



# Kaya Idalangin

Prayer Leaflet for Vocations

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55<sup>TH</sup> WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS:

## LISTENING, DISCERNING, & LIVING THE CALL OF THE *Lord*

**E**ven amid these troubled times, the mystery of the Incarnation reminds us that God continually comes to encounter us. He is God-with-us, who walks along the often dusty paths of our lives. He knows our anxious longing for love and he calls us to joy. In the diversity and the uniqueness of each and every vocation, personal and ecclesial, there is a need to listen, discern and live this word that calls to us from on high and, while enabling us to develop our talents, makes us instruments of salvation in the world and guides us to full happiness.

These three aspects – **listening, discerning and living** – were also present at beginning of Jesus' own mission, when, after his time of prayer and struggle in the desert, he visited his synagogue of Nazareth. There, he listened to the word, discerned the content of the mission entrusted to him by the Father, and proclaimed that he came to accomplish it "today" (Lk 4:16-21)...

*(an excerpt from the message of Pope Francis on the 55th World Day of Prayer for Vocations)*





## 1<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF TRIDUUM:

# Listening

**Introduction:** In the first day of our Triduum to the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we reflect on the first aspect of Pope Francis' message on the celebration, that is, "Listening the Call of the Lord." The Pope encourages us to "learn how to listen carefully to Jesus' word and the story of his life, but also to be attentive to the details of our own daily lives, in order to learn how to view things with the eyes of faith, and to keep ourselves open to the surprises of the Spirit." Let us pray in this Holy Hour that all of us, especially young men and women, may continue to rediscover the beauty of listening to God's Word in our daily lives. May there be more God's agents who continue to encourage the faithful to keep on listening to the Word of God and being attentive to the signs of the times.

**Opening Eucharistic Hymn: BLESS THE LORD, MY SOUL**

### Eucharistic Greetings:

**Celebrant:** Lord Jesus Christ, present in the most Blessed Sacrament, we thank you for the gift of faith, which your Father willed for us to receive. By your death and resurrection, you gave a new meaning to the faith we have received. May we continue to listen to your Word, so that the faith we have received may always be alive in praising and witnessing to you. Praise and thanks every moment...

**All:** To the most holy and most divine Sacrament.

**Celebrant:** Glory to the Father... **All:** As it was in the beginning...

**Celebrant:** Send, O Lord... **All:** Holy Apostles into Your Church!

**Spiritual Communion:** O my Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come to me spiritually. I welcome you and unite myself entirely with you. Do not permit me ever to be separated from you. Jesus, I believe in you, I hope in you, and I love you.

### Personal Adoration; Moments of Prayerful Silence

**Readings:** **First Reading** - Romans 10:1-17

**Gospel Reading** - Matthew 9:35-38

**Reading on the Excerpt of the Pope's Message on the 55<sup>th</sup> World Day of Prayer for Vocations:**  
(Read excerpt on the section "LISTENING" from the Pope's message - PAGE 7)

**Reflection Song: PAGKAKAIBIGAN**

### Community Prayer: *Prayer for Vocations by Pope Francis*

Father of mercy, who gave your Son for our salvation and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit, grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous, which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelization. Sustain these communities in their commitment to offer appropriate vocational catechesis and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration. Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment, so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth. May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus, intercede for each Christian community, so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit, it may be a source of true vocations for the service of the holy People of God. Amen.

### Benediction and Divine Praises for Vocations

Blessed be God, Author of Vocations.  
Blessed be the Name of the Lord of the Harvest.  
Blessed be Jesus Christ the Compassionate Lord.  
Blessed be his Most Sacred Heart, the Merciful.  
Blessed be His Most Precious Blood, who washed our sins.  
Blessed be Jesus in the Eucharist, our spiritual food.  
Blessed be the Holy Spirit, Light of all those who are called.

Blessed be her Immaculate Conception, the Model of all Priests.  
Blessed be the Great Mother of God, Mary Mother of Vocations.  
Blessed be the Name of Mary, Virgin, Mother of all Missionaries.  
Blessed be her glorious Assumption,  
intercessor upon all the Candidates to the Consecrated life.  
Blessed be St. Joseph, Protector of the Universal Church.  
Blessed be God, in His Holy Apostles and Saints of the Church.

### Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament / Recessional

**Concluding Hymn: STAY WITH ME**



## 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF TRIDUUM:

# Discerning

**Introduction:** In our second day of Triduum to the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we reflect on the second aspect of Pope Francis' message on the celebration, that is, "Discerning the Call of the Lord." Here, the Pope emphasizes that "each of us can discover his or her own vocation only through spiritual discernment. This is a process by which a person makes fundamental choices, in dialogue with the Lord and listening to the voice of the Spirit, starting with the choice of one's state in life." Let us pray that we may always seek to discern the promptings of the Spirit, leading us to a life that the Lord has prepared for us. May there be more Gospel workers, moved by the Spirit, who enkindle in the hearts of the young the sense of spiritual discernment, prophecy, and resistance to ideology and negativity.

**Opening Eucharistic Hymn:** TINAPAY NG BUHAY

### Eucharistic Greetings:

**Celebrant:** Lord Jesus, present in the most Blessed Sacrament, thank you for giving us the Spirit, which you poured out also to your disciples. As you triumphed over sin and death, you wished that all of us be guided by the Spirit of life, reminding us of our need to live and proclaim the Gospel, just as you have commanded and commissioned your disciples. May we, too, be open to the Spirit, who leads us to the will of the Father. Praise and thanks every moment...

**All:** To the most holy and most divine Sacrament.

**Celebrant:** Glory to the Father... **All:** As it was in the beginning...

**Celebrant:** Send, O Lord... **All:** Holy Apostles into Your Church!

**Spiritual Communion:** O my Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come to me spiritually. I welcome you and unite myself entirely with you. Do not permit me ever to be separated from you. Jesus, I believe in you, I hope in you, and I love you.

### Personal Adoration; Moments of Prayerful Silence

**Readings:** **First Reading** - 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

**Gospel Reading** - Luke 10:1-12

### Reading on the Excerpt of the Pope's Message on the 55<sup>th</sup> World Day of Prayer for Vocations:

*(Read excerpt on the section "DISCERNING" from the Pope's message - PAGE 7)*

### Reflection Song: PANALANGIN SA PAGIGING BUKAS PALAD

#### Community Prayer: *Prayer for Vocations by Pope Francis*

Father of mercy, who gave your Son for our salvation and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit, grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous, which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelization. Sustain these communities in their commitment to offer appropriate vocational catechesis and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration. Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment, so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth. May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus, intercede for each Christian community, so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit, it may be a source of true vocations for the service of the holy People of God. Amen.

#### Benediction and Divine Praises for Vocations

Blessed be God, Author of Vocations.  
Blessed be the Name of the Lord of the Harvest.  
Blessed be Jesus Christ the Compassionate Lord.  
Blessed be his Most Sacred Heart, the Merciful.  
Blessed be His Most Precious Blood, who washed our sins.  
Blessed be Jesus in the Eucharist, our spiritual food.  
Blessed be the Holy Spirit, Light of all those who are called.

Blessed be her Immaculate Conception, the Model of all Priests.  
Blessed be the Great Mother of God, Mary Mother of Vocations.  
Blessed be the Name of Mary, Virgin, Mother of all Missionaries.  
Blessed be her glorious Assumption,  
intercessor upon all the Candidates to the Consecrated life.  
Blessed be St. Joseph, Protector of the Universal Church.  
Blessed be God, in His Holy Apostles and Saints of the Church.

#### Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament / Recessional

**Concluding Hymn:** ANIMA CHRISTI



### 3<sup>RD</sup> DAY OF TRIDUUM:

# Living

**Introduction:** In the final day of our Triduum to the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, now we reflect on the third aspect of Pope Francis' message on the celebration, that is, "Living the Call of the Lord." The Pope enlivens each of us as he said, "Vocation is today! The Christian mission is now! Each one of us is called – whether to the lay life in marriage, to the priestly life in the ordained ministry, or to a life of special consecration – in order to become a witness of the Lord, here and now." Let us pray in this Holy Hour that every one of us may learn to live the call that the Lord has entrusted. May each young person learn how to treasure God's gift by sharing the call with others through service, especially to the poor and the needy, and encouraging others to follow God's call.

**Opening Eucharistic Hymn: ADORAMUS TE DOMINE**

#### Eucharistic Greetings:

**Celebrant:** Risen Lord Jesus, abiding in the Most Blessed Sacrament, you taught us to love the call which your Father willed for us to receive. You taught us to treasure the Father's call by being faithful to the love that he has first shown us through your ultimate laying down of your life, even unto the Cross! Help us always to overcome the temptations that hinder our fidelity to the calling of the Father. Inspire us always to lay down our lives for the sake of the Gospel. When our weakness seems to overcome us, be there for us to strengthen us. Praise and thanks every moment...

**All:** To the most holy and most divine Sacrament.

**Celebrant:** Glory to the Father... **All:** As it was in the beginning...

**Celebrant:** Send, O Lord... **All:** Holy Apostles into Your Church!

**Spiritual Communion:** O my Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come to me spiritually. I welcome you and unite myself entirely with you. Do not permit me ever to be separated from you. Jesus, I believe in you, I hope in you, and I love you.

#### Personal Adoration; Moments of Prayerful Silence

**Readings:**

**First Reading** - 2 Timothy 1:6-10

**Gospel Reading** - John 4:34-38

#### Reading on the Excerpt of the Pope's Message on the 55<sup>th</sup> World Day of Prayer for Vocations:

*(Read excerpt on the section "LIVING" from the Pope's message - PAGE 8)*

#### Reflection Song: TANGING YAMAN

#### Community Prayer: *Prayer for Vocations by Pope Francis*

Father of mercy, who gave your Son for our salvation and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit, grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous, which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelization. Sustain these communities in their commitment to offer appropriate vocational catechesis and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration. Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment, so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth. May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus, intercede for each Christian community, so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit, it may be a source of true vocations for the service of the holy People of God. Amen.

#### Benediction and Divine Praises for Vocations

Blessed be God, Author of Vocations.  
 Blessed be the Name of the Lord of the Harvest.  
 Blessed be Jesus Christ the Compassionate Lord.  
 Blessed be his Most Sacred Heart, the Merciful.  
 Blessed be His Most Precious Blood, who washed our sins.  
 Blessed be Jesus in the Eucharist, our spiritual food.  
 Blessed be the Holy Spirit, Light of all those who are called.

Blessed be her Immaculate Conception, the Model of all Priests.  
 Blessed be the Great Mother of God, Mary Mother of Vocations.  
 Blessed be the Name of Mary, Virgin, Mother of all Missionaries.  
 Blessed be her glorious Assumption,  
 intercessor upon all the Candidates to the Consecrated life.  
 Blessed be St. Joseph, Protector of the Universal Church.  
 Blessed be God, in His Holy Apostles and Saints of the Church.

#### Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament / Recessional

**Concluding Hymn: PANANAGUTAN**





**Introduction:** As we culminate the celebration of the 55th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we are still called to reflect on the theme, which guided us in contemplating Christ himself who said his generous “yes” to the mission that the Father has entrusted him. For us, the call of the Lord comes to each of us in ever-greater urgency to share the mystery of Christ’s love in the world. To listen, discern, and live the call of the Lord is already in itself a contribution to be like Christ who was focused in doing the will of the Father. Doing the will of the Father is a sure path to holiness. Countless saints have been witnesses on how listening, discerning, and living God’s call can lead each one to be truly holy and happy. And still a great number of people can attest to the power of the mystery of vocation in the salvific plan of God, that still continues to this day. Let us pray that we, too, may be receptive to listen, discern, and live the call of the Lord. May our desire for holiness never waver and wane, amidst so much confusion and disarray that we experience. Let us allow God’s mercy to transform us according to His design and plan so that our response may become a living and concrete sign of God’s love today.

**Eucharistic Hymn and Exposition:** One Bread, One Body

**Eucharistic Greetings:**

**Celebrant:** Eucharistic Jesus, ever-abiding in the most precious, most Blessed Sacrament, greatest gift of the Father, you yourself knew what it means to listen, discern, and live the call of your Father when you began your ministry. Help us and teach us to be like you, docile and obedient to the Lord’s call. O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine...

