

DEAR FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

“O Lord, grant us priests!

“O Lord, grant us holy priests!

“O Lord, grant us many holy priests!

“O Lord, grant us many holy religious vocations!”

“O Lord, grant us many holy Catholic Families!”

Families Must Pray for Vocations

Aren't good families the first and best adapted gardens where vocations blossom naturally? Indeed, if we were to ask the priests and religious to whom, after God, do they owe their vocation, the greater part of them would no doubt point to the examples and lessons of a father full of faith and manly virtue, a mother, chaste and pious, and a family in which, with purity of moral life, charity for God and neighbor reigned supreme. There are few exceptions to this ordinary rule of Providence, and such exceptions only confirm the rule.

We must pray for vocations, it is the order of the Divine Master: “And He said to them: The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send labourers into his harvest.” (Lk 10:2). But, as St Pius X rightly wrote, “if it is true that a vocation comes from God, it is no less certain also that God deigns to use secondary causes to realize the designs of His eternal wisdom” (Letter of May 7, 1907).

The Example of the Mothers of Lu

In a period of great faith, it was the custom for parents to beg God to deign to

call of their children. The well-known story of the mothers of Lu Monferrato, near Turin, in Italy, is a model of this deeply Catholic prayer of deeply Catholic parents who saw further than the good of their own selves and family. Under the direction of their parish priest, Msgr. Alessandro Canora, they gathered every Tuesday for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, asking the Lord for vocations. They received Holy Communion on the first Sunday of every month with the same intention. After Mass, all the mothers prayed a particular prayer together imploring for vocations to the priesthood.

“O God, grant that one of my sons becomes a priest! I promise to live as a good Christian woman and will lead my children to all that is good, wherewith I hope to receive the grace to be able to give to Thee, O God, a holy priest.”

Through the trusting prayer of these mothers and the openness of the other parents, an atmosphere of deep joy and Christian piety developed in the families, making it much easier for the children to recognize their vocations.

In fifty years, the prayers of these mothers have won at least five hundred priestly and religious vocations from out of the relatively small village of about 3000. But, remember, it was only in the town of Lu that for those fifty years, the good women were assisting together at the First Sunday Mass specifically for the intention of religious vocations!

The World vs. Vocations

We have to recognize, on the contrary, that often – too often alas! – parents, even among those who count it

glory to be sincerely Catholic, do not seem to be able to resign themselves to the priestly or religious vocation of their children, and do not scruple themselves to combat this divine call by every kind of argument, even at the risk of imperiling the conscience and eternal salvation of those souls who, nevertheless, ought to be so dear to them. Pope Pius XI wrote these strong words on this subject:

The lack of vocations in families of the middle and upper classes may be partly explained by the dissipations of modern life, the seductions, which especially in the larger cities, prematurely awaken the passions of youth; the schools in many places which scarcely conduce to the development of vocations. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that such a scarcity reveals a deplorable falling off of faith in the families themselves. Did they indeed look at things in the light of faith, what greater dignity could Christian parents desire for their sons, what ministry more noble, than that which, as We have said, is worthy of the veneration of men and angels? A long and sad experience has shown that a vocation betrayed -- the word is not to be thought too strong -- is a source of tears not only for the sons but also for the ill-advised parents; and God grant that such tears be not so long delayed as to become eternal tears. (*Ad Catholicici sacerdotii*, 1935).

What would he say today with the legalisation of contraception, of abortion, of the arrival of TV and internet (with their impurities) in practically every home? How can impure children ever dream of virginity, of chastity, of celibacy?

No Children—No Vocations

In order to have vocations in a family, it presupposes in the first place to have children! No children, no vocation, that is an obvious and tragic reality. Moreover, when a family voluntarily limits the number of their children to one or two, that eliminates Don Bosco's rule of thumb that in a good family, there is one vocation for about every three children.

And what responsibility for selfish fathers and mothers when the day of the frightening judgment will come! What to answer then to the Divine Judge, for whom nothing is hidden, when one has willfully either blocked a vocation (in the style of, 'No, you will not go to this foreign monastery!'), or worse, prevented them from coming into the world? Kyrie, eleison! "Not everyone that saith to Me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Mt 7:21)

Love Children—Love Vocations

The first step then for the solution of the crisis in vocation is for parents to welcome children in their home, many of them!

Then, the whole family atmosphere of virtue, prayer, good example, of speaking highly of the gift of vocation, the reading of the lives of the Saints, all these elements foster the rise of true and generous vocations.

What father would not rejoice indeed, walking in a church, to see his son at the altar, holding in his hands the Divine Victim, knowing very well that at every mass, that priestly son prays and will ever pray for his cherished parents still alive or deceased?



2011: Rev. Fr. Daniel Couture lays his hands on the then Deacon Theresian Xavier of Palayamkottai

What mother's heart would not vibrate with emotion seeing her daughter dedicated wholeheartedly to teaching children, nursing the sick or the elderly, preparing the altar for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, or even, caring for wounded soldiers on a battlefield while seeing her heavenly Spouse in all these souls?

Let us pray for families! They hold the key to the shortage of vocations!

"O Lord, grant us many holy Catholic Families!"

Please accept my blessing,

District Superior