



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

April 21, 2024

Dear Friends in Christ,

World Day of Prayer for Vocations is today, April 21, and is liturgically known as Good Shepherd Sunday. The purpose of this day is to publicly fulfill the Lord's instruction to "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest" (Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2).


Every vocation that comes from God is a blessing and a pathway toward holiness and fruitfulness on behalf of His kingdom. While appreciating all vocations, the Church concentrates its attention on this day to vocations to ordained ministries (priesthood and diaconate), consecrated life in all its forms (male and female religious life, societies of apostolic life, consecrated virginity, secular institutes), and to the missionary life.

We are beginning a prayer initiative in the Diocese of Grand Rapids to encourage discernment to the vocations of the priesthood, diaconate, and religious life. In particular, our diocese is in desperate need of more priests. The number of priests retiring in the future is higher than the number of projected priestly ordinations. There will be one priestly ordination this year. In 2025, there will be none.

I am asking each pastor to lead his congregation in reciting the Prayer for Vocations at the end of every Mass. I am also asking each of you to find additional times when you can recite the prayer in support of vocations in our diocese. We need the Holy Spirit to move our young people to humbly place himself or herself before God and to have the confidence to follow wherever He may lead them.

On this Good Shepherd Sunday, as we commence this campaign of prayer, join me in thanking the Lord for the clergy who serve you. The Eucharist is the foretaste of Heaven, and we can only have the Eucharist when we have priests.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids