. Let us pray.

Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

Father of mercy,
who gave your Son for our salvation
and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,
grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,
which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young
the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation.

Sustain these communities in their commitment
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis
and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration.
Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,
so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth.

May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus,
intercede for each Christian community,
so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit,
it may be a source of true vocations for the service of the holy People of God.





IT IS AN EXPERIENCE – Wednesday, 29 April

Introduction

The first word of vocation, then, is gratitude. Taking the right course is not something we do on our own, nor does it depend solely on the road we choose to travel. How we find fulfilment in life is more than a decision we make as isolated individuals; above all else, it is a response to a call from on high. The Lord points out our destination on the opposite shore and he grants us the courage to board the boat. In calling us, he becomes our helmsman; he accompanies and guides us; he prevents us from running aground on the shoals of indecision and even enables us to walk on surging waters.

Every vocation is born of that gaze of love with which the Lord came to meet us, perhaps even at a time when our boat was being battered by the storm. "Vocation, more than our own choice, is a response to the Lord's unmerited call" (Letter to Priests, 4 August 2019). We will succeed in discovering and embracing our vocation once we open our hearts in gratitude and perceive the passage of God in our lives.

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 2020 WORLD DAY OF VOCATIONS

Biblical text: *John 21, 1-14*

After that, Jesus showed himself to the disciples again when they were by Lake Tiberias. This is how it happened. Simon Peter, Thomas the Twin, and Nathanael were together. (Nathanael came from Cana in Galilee.) The sons of Zebedee (James and John) and two other disciples were also there. Simon Peter said to the other disciples, 'I am going to go and catch fish.' They replied, 'We will come with you.' So they went out and they got into the boat. But they caught nothing during that night.

Early in the morning, Jesus was standing on the shore of the lake. But the disciples did not know that it was Jesus who stood there. Then Jesus asked them, 'Friends, have you caught any fish?' They answered, 'No!' He said, 'Throw your net out on the right side of the boat. If you do that, you will catch some fish.' So they threw the net out into the water. Then they caught so many fish that they could not pull the net back into the boat.

The disciple that Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard him say, 'It is the Lord,' he put on his coat. (He had been wearing only a few clothes.) Then he jumped into the water. The other disciples followed him in the boat. They pulled the net that was full of fish behind them. They were not far from the shore. It was about 100 metres away. When they came to the shore, they saw that someone had lit a fire. Some fish were cooking on it. There was some bread there, too. Jesus said to them, 'Bring here some of the fish that you have just caught.' Simon Peter got back into the boat and he pulled the net on to the shore. It was full of 153 big fish. There were so many fish, but the net had not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come here and eat breakfast.' None of the disciples was brave enough to ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew that it really was the Lord. So Jesus got the bread and he gave it to them. Then he did the same with the fish. After Jesus died and became alive again, this was now the third time that he showed himself to his disciples.

Reflection

Only the disciple whom Jesus dearly loved was able to recognise him and say: He is the Lord. It is not easy to recognise him at dawn after a long disappointing and fruitless night's fishing, or to recognise him when we are up to our eyes in the daily round, to recognise him and discover that it is He who is reaching out to our life, to our Order... Recognising him is thanks to the love that underpins our relationship, feeling loved by him and requiting his love with ours. Making room for him and listening to what he is proposing changes the way we fish, transforms our life and open us up to another dimension. The boat is still the same, the company is the same, the sea the same, the net is also the same. But with our Lord everything is changed, the light shines bright, the net is full, the catch is generous, life is happy, and our table is shared with others. Once again there is the table, and once again we have food around which to meet together, to give thanks, to share life, and feel the community. Remember that it is the Lord who indwells our lives. If you do, we can thank him for the gift of our vocation and being called to hospitality.

A feature of our formation model

It is an experience: In the Formation process experiences are brought out which must be enlightened by the Christian vision in order to be able to respond to God's call, freely and responsibly. Formation in the order is based on the example of the teaching given by God the Father in the life and history of his people, in the path which Jesus followed with his disciples and in the action of the Spirit in the Church and in the world. Each Brother and each person under Formation must know how to integrate and experience all positive or negative events as a part of their own history of salvation on the basis of which God speaks to us and leads us.