**All:** All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine...

**Celebrant:** Glory to the Father...

**All:** As it was in the beginning...

**Celebrant:** Send, O Lord...

**All:** Holy Apostles into Your Church!

**Spiritual Communion:** (refer to the past days of the Triduum)

**Moments of Personal Adoration / Silent Prayer**

**From the Writings of St. Hannibal Mary di Francia:**

It is God who raises his ministers, who sends out holy vocations from heaven, but he wants us to pray. The *Rogate* (prayer for good laborers) is a command. The most holy Heart of Jesus burns with the desire of granting such a mercy, and hopes that the peoples (and all the priests) leave out the negligence of this command by imploring holy vocations. While seeing the ruin of many generations of souls redeemed by his very precious blood, Jesus cries out: “Pray, therefore!” Plenty of souls would be saved, and many of them would achieve sanctification if the mystical workers catechized, edified, and instructed them in the faith and religion. The Church and the peoples could achieve copious goods from the faithful obedience to, and from the universal propagation of this evangelical rogation. That word keeps the secret of the salvation of souls and the curability of the nations. God made the nations curable, but no remedy is so effective as plenty of evangelical workers, who

are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. This is a radical cure: therefore, let us adhere to this holy radicalism, to pray for holy vocations, if we want a sure social rebirth! With regard to the Church, society, and the world, the *Rogate* is the means which achieves all goods and the salvation in time and eternity. This word of Jesus Christ is a command of the zeal of his divine heart; word and command of a supreme importance, sure remedy for the salvation of the Church and society. The *Rogate* contains the secret of all good works and the salvation of all souls.

**Gospel Reading, Homily:** *Luke 4:14-21*

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all. He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.” Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, “Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

**Sharing of Personal Testimony, then Reflection Song**

**Prayer for the Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons:**

O God Most Loving Father, with your priests and those who consecrated their lives to you, may we be fully and ever united to Christ. May they be our constant guides in this oneness with you through prayer, the Eucharist and personal conversion. We have sinned and we have failed in so many ways. There are many brothers and sisters in our midst who continue to suffer. They hunger for truth and justice, for charity and solidarity. We pray that we may become bearers of the Gospel that transforms lives as we reach out to our suffering brethren. We pray that the Gospel may urge us to action, to witness to charity and compassionate service. Together may we all be renewed and learn how to be Servant-Leaders for the Gospel of Christ. Like him who rose from the table to wash the disciples’ feet, may we too rise up to the challenge to take care of the poor and the weak, to be always approachable rather than untouchable, and “to imbibe the odor of the sheep.” May our young people who are discerning the gentle call of the Lord to serve, be filled with courage and determination to follow you in service with humility and love. With Mary, Star of the New Evangelization, may we continue to be instruments of the Gospel in our country and in the world. Amen.

**Tantum Ergo / Benediction / Divine Praises for Vocations:**  
(refer to the past days of the Triduum)

**Concluding Hymn:**

O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine

# Missalette *for the* 55<sup>th</sup> World Day of Prayer For Vocations

## Introduction:

Listening, discerning, and living the call of the Lord are the three key aspects of Pope Francis' message for the 55<sup>th</sup> World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Jesus, first of all, lived these key aspects as he began his ministry to the people. The Pope emphasized that Jesus "listened to the word, discerned the content of the mission entrusted to him by the Father, and proclaimed that he came to accomplish it 'today.'" Throughout the message, the Pope seems to rally the faithful that while we are in contemplation of Jesus' life, we take a conscious effort to let ourselves be a concrete sign of His presence when we choose to listen, discern, and live the call of the Lord. In this Holy Mass, let us ask Jesus to let our lives conform to his life and ministry, so that we, too, may learn to listen, discern, and live the call, as the Father expects from us. Let us also pray that there may be more generous men and women who will not withhold their "Yes" to the Lord, who calls them to share His love to the world.

**Entrance Hymn:** Great is our God / Bayan Umawit

Greetings / Penitential Rite / Glory to God

## Collect:

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER** (*only required Collect*)

Almighty ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**FOR VOCATIONS TO HOLY ORDERS** (*for weekdays*)

O God, who willed to provide shepherds for your people, pour out in your Church a spirit of piety and fortitude, to raise up worthy ministers for your altars and make them ardent yet gentle heralds of your Gospel. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**FOR EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES** (*for weekdays*)

O God, whose will it is that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, look upon your harvest and be pleased to send workers to gather it, that the Gospel may be preached to all creation and that your people, gathered by the word of life and sustained by the power of the Sacraments, may advance in the path of salvation and love. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

**First Reading:** Acts 4:8-12

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29

**R. The stone rejected by the builders  
has become the cornerstone.**

**Second Reading:** 1 John 3:1-2

**Gospel Acclamation:** John 10:14

**Gospel Reading:** John. 10:11-18

Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works

for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep\* that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again.\* This command I have received from my Father.  
*The Gospel of the Lord.*

Homily of the Celebrant, followed by Creed

## Prayers of the Faithful:

(*in addition to the prepared prayers by the community*)

**For young men and women;** That God may give them the gift of listening, discerning, and living His call, as well as the gift of docility and courage to follow His call. We pray to the Lord. . . .

