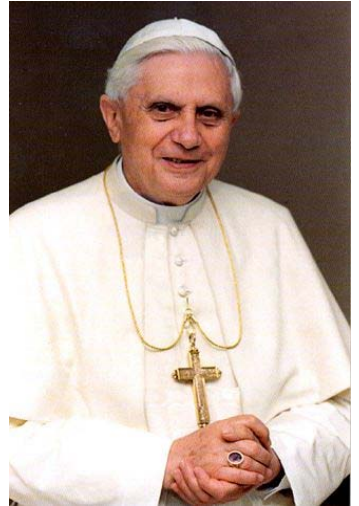




20 April 2010, #235

2010 World Day of Prayer for Vocations

The 47th World Day of Prayer for Vocations
25 April 2010 Fourth Sunday of Easter



For this year's World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Pope Benedict XVI chose the theme *Witness Awakens Vocations*. In the opening statement of his message he says, "The fruitfulness of our efforts to promote vocations depends primarily on God's free action, yet, as pastoral experience confirms, it is also helped by the quality and depth of the personal and communal witness of those who have already answered the Lord's call to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life, for their witness is then able to awaken in others a desire to respond generously to Christ's call."

The first World Day of Prayer for Vocations was held on April 11, 1964 when Pope Paul VI wanted to remember and pray for those who have committed themselves to priestly or consecrated lives and to encourage members of the faithful to nurture those in their midst who might be good candidates for a church vocation. The needs outlined by Pope Paul VI were for workers in the vineyard who could respond to the pastoral needs of people; who could be open, understanding and in touch with the times; who could be models of the doctrine they profess; and who might be willing to work in the missions.

When we speak about witness, Pope Benedict, reminds us that Jesus is the supreme Witness to God. "In the fullness of time, Jesus, sent by the Father (cf. Jn 5:36), would bear witness to the love of God for all human beings, without distinction, with particular attention to the least ones, sinners, the outcast and the poor. Jesus is the supreme Witness to God and to his concern for the salvation of all."

Vocation Update

Pope Benedict goes on to describe three aspects in the life of a priest or religious that are essential for effective witness. The fundamental element is that a person should “live in communion and unceasing dialog with God.” This is learned through friendship with Christ and through his constant example of union with God especially through prayer. The second aspect is the complete gift of oneself to God. We know love because Jesus laid down his life for us. A sense of service is offered by the example of Jesus who “lays aside his garments, takes a towel, girds himself with it and stoops to wash the feet of the Apostles...” By giving themselves completely to God, people are then able to give themselves to others “with complete, constant and faithful devotion, and with the joy of becoming a companion on the journey to so many brothers and sisters...” The third aspect essential for witness is a profound communion in love. “This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35). Particular expressions of this are a priest’s willingness to “help to overcome divisions, to heal rifts, to settle conflicts and misunderstandings, and to forgive offences.”

In his closing statements, Pope Benedict stresses the need to assist and encourage young people “to make demanding decisions affecting their future.” When priests and consecrated religious share with young people the “concrete existential choices” that they had made in their lives, young people will be encouraged and vocations will be fostered. When Pope Benedict uses words such as “demanding decisions” he highlights the idea that the vocational journey is not an easy process, but it can nonetheless be filled with the richness of deep intimacy with God and with our other brothers and sisters on the journey.

How does one begin to discern a religious vocation?

Contact Fr. John Holly 920-915-4400
jholly1953@yahoo.com or
Br. Jerry Johnson 773-475-6206
vocation@capuchinfranciscans.org
or visit www.CapuchinFranciscans.org
and click on <How to Begin>