Petition for the day

We pray for all the young men undergoing formation in our formation houses, that they may make the most of the time there, and persevere in responding to God's call. Let us also pray for our Brothers and Co-workers dedicated in the Order to the ministry of Vocations Promotion and Initial Formation, that God will give them the wisdom they need to accompany and guide these young men according to the criteria of the Gospel of mercy. Let us pray

Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

Father of mercy,
who gave your Son for our salvation
and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,
grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,
which are fonts of fraternal life, and nurture in the young
the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation.

Sustain these communities in their commitment
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis
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Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,
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IT IS PERSONALISED – Thursday, 30 April

Introduction

When the disciples see Jesus walking towards them on the sea, they first think that he is a ghost and are filled with fear. Jesus immediately reassures them with words that should constantly accompany our lives and our vocational journey: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear" (Mt 14:27). This, then, is the second word I wish to offer you: encouragement.

What frequently hinders our journey, our growth, our choosing the road the Lord is marking out for us, are certain "ghosts" that trouble our hearts. When we are called to leave safe shores and embrace a state of life – like marriage, ministerial priesthood, consecrated life – our first reaction is often from the "ghost of disbelief". Surely, this vocation is not for me! Can this really be the right path? Is the Lord really asking me to do this?

Those thoughts can keep growing – justifications and calculations that sap our determination and leave us hesitant and powerless on the shore where we started. We think we might be wrong, not up to the challenge, or simply glimpsing a ghost to be exorcized.

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 2020 WORLD DAY OF VOCATIONS

Biblical text: *Matthew 28,8-15:*

So the women went away quickly from the hole in the rock. They were very frightened, but they were also very happy. They ran to tell the disciples the angel's message. At that moment, Jesus met the two women and he said, 'Hello.' They went close to him.'

The women went to tell the disciples Jesus' message. At the same time, some of the soldiers who had watched the rock also went into the city. The soldiers told the leaders of the priests everything that had happened at the rock. The leaders of the priests and the important Jews met together. They decided what they should do now. They gave the soldiers a lot of money so that they would obey them. They said to the soldiers, 'When people ask you, you must say this: "Jesus' disciples came to the rock in the night and they took his body away. We were asleep when they did this." If the Roman ruler Pilate hears about this, we will explain things to him. Do not be afraid. He will not punish you.'

The soldiers took the money. They said what the Jewish leaders told them to say. Many Jews have heard the soldiers' story. Even today they still believe that it happened like that.

Reflection

In this Gospel account we find two words that perfectly sum up Easter, and give a new meaning to life: "be happy" and "do not fear". The discovery that death is not the end must be a source of great joy for us, the joy of risen men, of new men and women. Giving up life on the cross was the gateway to Life with a capital letter, to resurrection. But the joy that is being offered to us does not come from a few episodes, but from a project of life.

We might compare the resurrection with the gift of the vocation, discovering that we are loved, saved, forgiven, listened to, and accompanied. Forever. Our encounter with Him is an unexpected gift that transforms the sadness of those women into a passing moment of joy. Now we have been given the task of announcing, and the mission of proclaiming his resurrection, continuing to denounce injustices, being co-workers of the Kingdom of God, recreating hospitality. This is why we must be bold, and set all fear aside.

Living fearlessly and joyfully are some of our distinctive features as his followers. Joyful and fearless, knowing that He is alive. Happy and fearless, by being called to live Hospitality at the service of the most vulnerable people and the community.

A feature of our formation model

It is personalised: The personalised Formation process is tailored to each person viewed as an individual, appraising that person in every aspect of his being, respecting and stimulating his pace of growth. Those under Formation must be aware of their own identity and of the gift they have received from God in order to develop all their human and spiritual potential to the full. They must also be capable of gradually taking on the values and the culture of the Order, responsibly, dynamically and creatively.

