

## **Parish Vocation Cross Initiative**

### **Celebrating 175 Years – Archdiocese of Indianapolis**

**Thank you for your participation in the Parish Vocation Cross initiative!** The Vocation Cross initiative responds to Jesus' command, "Pray to the master of the harvest to send out workers for the harvest" (Mt: 9: 38). In addition, the Parish Vocation Cross Initiative will seek to create a greater "Culture of Vocation," helping to raise awareness of the need for vocations among the Catholic faithful. All are called universally to holiness. Some are called to live this out as a priest or deacon. Others are called to religious life as a sister or brother. Many are called to sacred married life and yet others to live a sacred single life. Whatever the vocation, it is our responsibility as faithful Catholics to help one another listen, hear and respond to God's Call. Master of the Harvest, may it be so!

### **Getting Started in Your Prayer**

- 1) **Place the Vocations Cross in a prominent and visible location** in your home (on a main table, fireplace mantel, etc.) Perhaps you will want to make the space sacred by placing some holy water near the cross for use in blessing or use a candle to light the area when you are home.
- 2) **Try to carve out a specific time each day** that you and your family/friends can gather to pray the prayers and share in the rich discussions. Many times, it is very fruitful to do this in and around a meal such as dinner time. Our lives and kid's lives are busy, for sure. Try to make this week a bit different than an average week and really make this special and an honor for your family.
- 3) **Don't be afraid to have your kids see you on your knees before the Vocations Cross** at anytime of day or night. It is a powerful witness to our children for them to see their parents praying!
- 4) **Use the following guide for your week:** Understandably, there is a lot here. Do what you can! Enjoy the fruitful interaction which will occur between the members of your family as you pray together and share insights derived from the praying and sharing. Get ready... the Holy Spirit is likely to rock your world!

## **Day One – Sunday**

### **Theme: Universal Call to Holiness**

**Pray the Prayer of Vocation** (enclosed) together.

**Read aloud the Thought for the Day:** “Dear young people of America, your personal prayer, your times of silent contemplation, and your participation in the Church’s liturgy, bring you closer to God and also prepare you to serve others. The saints show us that the life of faith and hope is also a life of charity. Contemplating Jesus on the Cross we see love in its most radical form. We can begin to imagine the path of love along which we must move (cf. *Deus Caritas Est*, 12). The opportunities to make this journey are abundant. Look about you with Christ’s eyes, listen with his ears, feel and think with his heart and mind. Are you ready to give all as he did for truth and justice?” Pope Benedict XVI, Papal Visit to America – April 2008

**Pray the Prayer to Make A Difference together** (enclosed).

#### **Excellent Supplemental Activities:**

**Read aloud the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 825 – 826**

#### **Questions for discussion:**

1. Can you think of someone in your life who strives to be holy? What do you see in them that you would like to see in yourself?
2. Have you decided to strive to be holy, with God’s grace? Why or why not?
3. Who is one of your favorite saints who, serves as a model for you in life?
4. What are some good practices one should follow as a Catholic in the journey to holiness?

## Day Two – Monday

### Theme: Living a Sacred Single Life

**Pray the Prayer of Vocation** (enclosed) together.

**Thought for the Day:** “Dear friends, truth is not an imposition. Nor is it simply a set of rules. It is a discovery of the One who never fails us; the One whom we can always trust. In seeking truth we come to live by belief because ultimately truth is a person: Jesus Christ. That is why authentic freedom is not an opting out. It is an opting in; nothing less than letting go of self and allowing oneself to be drawn into Christ’s very being for others (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 28).

At times, however, we are tempted to close in on ourselves, to doubt the strength of Christ’s radiance, to limit the horizon of hope. Take courage! Fix your gaze on our saints. The diversity of their experience of God’s presence prompts us to discover anew the breadth and depth of Christianity. Let your imaginations soar freely along the limitless expanse of the horizons of Christian discipleship. Sometimes we are looked upon as people who speak only of prohibitions. Nothing could be further from the truth! Authentic Christian discipleship is marked by a sense of wonder. We stand before the God we know and love as a friend, the vastness of his creation, and the beauty of our Christian faith. “ Pope Benedict XVI, Papal Visit to America – April 2008

**Pray the Prayer to Make A Difference together** (enclosed).

**Excellent Supplemental Activities:**

**Check Out Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, Saint for the Youth of the Third Millennium** [www.frassatiusa.org](http://www.frassatiusa.org)

**Read aloud about virtues in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)**  
1803, 1830-1832

#### **Questions for discussion:**

1. As a kid, how does God want me to live a sacred and virtuous life?
2. Who do I know that is single and striving to live a life of virtue?
3. Why is Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati a model for youth and young adults of this millennium?
4. What are the challenges that we face in this world that keep us from living a sacred life in Christ?
5. What gifts (personal and of the Church) has God given us to be able to conquer these obstacles?

