

**Message of
His Holiness Pope Leo XIV
for the 63rd World Day of
Prayer for Vocations**

The Interior Discovery of God's Gift



Diocese of Hearst-Moosonee

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Dear brothers and sisters, dear young people!

Guided and protected by the Risen Jesus, we celebrate on the fourth Sunday of Easter — also called “Good Shepherd Sunday” — the 63rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations. It is an occasion of grace in which we share some reflections on the interior dimension of vocation, understood as the discovery of God’s free gift that blossoms in the depths of our hearts. Let us explore together the truly beautiful path of life along which the Shepherd guides us.

The pope develops his message around 4 major points. 1) *The Way of Beauty*. In the Gospel of John, Jesus describes himself as the “good shepherd” (ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός) (Jn 10:11). Neither the eyes of the body nor aesthetic sensibilities alone are sufficient to recognize this beauty; rather, contemplation and interiority are required. Only the one who pauses, listens, prays and welcomes the Shepherd’s gaze can say with confidence: “I trust him; life with him can truly be beautiful. I want to walk this path of beauty.” What is most extraordinary is that, in becoming his disciple, one truly becomes “beautiful”; his beauty transforms us.

2) Mutual Awareness. “The Lord of life knows us and enlightens our hearts with his loving gaze.” Indeed, every vocation begins with the awareness and experience of a God who is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:16) He knows us profoundly; he has counted the hairs of our head (cf. Mt 10:30) and has envisaged for each person a unique path of holiness and service. Yet this awareness must always be reciprocal. We are invited to know God through prayer, listening to the Word, the Sacraments, the life of the Church

and works of charity for our brothers and sisters. Like the young Samuel, who unexpectedly heard the voice of the Lord during the night and learned to recognize it with the help of Eli (cf. 1 Sam 3:1–10).

3) Trust. Knowledge leads to confidence, a mindset that arises from faith and is essential both for welcoming one’s vocation and for persevering in it. Indeed, life reveals itself as a continual act of trusting in the Lord and abandoning ourselves to him, even when his plans unsettle our own. Let us consider Saint Joseph, who, despite the mysterious and unexpected pregnancy of the Virgin, trusted the divine message revealed in a dream and welcomed Mary and her child with an obedient heart (cf. Mt 1:18-25; 2:13-15)

4) Maturation. Indeed, a vocation is not a fixed point, but a dynamic process of maturation sustained by intimacy with our Lord. To grow in one’s vocation means being with Jesus, allowing the Holy Spirit to act in our hearts and in the circumstances of life, and reinterpreting everything in light of this gift. Like the vine and the branches (cf. Jn 15:1-8).

Dear brothers and sisters, dear young people, I encourage you to cultivate your personal relationship with God through daily prayer and meditation on the Word. Pause, listen and entrust yourselves. In this way, the gift of your vocation will mature, bringing you happiness and yielding abundant fruit for the Church and the world.

May the Virgin Mary, model of the interior acceptance of divine gifts and expert in prayerful listening, always accompany you on this journey!