Petition for the day

There are many people in our world who still lack the minimum wherewithal to exist on. We pray to you for all those who suffer and are being cared for in our centres: the sick, the elderly, travellers, prisons, addicts, alcoholics and those in any kind of need, so that they may feel the strength of God in their lives and that we may find a response to their needs. Let us pray

Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

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SAN GIOVANNI DI DIO

IT IS A GRADUAL AND DIFFERENTIATED PROCESS – Friday, 1 May

Introduction

The Lord knows that a fundamental life choice – like marriage or special consecration to his service – calls for courage. He knows the questions, doubts and difficulties that toss the boat of our heart, and so he reassures us: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear!" We know in faith that he is present and comes to meet us, that he is ever at our side even amid stormy seas. This knowledge sets us free from that lethargy which I have called "sweet sorrow" (Letter to Priests, 4 August 2019), the interior discouragement that hold us back from experiencing the beauty of our vocation.

In the Letter to Priests, I also spoke about pain, but here I would like to translate the word differently, as fatigue. Every vocation brings with it a responsibility. The Lord calls us because he wants to enable us, like Peter, to "walk on water", in other words, to take charge of our lives and place them at the service of the Gospel, in the concrete and everyday ways that he shows us, and specifically in the different forms of lay, priestly and consecrated vocation. Yet, like Saint Peter, our desire and enthusiasm coexist with our failings and fears.

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 2020 WORLD DAY OF VOCATIONS

Biblical text: *John 6, 44-51*

The Father has sent me. Nobody can come to me unless the Father brings them to me. I will raise those people up on the last day, so that they have life for ever. The prophets wrote in the Bible, "God will teach all the people." Everyone who hears the Father's message and learns from him will come to me. I do not mean that anyone has seen the Father. Only the one who has come from God has seen the Father. Nobody else has seen him. I am telling you what is true. The person who believes my message has life for ever. I am the bread that causes you to live. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, but they died. This bread that comes down from heaven is different. Anyone who eats this bread will not die. I am the bread that has life. This bread came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live for ever. The bread that I will give is my own body. I will give it so that all people in the world may have life with God.'

Reflection

It is God who calls us, it is God who guides us, it is God who always waits for us, it is God who accompanies us, it is God who gives us his Word so that we do not lose our way, so that we can always find Him. "Everyone who hears the Father's message and learns from him will come to me." Anyone who listens to the Father and learns comes to me." Let us be led by the Father to meet Jesus and to live our lives as living testimony to God in the world. Listening to the Father means learning to contemplate the signs of his presence in creation, in the hearts of every person, an authentic image of Him in the world. Listening to the Father means feeling that we are part of the History of Salvation where he wants us to be protagonists in the encounter with him.

Sometimes his Word is the whisper of a brother calling to us, at other times it is a cry of people in distress, at others a signpost along the path of life to help us to avoid losing our way by futile searching. This was the thinking of a great Hospitaller saint, St. Richard Pampuri, who devoted his life to the service of the sick as a Brother of St. John of God. A man who experienced God's love and mercy in his brothers and sisters. This is what enabled him to understand and direct his life at all times to serving God and his Kingdom, through simple, yet total dedication to the sick and those in need. He was able to walk along the path to holiness with great humility and simplicity in every moment of his short earthly existence, offering us a model of holiness in daily life. He did so as a young student, continued to do so as a doctor in Morimondo, and expressed it in highest manner as as a Brother of St John of God, wherever his superiors sent him. His heart radiated hospitality and, his medical expertise and his goodness and kindness attracted ever more people to come to him.

For the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God, this Jubilee Year, that has just been celebrated and will end today on the 30th anniversary of his canonisation, has been a time of grace to enable to become better acquainted with our Brother Saint. A magnificent example of the vocation to Hospitality, simplicity and consistency. A saint who surprises us with his youth, his work and the way he transformed small things into great works of charity, by being performed with love. St. Riccardo Pampuri, pray for us.

