



Vocations Sunday 2008

(Feel free to change or adapt this prayer service to suit your particular circumstances.)

Gathering Hymn: Here I Am, Lord; By Name I Have Called You; Galilee Song or any other suitable hymn

Psalm 100

Sing a joyful noise to the Beloved
All peoples of the earth!
Serve Love with a glad heart!
Join hands in the great
Dance of Life!

Know that the Beloved of your heart
is the Divine Presence!
Love created us, and we belong to
the Most High;
We are born to be loving
expressions of the Creator's
Divine Plan.

Open the gates of your heart
with gratitude
and enter Love's court
with praise!
Give thanks to the beloved,
bless Love's holy Nmae!

For Love is of God, and lives
in your heart forever,
With faith, truth, joy, now
and in all that is to come
Alleluia! Amen!

Psalms for Praying

- Nan C. Merrill



Ephesians 1: 17-19

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of Christ. May God enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope God's call holds for you, how rich is the glory of the heritage offered among God's holy people, and how extraordinarily great is the power that God has exercised for us believers.

Intercessions

The God of life is in our midst, breathing energy and compassion into our hearts. We lift our voices in prayer and praise, as we say:

Merciful God, hear our prayer.

In gratitude we remember the gift of our vocation to the Mercy way of life:

Merciful God, hear our prayer.

We pray for all the Sisters in the Congregation that we may experience your gentle compassion:

Merciful God, hear our prayer.

We pray for the young who are searching for meaning in their lives that they may see in our lives Christ's love for them:

Merciful God, hear our prayer.

We pray for those people whom God may be calling to be Sisters of Mercy, that they may be generous in their response and that we may be open to receive them.

Merciful God, hear our prayer.

We pray for those whose lives we touch that together we will reflect the tender mercy of God.

Merciful God, hear our prayer.



Pause for Reflection

An Extract from Religious Life in America: A New Day Dawning, p. 176, Seán D. Sammon, FMS

What's your answer to this question? Does the mission of your congregation remain as vital and urgent today as it was at the time of your group's foundation, and will it remain so for some time to come? If your answer is "yes," doesn't it stand to reason that **every member** of your congregation, in light of today's vocation crisis, would want to make the recruiting of new members their number one priority? **Vocation promotion is always rightly undertaken for the sake of mission, never, hopefully, for reasons of survival.**

First of all, then, if we want a future for the mission of our congregation, we will need to make vocation promotion our number one priority. That's right, our number one priority.

Second, the overwhelming majority – if not all – of our group's membership will need to rearrange other commitments so as to free up twenty per cent of their best time to devote directly to the work of vocation promotion. Why twenty per cent? Because there is a lot to learn and a great deal of work to be done. If any of our groups choose not to make vocation promotion their number one priority – and we all have that choice – and to provide the time to work in this important ministry, we can reasonably predict that our group will not have a future and, really – as has been stated earlier, it won't deserve one.

We have all heard the litany of very good reasons why this or that member of any congregation just cannot get involved with the work of vocation promotion. Some of us say, "I haven't the time," or protest, "You don't understand the demands that my ministry is placing on me." Others of us hide behind age. "I'm too old," we say, "this work is the responsibility of younger people." Still others excuse themselves with this observation, "We already have a full-time vocation director."

None of these reasons holds any water. Yes, all of us are busy; the median age of a number of our groups would allow the majority of our members to beg off being involved, citing senior citizen status; most of our congregations today have a member full-time in the ministry of vocation promotion. So let's put aside these excuses and come to a decision. ***Do we or do we not want a future for the mission and life of our congregation?***

(Emphasis mine)

REKINDLE THE FLAME



Pointers for Reflection and Sharing

What is your reaction to the material presented above?

Do you want a future for our Congregation and its mission? What price are you willing to pay – in terms of time, willingness to change some elements of your present life (e.g., ministry, community set-up, style of prayer) to insure that future?

Is there one practical initiative you and / or your group can take in the next week that supports new membership?

Concluding Prayer

Spirit of God, you make your home within us. Help us to hear your voice speaking within us, calling us to deeper union with you. Renew our hearts and transform our actions that we may proclaim to the world: God is alive! God's love is everlasting! This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

