**Vocations Week – 2021**

**Day Nine**

**Sunday 25th April**

***A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to John***  10:1-10

The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice; one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.

***Saint Joseph, Courageous Father***

In “*Patris Corde*” (‘With a father’s heart’) Pope Francis continues his reflections on St Joseph as a creatively courageous father by talking about how Joseph must have worked to provide for his family as they faced the concrete problems which would have been part and parcel of their life in exile in Egypt. The Pope considers St Joseph to be the special patron of all those forced to leave their native land because of war, hatred, persecution or poverty.

St Joseph acts as an obedient son of God, listening as the Lord encourages and inspires him to look after Mary and Jesus, his and our most precious treasure. Just as Joseph guarded, protected and provided for his wife and their Son, we are entrusted with the care and protection of the Body of Christ which is the Church, especially the weakest and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. We ask St Joseph to help us in this task. We often call on him as the Protector of the Church, just as we call on Mary as Mother of the Church. If we wish to call ourselves Christians, we cannot fail to show a special love and concern for the unfortunate, the needy, exiles, the afflicted, the poor and the dying. As Jesus says in St Matthew’s gospel (Chapter 25), “As you did this to one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did it to Me.”

**Ministering to Others**

We must continually remind ourselves that every Christian who is baptised into the church is admitted to the royal priesthood of all believers in Christ, and that each of us has a ministry, whether we are young or old, male or female, lay member or clergy. To be a Christian is to follow Jesus Christ’s example of ministry, to be God’s representative on earth. Each of us has been called by God to love and serve him and our fellow human beings. However sinful rebellious, or inadequate we may feel, we cannot escape God’s claim on us…We minister when we pray for others, when we stand before God, holding them in our thoughts. We minister by our presence with another in time of trouble, giving reassurance that the other is not alone in adversity. We minister when we simp1y listen with a sympathetic ear to one who is full of sorrow and grief; or when we telephone a shut-in just to let someone know that he or she is not forgotten; or when we offer a welcoming smile or a welcoming handclasp to a stranger in our midst… We encounter God in our ministry to others, for only as we love and serve others do we love and serve God… God is to us as our neighbour’s hand.

Pauli Murray, **Ministering to Others,**p377**,**from *Pauli Murray: Selected Sermons and Writings*, edited by Anthony B**.** Pinn.

**Mass**

**Angelus for Vocations**

**Daily Examen**

**Rosary for Vocations Glorious Mysteries**

**Night Prayer**

**Mass Sunday 25th April**

***Introduction:***

Through the Prophet Jeremiah, God promised to give His people shepherds after His own heart to feed them with knowledge and understanding. Jesus Christ is our Good Shepherd. He is Truth Incarnate, and He feeds us with His very Body and Blood as He leads us on the path to eternal life. Today, in this Mass, we pray that He will raise up shepherds after His own heart to lead and guide His people, the Church.

***Prayer of the Faithful:***

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

1. For Francis, our Pope; Donal, our Bishop; and for all bishops, priests, and deacons: that they may be shepherds after the Lord’s own heart.

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

1. For an increase in vocations to the priesthood: that many more young men will be called to serve as shepherds in the Diocese of Derry.

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

1. For an increase in vocations to the religious life: that young men and women may hear the voice of the Good Shepherd calling them to lay down their lives in the service of the Gospel.

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

1. That our deceased brothers and sisters who served the Lord as priests and religious may now praise Him for all eternity in heaven.

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