A feature of our formation model

It is a gradual and differentiated process: While preserving its basic unitary character, our Formation must be geared to make allowances for differences between people in terms of their age, culture, mission, roles, communities, Provinces, and the different situations that exist within the Order. It must also take account of their individual features and their socio-cultural background. It also demands a continuous critical self-assessment, re-reading our lives in terms of reality and in terms of the other people with whom we relate.

Petition for the day

Our Hospitaller Family is a very pluralistic community, capable of establishing cooperation and union around the face of people who are suffering. May our Lord give us the grace of memory to take upon ourselves our foundational charism and to renew it in the present day circumstances to meet the new challenges which are being posed to the Order. Let us pray

Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

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grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,
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IT IS LIBERATING AND PROPHETIC - Saturday, 2 May

Introduction

If we let ourselves be daunted by the responsibilities that await us – whether in married life or priestly ministry – or by the hardships in store for us, then we will soon turn away from the gaze of Jesus and, like Peter, we will begin to sink. On the other hand, despite our frailty and poverty, faith enables us to walk towards the Risen Lord and to weather every storm. Whenever fatigue or fear make us start to sink, Jesus holds out his hand to us. He gives us the enthusiasm we need to live our vocation with joy and fervour.

When Jesus at last boards the boat, the winds die down and the waves are calmed. Here we have a beautiful image of what the Lord can do at times of turbulence and tempest in our lives. He stills those winds, so that the forces of evil, fear and resignation no longer have power over us.

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 2020 WORLD DAY OF VOCATIONS

Biblical text: John 20,11-18

But Mary stood outside the hole in the rock. She was crying. While she cried, she bent herself down to look inside the hole. She saw two angels there. They were wearing white clothes. They were sitting where Jesus' dead body had been. One angel was sitting where Jesus' head had been. The other angel was sitting where his feet had been.

They asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying?' She replied, 'They have taken away my Lord. I do not know where they have put him.' When she had said this, she turned round. She saw a man who was standing there. It was Jesus, but she did not recognize him. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?' Mary thought that he was the gardener. So she said, 'Sir, if you have carried him away somewhere, please tell me. Tell me where you have put him. Then I will go and I will take him back.'

Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' She turned towards him and she said in the Jewish language, 'Rabboni!' (This means 'Teacher'.) Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me because I have not gone up to the Father yet. But go to my brothers, the disciples. Tell them, "Now I will go up to my Father. He is also your Father. He is my God, and he is your God."' Mary from Magdala took this message to the disciples. She went and she said to them, 'I have seen the Lord!' Then she told them the things that he had said to her.

Reflection

The Risen Jesus called her by name and she recognised him. Mary knew him well, she had gone to the tomb to look for him, she wanted to be close to him. And she met someone. It was Jesus, but he didn't recognise him. It was only when he spoke his name that everything changed. This demonstrates the importance of a personal relationship, an encounter between ourselves and the other person, as two friends. Jesus knows us and also, as he did with Mary, He calls us to discover him, to recognise him as the Lord.

This personal encounter is essential if we are to walk with him, to announce His Word, to continue the mission. Mary's response is to announce great news: "I have seen the Lord." And no witness and mission is possible without that encounter, nothing can be announced without that personal relationship. Never doubt it: we cannot propose Jesus as a friend without really knowing what it means to be his friend. He wants this personal relationship with each of us, he calls us by our name, he loves us as we are, we are unique to him. This was the origin of our vocation, of our personal calling that we perhaps received many years ago, which led us to leave everything in order to embark on the mission of announcing Him through our lives.

A feature of our formation model

It is liberating and prophetic: Formation educates to make free choices for authentic motives, so that we can gradually take on the attitudes of Christ as a sign of the freedom of the new man, overcoming fear and the constraints that prevent us from living in freedom. Education in and for freedom means preparing the candidates and Brothers to be sensitive to contemporary signs, to denounce situations of injustice, poverty, and marginalization, which are detrimental to health and life. This Formation in freedom trains us to announce the Good News and to be a prophetic presence, living in the manner of John of God in different times and places, with the courage, fidelity and confidence of our Brother Saints and Martyrs who have gone before us.

