



Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for May

The Church in Africa, a Seed of Unity

That the Church in Africa, through the commitment of its members, may be the seed of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for this continent.



This month we celebrate the Easter season! Alleluia, He is risen! We welcome those who joined the Church at the Easter vigil Mass and those who made their first Communion. We also think of St. Joseph the Worker, whose feast day is May 1, and we honor Mary and all mothers. Our school children will take part in a May Crowning on May 16th. Finally, we join in prayer for the 56th World Day of Prayer for Vocations on May 12th and celebrate 7 new priests being ordained in our Archdiocese!

FOCUS on the SACRAMENTS: HOLY ORDERS



VOCATION OFFICE FOR THE
DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
HEED THE CALL

Deaconship, priesthood, and bishopric are the three stages in the sacrament of Holy Orders as it was instituted by Christ. At each stage, as in every sacrament, there is an increase in sanctifying grace.

- A deacon has the right to baptize, to preach, and to administer Holy Communion.
- A priest has the power to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ and to forgive sins.
- A bishop, who alone has the complete fullness of the priesthood, has the power to confirm and to ordain—to pass the power of the priesthood on to others in the sacrament of Holy Orders. beginningcatholic.com/holy-orders

On Saturday, May 11th, five men will be ordained to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. These men are at a milestone along their journey to the priesthood. On May 18th, seven men will be ordained as priests for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia at the Cathedral Basilica of Ss. Peter and Paul. Both of these events can be viewed online live. God bless these men in their ministry!

“...The Lord’s call is not an intrusion of God in our freedom; it is not a “cage” or a burden to be borne. On the contrary, it is the loving initiative whereby God encounters us and invites us to be part of a great undertaking. He opens before our eyes the horizon of a greater sea and an abundant catch.

God in fact desires that our lives not become banal and predictable, imprisoned by daily routine, or unresponsive before decisions that could give it meaning. The Lord does not want us to live from day to day, thinking that nothing is worth fighting for, slowly losing our desire to set out on new and exciting paths. If at times he makes us experience a “miraculous catch”, it is because he wants us to discover that each of us is called – in a variety of ways – to something grand, and that our lives should not grow entangled in the nets of an ennui that dulls the heart. Every vocation is a summons not to stand on the shore, nets in hand, but to follow Jesus on the path he has marked out for us, for our own happiness and for the good of those around us.”

~ Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2019

Why do we have the 40 Hours Devotion?

The Forty Hours Devotion is a special forty-hour period of continuous prayer made before the Blessed Sacrament in solemn exposition.

St. John Neumann (1811-60), the fourth bishop of Philadelphia, was a strong promoter of the Forty Hours Devotion. While the practice had already existed in individual churches throughout the city (as well as in other places in the country), no organized, cohesive diocesan schedule for it had ever before been attempted. St. John had a tremendous devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and desired to foster such a spiritual life in his people.

Unfortunately at this time, a strong anti-Catholic sentiment plagued Philadelphia. During the Know Nothing riots of 1844, two churches were burned and another was saved simply by the threat of gunfire. Some priests, therefore, advised St. John that the introduction of 40 Hours Devotion would only flame the hatred against the Catholics and expose the Blessed Sacrament to desecration. St. John was left in a quandary.

A strange incident occurred which helped St. John decide. One night, he was working very late at his desk and fell asleep in his chair. The candle on the desk burnt down and charred some of the papers, but they were still readable. He awoke, surprised and thankful that a fire had not ignited. He fell on his knees to give thanks to God for protection, and heard His voice saying, "As the flames are burning here without consuming or injuring the writing, so shall I pour out my grace in the Blessed Sacrament without prejudice to My honor. Fear no profanation, therefore; hesitate no longer to carry out your design for my glory."

He introduced the practice of 40 Hours Devotion at the first diocesan synod in April, 1853, and the first devotions began at St. Philip Neri Parish, an appropriate place since that saint had initiated the devotion in the city of Rome. St. John himself spent most of the three days in the Church praying. No trouble ensued. St. John then introduced the program for the whole diocese, so that each parish would have Forty Hours Devotion during the course of the year. He composed a special booklet for the devotions and obtained special indulgences for the faithful attending them. The Forty Hours Devotion was so successful it spread to other dioceses. At the Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1866, the Forty Hours Devotion was approved for all Dioceses of the United States.

The Forty Hours Devotion provides a wonderful opportunity for the spiritual growth of each person and the parish as a whole. In a world where temptation and evil abound, where devotion to the Mass and our Lord in the Holy Eucharist have declined, where the practice of penance and confession have been forgotten, we need the Forty Hours Devotion more than ever.

<http://catholicstraightanswers.com/what-is-the-40-hours-devotion/>