

A Selection of Vocation Bulletin Notices for Good Shepherd Sunday 2026

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Today, Good Shepherd Sunday, the Catholic Church prays for vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life. Please pray that the “Lord of the harvest will send labourers into his harvest” (Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2). Please pray that young men and women hear and respond generously to the Lord's call for their lives. You might like to join in the Diocesan nine-day novena for vocations starting today. Copies available online at the Diocesan website <https://cdoc.nz/> For more information contact the Vocations Coordinator Matt O'Connell on 366-9869 or moconnell@cdoc.nz

Thinking about a Vocation to the Priesthood or Religious Life?

The Good Shepherd knows his sheep and lays down his life for them. On this Vocations Sunday are you being called to Shepherd others as a Priest or Religious? Pope Leo XIV encourages all young people to “listen to the voice of the Lord who invites you to a full and fruitful life, calling you to put your talents to use”. “In coming to know the Lord ... you will ‘discover your vocation’, which is an “immeasurable gift for the Church and for those who receive it with joy”. Contact the Vocations Director, Fr Monty Bamford on frmonty@cathedralparish.nz or the Vocations Coordinator, Matt O'Connell on 366-9869 or moconnell@cdoc.nz if you want more information or to talk about a possible vocation.

National Vocations Awareness Week

As we today begin **National Vocations Awareness Week**, let us renew our commitment to creating an environment of vocational discernment in our families, parishes, and schools, encouraging young men to seriously consider a call to serve God as diocesan priests. Thank you to all who are active in promoting diocesan priesthood as a fulfilling, God-centred life of adventure and service.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Today the Church throughout the world prays for vocations. Will you make a special effort to ask the Lord for vocations to the priesthood and religious life? Pray for the priests who have ministered to you throughout your life, both living and dead. Encourage your children, grandchildren, or other young people to consider a vocation as a priest or religious brother or sister. Pray a rosary for more young men and women in our diocese to respond to God's call.

Pray for Vocations

As Catholics, we firmly believe that God has a plan for our lives! Fully living our own vocations—and teaching young people how to discern God's call—is a serious duty, but also a joyful one. During this week, please encourage the young people in your life—children, grandchildren, students, and friends—to be open if God calls them to priesthood or religious life.

Parish Newsletter quotations (if you wish to fill gaps over next few weeks)

“God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not

intending it if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.” **Prayer of John Henry Newman**

Quotes from Pope Leo’s message for Vocations Sunday, 2026

These can be used as separate reflections or a longer bulletin reflection.

The way of beauty

In the Gospel of John, Jesus describes himself as the “good shepherd” (Jn 10:11). This expression refers to a shepherd who is perfect, authentic and exemplary, inasmuch as he is ready to give his life for his sheep, thus revealing God’s love. He is the Shepherd who draws us to himself, whose gaze reveals that life is truly beautiful when one follows him. Neither the eyes of the body nor aesthetic sensibilities alone are sufficient to recognize this beauty; rather, contemplation and interiority are required. Only the one who pauses, listens, prays and welcomes the Shepherd’s gaze can say with confidence: “I trust him; life with him can truly be beautiful. I want to walk this path of beauty.” What is most extraordinary is that, in becoming his disciple, one truly becomes “beautiful”; his beauty transforms us ... Indeed, more than goodness, the distinctive trait of the saint is the luminous spiritual beauty that radiates from his or her life in Christ. In this way, the Christian vocation reveals itself in all its depth as a participation in the life of Jesus, by sharing in his mission and reflecting his beauty.

St Augustine

This interior experience of life, faith and meaning was also that of Saint Augustine, who ... while acknowledging the sins and errors of his youth, recognizes God as “more inward than my most inward part.”[2] More than self-knowledge, Augustine discovers the beauty of the divine light that guides him in the darkness. Perceiving God’s presence in the innermost recesses of his soul, he came to understand the importance of caring for the interior life as a place of encounter with Christ, which is the way to experience the beauty and goodness of God in our own lives. Such a relationship is based on prayer and silence, and when cultivated opens us to receive and actively respond to the gift of vocation.

An Invitation

I invite everyone — in families, parishes and religious communities, as well as bishops, priests, deacons, catechists, educators and all the faithful — to commit themselves more fully to creating conditions that allow this gift to be embraced, nourished, protected and accompanied, so that it may bear abundant fruit. Only when our surroundings are illumined by living faith, sustained by constant prayer and enriched by fraternal accompaniment can God’s call blossom and mature, becoming a path of happiness and salvation for individuals and for the world. By embarking on the path that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, shows us, we come to know more deeply both ourselves and the God who calls us.

Mutual awareness

Every vocation begins with the awareness and experience of a God who is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:16). He knows us profoundly; he has counted the hairs of our head (cf. Mt 10:30) and has

envisaged for each person a unique path of holiness and service. Yet this awareness must always be reciprocal. We are invited to know God through prayer, listening to the Word, the Sacraments, the life of the Church and works of charity for our brothers and sisters. Like the young Samuel, who unexpectedly heard the voice of the Lord during the night and learned to recognize it with the help of Eli (cf. 1 Sam 3:1–10), we too must create a space for interior silence in order to hear what the Lord desires for our happiness. This is not a matter of lofty ideas or scholarly learning, but of a personal encounter that transforms one's life.[4] God dwells in our hearts. A vocation entails an intimate dialogue with the One who calls and invites us to respond, despite the deafening noise of the world, with true joy and generosity.

Dear Young People

Dear young people, listen to this voice! Listen to the voice of the Lord who invites you to a full and fruitful life, calling you to put your talents to use (cf. Mt 25:14-30) and to unite your limitations and weaknesses with the glorious cross of Christ. Make time, then, for Eucharistic adoration; meditate faithfully on the word of God, so that you may put it into practice each day; and participate actively and fully in the sacramental and ecclesial life of the Church. In this way, you will come to know the Lord. Through the intimacy of his friendship, you will discover how to give of yourselves, whether through marriage, the priesthood, the permanent diaconate, or consecrated life. Every vocation is an immeasurable gift for the Church and for those who receive it with joy. To know the Lord means above all learning to entrust oneself to him and to his providence, which is abundant in every vocation.

Maturation of a vocation

Indeed, a vocation is not a fixed point, but a dynamic process of maturation sustained by intimacy with our Lord. To grow in one's vocation means being with Jesus, allowing the Holy Spirit to act in our hearts and in the circumstances of life, and reinterpreting everything in light of this gift.

Like the vine and the branches (cf. Jn 15:1-8), our whole lives must be rooted in a strong and vital bond with the Lord, so that we may more wholeheartedly respond to his call through our trials and necessary "pruning." The "places" where God's will is most manifest, and where we experience his infinite love, are often the authentic, fraternal bonds we establish throughout our lives. How precious it is to have a true spiritual guide to accompany us in the discovery and growth of our vocation! How important it is to discern and test the promptings of the Holy Spirit, so that a vocation can be brought to fruition in all its beauty!

A vocation, therefore, is not an immediate possession — something "given" once and for all. Instead, it is a path that unfolds much like life itself. The gift we have received must not only be protected but also nourished by a daily relationship with God in order to grow and bear fruit. "This is helpful, since it situates our whole life in relation to the God who loves us. It makes us realize that nothing is the result of pure chance but that everything in our lives can become a way of responding to the Lord, who has a wonderful plan for us." [7]