Petition for the day

Lord we pray for the young people who were questioning their future in terms of choosing a life that will do good to those who suffer, so that they can find in our Hospitaller Family an ideal place in which to live their vocation to hospitality, continuing the work begun so long ago by Saint John of God. Let us pray.

Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

Father of mercy,
who gave your Son for our salvation
and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,
grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous,
which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young
the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation.

Sustain these communities in their commitment
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis
and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration.
Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,
so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth.

May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus,
intercede for each Christian community,
so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit,
it may be a source of true vocations for the service of the holy People of God.





ORDINE OSPEDALIERO | di
SAN GIOVANNI DI DIO

IT IS UNIVERSAL – Sunday, 3 May

Introduction

As we live out our specific vocation, those headwinds can wear us down. Here I think of all those who have important responsibilities in civil society, spouses whom I like to refer to – not without reason – as “courageous”, and in a particular way those who have embraced the consecrated life or the priesthood. I am conscious of your hard work, the sense of isolation that can at times weigh upon your hearts, the risk of falling into a rut that can gradually make the ardent flame of our vocation die down, the burden of the uncertainty and insecurity of the times, and worry about the future. Take heart, do not be afraid! Jesus is at our side, and if we acknowledge him as the one Lord of our lives, he will stretch out his hand, take hold of us and save us.

Even amid the storm-tossed waters, then, our lives become open to praise. This is the last of our vocation words, and it is an invitation to cultivate the interior disposition of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Grateful that Lord gazed upon her, faithful amid fear and turmoil, she courageously embraced her vocation and made of her life an eternal song of praise to the Lord.

Dear friends, on this day in particular, but also in the ordinary pastoral life of our communities, I ask the Church to continue to promote vocations. May she touch the hearts of the faithful and enable each of them to discover with gratitude God’s call in their lives, to find courage to say “yes” to God, to overcome all weariness through faith in Christ, and to make of their lives a song of praise for God, for their brothers and sisters, and for the whole world. May the Virgin Mary accompany us and intercede for us.

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 2020 WORLD DAY OF VOCATIONS

Biblical text: *John 10, 27-30*

My sheep recognize my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them life for ever with God. They will never die. Nobody can ever take them away from me. My Father has given them to me. He is greater than all things. Nobody can ever take my sheep out of my Father's hand. My Father and I are one Person.

Reflection

“No one can snatch them (his sheep) from my Father’s hands”, the Good Shepherd that He is, the guide who cares for us, like a Father who loves us beyond measure. We are protected by the hands of someone who loves us. Hands that caress, care and heal. Hands that protect us from all danger, in the face of all our enemies. Hands that help us to grow, that hold us tight, to make us feel close, that caress and comfort us.

In his hands we are sure we cannot fall, in his hands we can rest from our hard work, in his hands we are confident that we shall learn. Hand-in-hand, protected in his company, we are able to embark along new

pathways, adventures and projects that fill our lives. Some projects are imbued with the Gospel because His hands help us to shape them, protect us from fear, and envelop us in times of doubt.

We are confident that we are in God's hands and that they are supporting us and gently nudging us forward, even though we may be anxious about the future, or paralysed by uncertainty and by the dearth of vocations in our Order. We are confident that we are in the hands of the Father and that He will never let anyone snatch us away from Him.

A feature of our formation model

It is universal: Providing Formation with a universal and ecumenical vision means that we must be capable of looking beyond our own borders, of broadening the geographical, conceptual, structural, dynamic and spiritual horizons of the Order, acting with universal attitudes according to a conception of globality. The Order is present in many parts of the world, witnessing to the universal nature of our Charism. This stimulates us to respect the values of all different races, cultures, specific human groups, religions and languages, so that we can try to embody the Charism and the spirit of John of God.

Petition for the day

Believing means giving up self, breaking out of our comfort zone and the rigidity of ego and focusing our lives on Jesus. We pray, Lord, for our communities, so that every day we continue renewing our decision to follow Jesus Christ who remains alive among us and invites us to renew and promote our spiritual and fraternal life. Let us pray

Prayer for Hospitaller Vocations.

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and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit,
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which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young
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