

Pope Francis's Mother Surprised by His Vocation

In an interview for a Spanish-language newspaper, Pope Francis's only living sibling, María Elena Bergoglio, recounts how their mother discovered he was interested in the priesthood.

At age 19, young Jorge Bergoglio initially felt that he wanted to study medicine. Wanting him to have a quiet place to study, his mother prepared a special room for him by cleaning out a cluttered room on the family's terrace.

One day, the future pope's mom entered the room to clean it. But she ran into a surprise: books of theology.

The pope's sister, the only one of his five siblings still alive, recounted the conversation between mother and son:

"Jorge, come here. You told me that you were going to study medicine."

"Yes, mother."

"Why did you lie to me?"

"No, I did not lie to you mother; I am going to study the medicine of the soul."

Surprised by the news, his mother wept, because she understood he would have to leave home to study. His father, however, rejoiced in his son's vocation.

Eventually the entire family embraced his call to the priesthood. Jorge Bergoglio was ordained a priest in 1969 and elected Pope in 2013.

Pope Saint Pius X Kisses His Mother's Wedding Ring

Pope Pius X was a very humble man and had a saintly mother. Because they were so poor, she worked as a washer woman and a school janitor to earn enough money so that he could go to the seminary.

When elected pope, he was embarrassed and uncomfortable with the pomp and circumstance of the office. "Look how they have dressed me up," he lamented to a friend.

His mother was also present at his installation and kissed his large papal ring, as is the custom. She then presented her tiny hand with her wedding ring and said, "Now you kiss my ring—for without it, you never would have received yours!"

On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, let's fervently pray not just that young people to hear the Lord's voice, but that their parents happily support & encourage them as they respond to His call.

Mary, Mother of Vocations

"Every aspect of priestly formation can be referred to Mary, the human being who has responded better than any other to God's call. Mary became both the servant and the disciple of the Word to the point of conceiving, in her heart and in her flesh, the Word made man, so as to give him to mankind. Mary was called to educate the one Eternal Priest, who became docile and subject to her motherly authority. With her example and intercession the Blessed Virgin keeps vigilant watch over the growth of vocations and priestly life in the Church." - Bl. John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

11 MAY 2014

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY
(MOTHER'S DAY)

Resources for Priests

HOMILY IDEAS

- **First Reading: Acts 2:14, 36-41**

Summary: Peter preaches to the crowd on Pentecost, exhorting them to be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit.

The vocation angle: When Peter exhorted the crowd, "they were cut to the heart." Sometimes the Holy Spirit "speaks" to us when we have a moment of clarity deep inside our spirit. Many men who have been called to priesthood have had this experience—during Mass, on a retreat, or at a youth event. The question is, how do you respond? This is one instance where you can "follow the crowd," that is, do what the crowd did in Jerusalem that day by responding whole-heartedly to the call.

- **Psalm: Psalm 23**

Summary: This most famous psalm describes peace in the midst of danger.

The vocation angle: When a young person feels calls to priesthood or religious life, he or she can experience a lot of confusion and anxiety. But the saints tell us never to make a decision about one's vocation in a state of fear. Rather, like the psalmist, we must find that place of inner calm and then respond to the call, whatever it is. We must rely on the Shepherd, who will never call us where His grace cannot sustain us.

- **Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:20-25**

Summary: Jesus offers an example of suffering patiently for the sake of the good.

The vocation angle: When faced with the choice of marriage & family or priesthood & religious life, people are drawn to the former by their very natures. Sometimes, though, sacrifices should be made for the sake of a great good. We should acknowledge that, like Jesus, some are called to celibacy for the Kingdom of God.

• **Gospel: John 10:1-10**

Summary: Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Those who hear his voice follow him.

The vocation angle: To hear the Shepherd's voice requires quiet and prayer. Pope John Paul II said, "Young people, if they can be taught how to pray, can be trusted to know what to do with God's call." Talk about prayer, methods of prayer, and the importance of listening for God's voice, especially when making big decisions in life.

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EXCERPTS FROM THE HOLY FATHER'S MESSAGE
ON WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS



www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy

"We Christians were not chosen by the Lord for small things; push onwards toward the highest principles. Stake your lives on noble ideals!"

"Every vocation... always requires an exodus from oneself in order to center one's life on Christ and on his Gospel."

"A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people."

"I turn now to those who are well disposed to listen to the voice of Christ that rings out in the Church and to understand what their own vocation is. I invite you to listen to and follow Jesus, and to allow yourselves to be transformed interiorly by his words, which 'are spirit and life'" (Jn 6:62).

The Church has celebrated World Day of Prayer for Vocations for half a century, beginning in 1963 during the Second Vatican Council. Each year, the Holy Father releases a statement about the importance of praying for vocations. (Pope Francis' complete message for 2014 is included in this packet.)

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

11 May 2014

Suggestions:

- On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we pray for an increase in vocations to priesthood and consecrated life, especially in places where they are most needed. We pray to the Lord.
- For all charged with the common good, especially those who work with youth, that they will inspire children and young adults to strive for virtue. We pray to the Lord.
- For those who are having difficulty discerning their vocations, that the Holy Spirit give them wisdom and peace. We pray to the Lord.
- That young men from our parish will respond to the Church's tremendous need for priests. We pray to the Lord.
- That young women from our parish will remain open to consecrating themselves to God as religious sisters. We pray to the Lord.
- That Christian parents will happily encourage their children to remain open to priesthood or consecrated life. We pray to the Lord.
- In thanksgiving for all mothers, especially the mothers of priests, both living and dead. We pray to the Lord.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS BULLETIN INSERTS

MAY 3/4, 2014:

Pray the Rosary for the Priests in Your Life

When praying the rosary, offer the first decade for the priest who baptized you, the second for the priest who gave you first Communion, the third for the bishop who confirmed you, the fourth for the priest who witnessed your marriage or the bishop who ordained you (or will do so in the future), and the fifth decade for the priest who will anoint you at your death.

MAY 10/11, 2014

Mother's Day & Priestly Vocations?

Pope Pius X (1835-194) was a very humble man and had a saintly mother, Margarita Sanson. Because they were so poor, she worked as a washer woman and a school janitor to earn enough money so that he could go to the seminary. (In those days, the family had to pay for the seminarian's education.) When he was elected pope, his mother was present, and as was the custom, she kissed his large papal ring. She then presented her tiny hand with her wedding ring and said, "Now you kiss my ring—for without it, you never would have received yours!" We can understand why Pope Pius once said, "Every vocation to the priesthood comes from the heart of God, but it passes through the heart of a mother."

Join the *Invisible Monastery*

Pledge to pray for vocations at the web site, www.ccpriest.org It was inspired by a Vatican document urging the faithful to "organize an 'invisible monastery' in which many persons, day and night, are committed to continuous prayer for priestly vocations."