(*or...*)

**For young people;** That they may generously respond with their "Yes" to God's call for them to share His love with His people. Let us pray to the Lord. . . .

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

### Prayer over the Offering:

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that we may always find delight in these paschal mysteries, so that the renewal constantly at work within us may be the cause of our unending joy. Through Christ our Lord.

**Preface: PREFACE IV OF EASTER**

*Eucharistic Prayer, then Communion Rite, follow as usual...*

**Communion Hymn:** Panalangin sa Pagiging Bukas-Palad

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look upon your flock, kind Shepherd, and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures the sheep you have redeemed by the Precious Blood of your Son. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

## PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

 (*after Post-Communion Prayer*)

Lord Jesus, You told your disciples: "Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, to send laborers to His harvest"

We beg You! Send many and holy priests and religious in our Diocese, and in the whole world. Have mercy on us!

Grant O Lord, the grace of perseverance and fidelity to those whom you have called. We trust in you!

Mary Mother of Vocations, pray for us.  
St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, pray for us.  
St. John Mary Vianney, pray for us.

Send, O Lord, Holy Apostles into Your Church!

*The Mass is concluded, as usual...*

# Message of Pope Francis for the 55<sup>TH</sup> WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

next October, the Fifteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will meet to discuss the theme of young people and in particular the relationship between young people, faith and vocation. There we will have a chance to consider more deeply how, at the centre of our life, is the call to joy that God addresses to us and how this is "God's plan for men and women in every age" (*SYNOD OF BISHOPS, XV ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY, Young People, The Faith and Vocational Discernment, Introduction*).

The Fifty-fifth World Day of Prayer for Vocations once again proclaims this good news to us, and in a decisive manner. We are not victims of chance or swept up in a series of unconnected events; on the contrary, our life and our presence in this world are the fruit of a divine vocation!

Even amid these troubled times, the mystery of the Incarnation reminds us that God continually comes to encounter us. He is God-with-us, who walks along the often dusty paths of our lives. He knows our anxious longing for love and he calls us to joy. In the diversity and the uniqueness of each and every vocation, personal and ecclesial, there is a need to listen, discern and live this word that calls to us from on high and, while enabling us to develop our talents, makes us instruments of salvation in the world and guides us to full happiness.

These three aspects – listening, discerning and living – were also present at beginning of Jesus' own mission, when, after his time of prayer and struggle in the desert, he visited his synagogue of Nazareth. There, he listened to the word, discerned the content of the mission entrusted to him by the Father, and proclaimed that he came to accomplish it "today" (Lk 4:16-21).

## LISTENING

The Lord's call – let it be said at the outset – is not as clear-cut as any of those things we can hear, see or touch in our daily experience. God comes silently and discreetly, without imposing on our freedom. Thus it can happen that his voice is drowned out by the many worries and concerns that fill our minds and hearts.

We need, then, to learn how to listen carefully to his word and the story of his life, but also to be attentive to the details of our own daily lives, in order to learn how to view things with the eyes of faith, and to keep ourselves open to the surprises of the Spirit.

We will never discover the special, personal calling that God has in mind for us if we remain enclosed in ourselves, in our usual way of doing things, in the apathy of those who fritter away their lives in their own little world. We would lose the chance to dream big and to play our part in the unique and original story that God

wants to write with us.

Jesus too, was called and sent. That is why he needed to recollect himself in silence. He listened to and read the word in the synagogue, and with the light and strength of the Holy Spirit he revealed its full meaning, with reference to his own person and the history of the people of Israel.

Nowadays listening is becoming more and more difficult, immersed as we are in a society full of noise, overstimulated and bombarded by information. The outer noise that sometimes prevails in our cities and our neighbourhoods is often accompanied by our interior dispersion and confusion. This prevents us from pausing and enjoying the taste of contemplation, reflecting serenely on the events of our lives, going about our work with confidence in God's loving plan, and making a fruitful discernment.

Yet, as we know, the kingdom of God comes quietly and unobtrusively (cf. Lk 17:21), and we can only gather its seeds when, like the prophet Elijah, we enter into the depths of our soul and are open to the imperceptible whisper of the divine breeze (cf. 1 Kg 19:11-13).

