

Seventh Day
October 19th

Friend of the Youth and Father of Families

Preparatory Reading:

“In addressing myself to Christian families, I wish thereby to confirm them in their mission of educating the young generations, which are the hope and future of the Church. *This is a great mystery* (Eph 5:32). In spite of profound historical changes, the family remains the most complete and the richest school of humanity, in which one lives the most significant experience of unselfish love, fidelity, mutual respect and the defense of life. Its particular task is to protect and hand on virtues and values, by means of the education of the children, in such a way as to build up and promote the good of individuals and of the community.

This same responsibility involves, with greater reason, the Christian family, because its members, already consecrated and sanctified in virtue of their Baptism, are called to a particular apostolic vocation by the sacrament of Matrimony (cf. *Familiaris consortio*, nn. 52, 54).

The family, to the extent to which it becomes conscious of this singular vocation and measures up to it, becomes a community of sanctification in which one learns to live meekness, justice, mercy, chastity, peace, purity of heart (cf. Eph 4:1-4; *Familiaris consortio*, n. 21). It becomes, in other words, what Saint John Chrysostom called “the domestic church,” that is, a place in which Jesus Christ lives and works for the salvation of men and for the growth of the kingdom of God. The members of the family, called to faith and to eternal life, are *sharers in the divine nature* (2 Pt 1:4), they are nourished at the table of the Word of God and of the Sacraments, and they express themselves in that evangelical way of thinking and acting which opens them up to a life of holiness on earth and of eternal happiness in heaven (cf. Eph 1:4-5).

Christian parents, demonstrating a loving care for their children from their earliest years, communicate to them, by word and example, a sincere and lived-out relationship with God, made up of love, fidelity, prayer and obedience (cf. *Lumen gentium*, n. 35; *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n. 11). In this way, parents encourage the holiness of their children and render their hearts docile to the voice of the Good Shepherd, who calls every man to follow him and to seek first the kingdom of God.

In the light of this horizon of divine grace and human responsibility, the family can be considered a “garden” or a “first seminary” in which the seeds of vocation, which God sows generously, are able to blossom and grow to full maturity (cf. *Optatam totius*, n. 2).¹

“The Church has an immense need of priests. This is one of the most serious urgencies that challenge Christian communities. Jesus does not want a Church without priests. If priests are lacking, Jesus is lacking in the world, his Eucharist is lacking, his forgiveness is lacking. For her own mission, the Church also has an immense need of abundance from other consecrated vocations. The Christian people cannot accept with passivity and indifference the decline of vocations. Vocations are the future of the Church. A community poor in vocations impoverishes the whole Church; on the contrary, a community rich in vocations is a treasure for the whole Church.”²

Prayer:

Eternal God, who in your divine providence have given us Saint John Paul II as example and guide, grant that we may be grateful for this gift by being faithful to his magisterium, by living his teachings and by entrusting our prayers to his intercession.

May he, who in union with the bishops of the whole world consecrated the Church and the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, obtain for us the grace to be faithful to this kind Mother. And may we repeat each day as he taught us:

“Virgin Mother of my God, make me all yours!
Yours in life, yours in death;
yours in suffering, yours in fears and in misery;
yours on the cross and in painful discouragement;
yours in time and in eternity.
Virgin Mother of my God, make me all yours!”
Totus tuus Maria.
Amen.

¹ SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Message for the XXXI World day of Prayer for Vocations* (12/26/1993).
http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/vocations/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_26121993_world-day-for-vocations.html

² SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Message for the XXIII World day of Prayer for vocations* (01/06/1986).

Request the particular grace desired through this novena.

Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be. Then pray the litany.

LITANY IN HONOR OF ST. JOHN PAUL II

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

*Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy*

Christ, hear us
Christ, graciously hear us

*Christ, hear us
Christ, graciously hear us*

God the Father of Heaven
God the Son, Redeemer of the World
God the Holy Spirit
Holy Trinity, One God

*Have mercy on us
Have mercy on us
Have mercy on us
Have mercy on us*

Man of Millennial Events
Gladiator of the Gospel of Jesus Christ
Exemplary Patriot
Perennial Alleluia
Poet and Singer
Metaphysician and Warrior
Homeric Laborer

*Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us*

Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world

Spare us, O Lord

Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world

Graciously hear us, O Lord

Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world

Have mercy on us