## **Day Three – Tuesday**

### **Theme: Call to Priesthood**

**Pray the Prayer of Vocation** (enclosed) together.

**Thought for the Day:** “I greet the seminarians present and indeed encourage all seminarians throughout America. I am glad to know that your numbers are increasing! The People of God look to you to be holy priests, on a daily journey of conversion, inspiring in others the desire to enter more deeply into the ecclesial life of believers. I urge you to deepen your friendship with Jesus the Good Shepherd. Talk heart to heart with him. Reject any temptation to ostentation, careerism, or conceit. Strive for a pattern of life truly marked by charity, chastity and humility, in imitation of Christ, the Eternal High Priest, of whom you are to become living icons.” Pope Benedict XVI, Papal Visit to America – April 2008

**Pray the Prayer to Make A Difference together** (enclosed).

#### **Excellent Supplemental Activities:**

**View DVD “Fishers of Men”** (enclosed) together

#### **Questions for discussion:**

1. What stirred within you as you viewed the DVD?
2. Why is it important that we have priests?
3. Have you (boys/young men) ever considered becoming a priest?
4. How does God call individuals to priesthood?
5. Are you willing to pray for yourself or others to hear and answer the call? Why or why not?

**Check out the website: [www.HearGodsCall.com](http://www.HearGodsCall.com)**

\* See especially the Seminarian and Priesthood sections

## **Day Four – Wednesday**

### **Theme: Call to Religious Life**

**Pray the Prayer of Vocation** (enclosed) together.

**Thought for the Day:** “Religious Sisters, Brothers and Priests contribute greatly to the mission of the Church. Their prophetic witness is marked by a profound conviction of the primacy with which the Gospel shapes Christian life and transforms society. Today, I wish to draw your attention to the positive spiritual renewal which Congregations are undertaking in relation to their charism. The word charism means a gift freely and graciously given. Charisms are bestowed by the Holy Spirit, who inspires founders and foundresses, and shapes Congregations with a subsequent spiritual heritage.

The wondrous array of charisms proper to each Religious Institute is an extraordinary spiritual treasury. Indeed, the history of the Church is perhaps most beautifully portrayed through the history of her schools of spirituality, most of which stem from the saintly lives of founders and foundresses. Through the discovery of charisms, which yield such a breadth of spiritual wisdom, I am sure that some of you young people will be drawn to a life of apostolic or contemplative service. Do not be shy to speak with Religious Brothers, Sisters or Priests about the charism and spirituality of their Congregation.”  
Pope Benedict XVI, Papal Visit to America – April 2008

**Pray the Prayer to Make A Difference together** (enclosed).

#### **Excellent Supplemental Activities:**

**View DVD “In the Arms of Mother Teresa”** (enclosed) together  
Select menu – Hit menu twice to bring up Mother Teresa segment

#### **Questions for discussion:**

1. Why is Mother Teresa so revered worldwide, by Catholics and non-Catholics alike as a model for our times?
2. What is a charism? (see CCC 799-801)
3. Have you (girls, boys, young men and women) ever considered becoming a religious, sister or brother? Why or why not?
4. What charisms/gifts has God given you to share with the world?

## **Day Five – Thursday**

### **Theme: Call to Sacred Married Life**

**Pray the Prayer of Vocation** (enclosed) together.

**Thought for the Day:** “Dear young people, finally I wish to share a word about vocations. First of all my thoughts go to your parents, grandparents and godparents. They have been your primary educators in the faith. By presenting you for baptism, they made it possible for you to receive the greatest gift of your life. On that day you entered into the holiness of God himself. You became adoptive sons and daughters of the Father. You were incorporated into Christ. You were made a dwelling place of his Spirit. Let us pray for mothers and fathers throughout the world, particularly those who may be struggling in any way – socially, materially, spiritually. Let us honor the vocation of matrimony and the dignity of family life. Let us always appreciate that it is in families that vocations are given life.” Pope Benedict XVI, Papal Visit to America – April 2008

**Pray the Prayer to Make A Difference together** (enclosed).

#### **Excellent Supplemental Activities:**

**Read aloud the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1601, 1643-1644, 1646-1648**

#### **Questions for discussion:**

1. Marriage is a Sacrament; a visible sign of our invisible God. How so?
2. Did you know that the ultimate mission of marriage is to help get your spouse to heaven? How does this change your vision of marriage in our world?
3. In your eyes, who do you know that is a living example of married love? What do you see in them that you desire in yourself one day?
4. Why does the Church call marriage a “vocation?”
5. The world tells us that it is OK to live with someone outside of marriage. Why does the Church teach that a couple should only live together within the bond of marriage?

