**Vocations Week – 2021**

**Day Seven**

**Friday 23rd April**

***A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles*** 9:1-20

When he heard that, Ananias said, ‘Lord, several people have told me about this man and all the harm he has been doing to your saints in Jerusalem. He has only come here because he holds a warrant from the chief priests to arrest everybody who invokes your name. The Lord replied, ‘You must go all the same because this man is my chosen instrument to bring my name before pagans and pagan kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he himself must suffer for my name.’

In *Patris Corde*, his document on St Joseph, Pope Francis refers to Joseph’s acceptance of Mary. Trusting in the angel’s words, he showed great respect and sensitivity, even though he didn’t understand the bigger picture. He’s an example to men, especially in today’s world where psychological, verbal and physical violence towards women is so evident. St Joseph’s acceptance may invite us to ask how we react when things happen whose meaning we don’t understand – probably with disappointment and / or rebellion. But St Joseph shows us how to set aside our own feelings, and embrace things as they are. He isn’t passively resigned to his fate, but is courageously and firmly proactive. We can be the same, if we rely on the strength of the Holy Spirit to give us the hope and courage we need. The Lord invited Joseph, as He invites us, not to be afraid but, instead, to accept the way things are, even when they don’t turn out as we would wish. St Paul tells us that “…all things work together for good, for those who love God” (Rom. 8:28). Faith gives meaning to everything, every event, however happy or sad, positive or negative it may be. Just as St Joseph accepted Mary, and embraced everything that was asked of him, we’re invited to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show particular concern for the weak, the poor, the needy and our more vulnerable brothers and sisters. Following his example, we can love the stranger among us, and be as welcoming and forgiving as the father of the prodigal son.

**Love Everything**

Love people even in their sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love, and is the highest love on earth. Love all of God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand of it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, **Love Everything**, p18 (*The Brothers Karamazov*) from *Lenten Prayers for Busy People*, edited by William J. O’Malley.

**Mass**

**Angelus for Vocations**

**Vocation Interview hosted by Bishop Donal McKeown**

**Daily Examen**

**Rosary for Vocations Sorrowful Mysteries**

**Night Prayer**

**Mass Friday 23rd April**

***Introduction:***

We are reminded in today’s passage from the Acts of the Apostles that, despite his past, Saint Paul had been called to become God’s chosen instrument to bring his name before all nations and before the people of Israel. In *Patris Corde*, Pope Francis describes how St Joseph responded to his vocation to accept and support Mary, learning to trust in the angel’s words, and how he displayed great respect and sensitivity, even though he didn’t understand the bigger picture. We too are God’s chosen instruments; we have been entrusted with a unique mission to make God’s name known in our time and place. Likewise, we are asked to support, encourage and accompany those who have been chosen to serve God’s mission in the Church.

***Prayer of the Faithful:***

**Reader:** The response to our intercessions is: Lord hear our Prayer.

1. For all those chosen by Christ to "prepare the way of the Lord;" may our prayers, encouragement and support help men and women to answer their calling to minister to the People of God.

We pray to the Lord. **R/Lord Hear our Prayer**

1. For a deeper trust and openness to the Holy Spirit among those discerning a call to serve Christ in the priesthood or religious life.

We pray to the Lord. **R/Lord Hear our Prayer**

1. That during this week of prayer for vocations in the diocese of Derry, every parishioner will be inspired to foster a vocational understanding of life. May the witness of our lives, and our words of invitation and encouragement, help our young people to listen to and answer God’s call.

We pray to the Lord. **R/Lord Hear our Prayer**

1. That all the baptised will be encouraged to share in the responsibility of discovering their vocation to follow Christ, either in the priesthood, religious life, single or married life.

We pray to the Lord. **R/Lord Hear our Prayer**

1. For a deeper sense of faith, hope and love among all Christians, and for a greater awareness of the richness of every vocation to love Christ, and that more men and women will respond to His invitation to follow Him.

We pray to the Lord. **R/Lord Hear our Prayer**