



A Reflection on Vocations

“I know my sheep, and mine know me,” Jesus assures us each year on Good Shepherd Sunday. We know Him because we hear His voice inviting us to follow Him along the path of our vocation.

A vocation is a call to a uniquely personal mission in life which no one else can fulfill. St. Paul received his vocation on the road to Damascus. Jesus called him to be an apostle and promptly sent him to be baptized. So are your vocation and mine intimately linked with baptismal adoption as children of the Father and the baptismal birthright of a place at the table of the Eucharist. Our vocation is the part Jesus gives us to play in the great drama that has unfolded around that table down the centuries. *My* vocation comes into ever clearer focus as the words of Jesus take hold and the path of His will for *me* re-directs the story of my life.

My path may converge with another’s in a mutual vocation to marriage, or it may lead me along the path of a single life. The Lord may call me to consecrate myself to Him in service to His Church by a vow of virginity as a religious sister or by a vow of celibacy as a priest. Whatever my vocation may be, what counts is that my response reflect the faithfulness of the God Who calls me, the God Who is always true to His promise to be with me to the end.

In 2013 the humanly indispensable vocation to marriage faces an unprecedented challenge in the attempt to redefine the one-flesh union of man and woman to accommodate couples of the same sex. Not only would such a change magnify our societal confusion about the nature and responsibilities of marriage, it would also put at risk the religious liberty of Christians to proclaim and practice the Gospel. This is why the National Conference of Bishops has called for a concerted nationwide campaign of prayer for the legal upholding of marriage—in the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass, in Eucharistic Adoration, in special group Rosaries for Marriage, and in voluntary fasting and abstinence from meat on Fridays. I encourage you and your family to take up one or more of these practices between now and the 4th of July. The next issue of *The Chronicle* will explain them more fully.

Another vocation very much needs our prayers as well. Most of the priests who break the Bread of Life for us in the Diocese of Baker heard God’s call far from Eastern Oregon—in Nigeria, Tanzania, Poland, India, Sri Lanka, Malta, or Mexico. But we should not think that God fails to call men from our midst to take up the priestly ministry. He is ever ready to give us indigenous priests, but He wants us to ask Him with a persistence proportionate to our need. Throughout the diocese we must unceasingly beg the Lord of the Harvest to send laborers into His vineyard. With the assistance of the Serra Club a diocesan-wide program of Eucharistic Adoration for vocations is being developed and will soon be implemented. More information will be published in *The Chronicle* in June, but don’t wait till then to begin to pray for this vital intention.