## DISCERNING

When Jesus, in the synagogue of Nazareth, reads the passage of the prophet Isaiah, he discerns the content of the mission for which he was sent, and presents it to those who awaited the Messiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Lk 4:18-19).

In the same way, each of us can discover his or her own vocation only through spiritual discernment. This is "a process by which a person makes fundamental choices, in dialogue with the Lord and listening to the voice of the Spirit, starting with the choice of one's state in life" (*SYNOD OF BISHOPS, XV ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY, Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment, II, 2*).

Thus we come to discover that Christian vocation always has a prophetic dimension. The Scriptures tell us that the prophets were sent to the people in situations of great material insecurity and of spiritual and moral crisis, in order to address in God's name a message of conversion, hope and consolation. Like a whirlwind, the prophet unsettles the false tranquility of consciences that have forgotten the word of the Lord. He discerns events in the light of God's promise and enables people to glimpse the signs of dawn amid the dark shadows of history.

Today too, we have great need of discernment and of prophecy. We have to resist the temptations of ideology and negativity, and to discover, in our relationship with

*(continued on next page)*

the Lord, the places, the means and situations through which he calls us. Every Christian ought to grow in the ability to "read within" his or her life, and to understand where and to what he or she is being called by the Lord, in order to carry on his mission.

## LIVING

Lastly, Jesus announces the newness of the present hour, which will enthuse many and harden the heart of others. The fullness of time has come, and he is the Messiah proclaimed by Isaiah and anointed to liberate prisoners, to restore sight to the blind and to proclaim the merciful love of God to every creature. Indeed, Jesus says that "today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4:21).

The joy of the Gospel, which makes us open to encountering God and our brothers and sisters, does not abide our slowness and our sloth. It will not fill our hearts if we keep standing by the window with the excuse of waiting for the right time, without accepting this very day the risk of making a decision. Vocation is today! The Christian mission is now! Each one of us is called – whether to the lay life in marriage, to the priestly life in the ordained ministry, or to a life of special consecration – in order to become a witness of the Lord, here and now

This "today" that Jesus proclaimed assures us that God continues to "come down" to save our human family and to make us sharers in his mission. The Lord continues to call others to live with him and to follow him in a relationship of particular closeness. He continues to call others to serve him directly. If he lets us realize that he is calling us to consecrate ourselves totally to his kingdom, then we should have no fear! It is beautiful – and a great grace – to be completely and forever consecrated to God and the service of our brothers and sisters.

Today the Lord continues to call others to follow him. We should not wait to be perfect in order to respond with our generous "yes", nor be fearful of our limitations and sins, but instead open our hearts to the voice of the Lord. To listen to that voice, to discern our personal mission in the Church and the world, and at last to live it in the today that God gives us.

May Mary Most Holy, who as a young woman living in obscurity heard, accepted and experienced the Word of God made flesh, protect us and accompany us always on our journey.

*From the Vatican, 3 December 2017  
First Sunday of Advent*

FRANCIS



## POINTS FOR MEDITATION ON THE POPE'S MESSAGE

- 1.** What are the three key aspects the Pope emphasized in his message? How do these three aspects affect my present situation and/or ministry? How do these aspects improve my relationship with Jesus?
- 2.** In my present situation, what are the possible "noises" that may hinder me or put obstacle in listening to God's call? What may be the personal "noises" I have that make me slow down in answering God's call? What are some of my efforts in improving my capability to "listen" to God's call?
- 3.** In "discerning", do I take an active role in creating a sense of "prophecy", or witnessing to the truth, amidst the possible oppositions, ridicule, and persecutions I may face? Do I promote well the Good News which I have been commissioned to, like the disciples of Jesus?
- 4.** In "living" the call of the Lord, what are some of the challenges that a Christian can face when it comes to fidelity to one's call? As I recall my personal history, what were some of the fears I inhibited that made it difficult for me to witness to the love, as Jesus expected me to be?
- 5.** Did I ever challenge myself whether the kind of life I have now really conforms to what God wants for me? Am I really happy with the state of life I am in? Did I take time to sit down, embrace silence, and allow God to speak to my heart, rather than content myself with the "noises" around me? Am I consistent in receiving the sacraments, as they are important in my listening, discerning, and living the call of the Lord? Did I allow God to make me truly happy?

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