**Check out the website: [www.archindy.org](http://www.archindy.org)**

\* See Office of Family Ministries (under “Offices”)

## Day Six – Friday

### Theme: Discerning God's Call

**Pray the Prayer of Vocation** (enclosed) together.

**Thought for the Day:** “What matters most is that you develop your personal relationship with God. That relationship is expressed in prayer. God by his very nature speaks, hears, and replies. Indeed, Saint Paul reminds us: we can and should “pray constantly” (*1 Thess 5:17*). Far from turning in on ourselves or withdrawing from the ups and downs of life, by praying we turn towards God and through him to each other, including the marginalized and those following ways other than God's path (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 33). As the saints teach us so vividly, prayer becomes hope in action. Christ was their constant companion, with whom they conversed at every step of their journey for others.

There is another aspect of prayer which we need to remember: silent contemplation. Saint John, for example, tells us that to embrace God's revelation we must first listen, then respond by proclaiming what we have heard and seen (cf. *1 Jn 1:2-3*; *Dei Verbum*, 1). Have we perhaps lost something of the art of listening? Do you leave space to hear God's whisper, calling you forth into goodness? Friends, do not be afraid of silence or stillness, listen to God, adore him in the Eucharist. Let his word shape your journey as an unfolding of holiness.” Pope Benedict XVI, Papal Visit to America – April 2008

**Pray the Prayer to Make A Difference together** (enclosed).

#### Excellent Supplemental Activities:

##### Questions for discussion:

1. Why does Pope Benedict say that “what matters most is that you develop your personal relationship with God in prayer?”
2. What is discernment? Are you open to discerning God's will for your life versus your will? Why or why not?
3. Do you ever sit quietly before God in prayer? Why or why not? What are the fruits of silent contemplation?
4. Where is your favorite place to pray? Favorite prayer form?
5. What are some other ways to discern God's call?

**Visit a Perpetual Adoration Chapel or Catholic Church** and take some quiet time to pray before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. You may choose to use the “In Prayer for Vocations Booklet” (enclosed) to pray for vocations together.

**Perpetual Adoration Chapels in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis** include: St. Luke Parish, Indianapolis, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, Indianapolis, Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Greenwood, St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Indianapolis, St. Thomas More Parish, Mooresville, St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Bedford, St. Mary Parish, Greensburg, St. Patrick Parish, Terre Haute, St. Nicholas Parish, Sunman, St. Louis Parish, Batesville.

## Day Seven – Saturday

### Theme: Vocation.... Everyone has one. What's Yours?

**Pray the Prayer of Vocation** (enclosed) together.

**Thought for the Day:** “Have courage! You too can make your life a gift of self for the love of the Lord Jesus and, in him, of every member of the human family (cf. *Vita Consecrata*, 3). Friends, again I ask you, what about today? What are you seeking? What is God whispering to you? The hope which never disappoints is Jesus Christ. The saints show us the selfless love of his way. As disciples of Christ, their extraordinary journeys unfolded within the community of hope, which is the Church. It is from within the Church that you too will find the courage and support to walk the way of the Lord. Nourished by personal prayer, prompted in silence, shaped by the Church’s liturgy you will discover the particular vocation God has for you. Embrace it with joy. You are Christ’s disciples today. Shine his light upon this great city and beyond. Show the world the reason for the hope that resonates within you. Tell others about the truth that sets you free.” Pope Benedict XVI, Papal Visit to America – April 2008

**Pray the Prayer to Make A Difference together** (enclosed).

#### Excellent Supplemental Activities:

##### Questions for discussion:

1. What are you seeking? What is God whispering to you?
2. In the Mass, the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus. How does this invite you to change/conversion in your own life?
3. Do you have the hope that Sacred Scripture talks about? How can you share this hope with others?
4. Do you believe God has a special and beautiful plan/vocation for your life?
5. Are you willing to embrace it with joy and become a “light set on the mountain top” in our world for all to see?

**Check out the website:** [www.HearGodsCall.com](http://www.HearGodsCall.com) and share it with someone else in your life!

**Other possible activities for your week or during the year of the 175<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis:**

Visit with your priest about vocations.

Ask another family to join you in your home to pray for vocations.

Pray the Rosary together as a family.

Take a road trip to:

1. Saint Meinrad Seminary – Saint Meinrad, Indiana
2. Mother of the Redeemer Farm – Bloomington, Indiana
3. Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House – Indianapolis, Indiana
4. Mount Saint Francis Retreat Center – Mt. St. Francis, Indiana
5. Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Sisters of St. Benedict – Beech Grove, Indiana
6. Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis – Oldenburg, Indiana
7. Sisters of Providence - Saint Mary of the Woods, Indiana

**For more information on Vocations contact:**

**Vocations Office, Archdiocese of Indianapolis**

**[www.HearGodsCall.com](http://www.HearGodsCall.com)**

**1400 North Meridian Street**

**Indianapolis, Indiana 46202**

**317.236.1400**

**Master of the Harvest, Hear our Prayers!**