

Vocations Prayer Newsletter September 2024

St Matthew – Feast Day 21st September The Mystery and Power of Vocation

The call of Matthew is one of the great and memorable scenes in the New Testament.

At its heart is the mystery of vocation and discipleship. The call of Christ comes to Matthew unexpected and compels him to a decision that will not only change what he does with his life, but who he is as a person. The summons Matthew receives was not something he could have predicted and the outcome of his decision to follow Christ was not something that he would be able to control.



This is all about the mystery and power of vocation. Vocation is not just about getting a job or choosing a career. Instead, it is about God's will and purpose for our lives. As such, vocation exposes us to the vulnerability of genuine faith.

Further, vocation is not simply about what one "does" with one's life; it is about what God's will is for a person. This is an important distinction for us, as our culture assumes that a person's identity is almost exclusively defined by what someone does or is doing rather than who they are.

It is the divine will that reveals who a person is to the depth of their being, which is why to miss one's vocation is no small thing. It means that one misses their purpose, and that despite all kinds of accomplishments, one will remain unfulfilled. This is also a great cultural challenge, because the prevailing understanding of a fulfilled life in our times is based not so much on the fulfilment of God's purpose for our lives but on our own decisions and the need to have "experiences."

Therefore, what Christ reveals as vocation - priesthood, marriage, religious life - these are not career options. They are illuminations of the purpose and meaning of our lives. We are chosen for these things, and like St. Matthew, we become who we are meant to be in our response to this divine call.

One of the tragedies of our time is the crisis of vocations. Often this is looked upon as some kind of staffing problem for our churches - we won't get the level of service that we have grown accustomed to. That's not the crisis at all. The crisis is that many people, summoned by God to serve him in priesthood, in marriage, in religious life, lack the spiritual means to discern that call or cannot see the gravity of what happens when a divine call is refused or opposed. To refuse one's vocation is to lose the purpose of one's life! That is the challenge of our time.

Let us pray especially on the Feast of St. Matthew, that all the apostles will intercede for us and bring us to a deeper appreciation of the urgency of our vocation.

Adapted from an article by Fr Steve Grunow, reproduced with permission from Word on Fire

Autumn 'First Friday Seeker Evenings'
7 – 9 pm, Sacred Heart Church,
Fareham. PO16 ONQ

We will be gathering on Friday 6th September,
Friday 4th October, Friday 6th December.

Our regular Seeker and discernment evening is for all those who are pondering their path in life and seeking the will of the Lord. The evening follows a very simple pattern of a meal, a discussion and adoration.

Pope Francis recently reflected on the significance of discernment, "Discernment is part of life, whether at momentous times involving major decisions or in our daily decisions about small, routine matters," said Pope Francis.



"Discernment is demanding and requires listening to the Lord, to oneself, and to others. It is a process that calls for 'prayer, reflection, patient expectation, and, ultimately, courage and sacrifice'." The Pope also highlighted the joy that comes from making good decisions, stressing that "making a good decision, a right decision, brings us much joy."

He urged that we especially help young people understand that "being free means risking to embark on a particular path, with wisdom and prudence of course, but also with boldness and a spirit of renunciation, in order to grow and advance in self-giving, and thus to find happiness in loving others in accordance with God's plan."

If you would like to register, or have more information, contact vocations@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk



Visits out and about

Last month, the team visited the Parish of Hedge End, West End and Bitterne - thank you to Fr Elijah and the parishioners for their warm welcome.

Our October visit will be with the Parish of Our Lady and St Dominic, Farnborough.

**Invocation - at Adoremus. Last Chance
to join us at St Mary's College, Oscott,
Birmingham
Sunday 15th September 10am-5.30pm**

The Bishops Conference are hosting a national youth and discernment event called 'Invocation at Adoremus'.



This day presents an opportunity for youth and discerners to gather with seminarians and meet others from right across the country. During the time together, there will be a celebration of Mass, time to hear from keynote speakers, a choice of workshops and the opportunity to spend time in Adoration and go to Confession. Please get in touch if you would like to be considered as a delegate to attend this free event. (We will try to co-ordinate transport) vocations@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Return to Seminary

Please remember in your prayers our Seminarians who will be returning to their respective seminaries and/or placements for the next year of Formation. We have eleven men in formation at this time. We ask that you hold the Rectors, and all the staff and clergy entrusted with the formation of our future priests, in your prayers.

“Lord Jesus Christ, we pray for these men whom You have called to discern priesthood. We beg Your continued blessings on our Diocese and families. Call forth even more men, of generous spirit and fervent love, whom You desire for this holy work. Amen”

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR PORTSMOUTH SEMINARIANS
2024/2025

Rev. Ryan Browne
St John's Cathedral, Portsmouth

Sean Barnes
Pontifical Beda College, Rome

Owen Dugan
St Mary's, Oscott

Francis Ezeani
Allen Hall, London

Jack Ryan
Venerable English College, Rome

Nathan King
Allen Hall, London

John Aburn
Sacred Heart House, Fareham

Rev. Diego Hoyos
St Mary's, Oscott

Ryan Hawkes
St Joseph & St Edmund Parish, Southampton

Farvin Gonsalves
Allen Hall, London

Adam Trzebiński
Allen Hall, London

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www.portsmouthvocations.org

Diocesan Vocation Contacts



Diocesan Vocation Promoter
Fr John Cooke
Contact Fr John with enquiries regards all aspects of vocations, discernment and support of the promotion of our universal call to holiness.
vocations@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk
01329 318 869



Diocesan Vocation Director
Fr Chris Heaps
Contact our new Vocation Director, Fr Chris, if you are discerning the Diocesan Priesthood for advice and accompaniment.
cheaps@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk
0118 957 4171

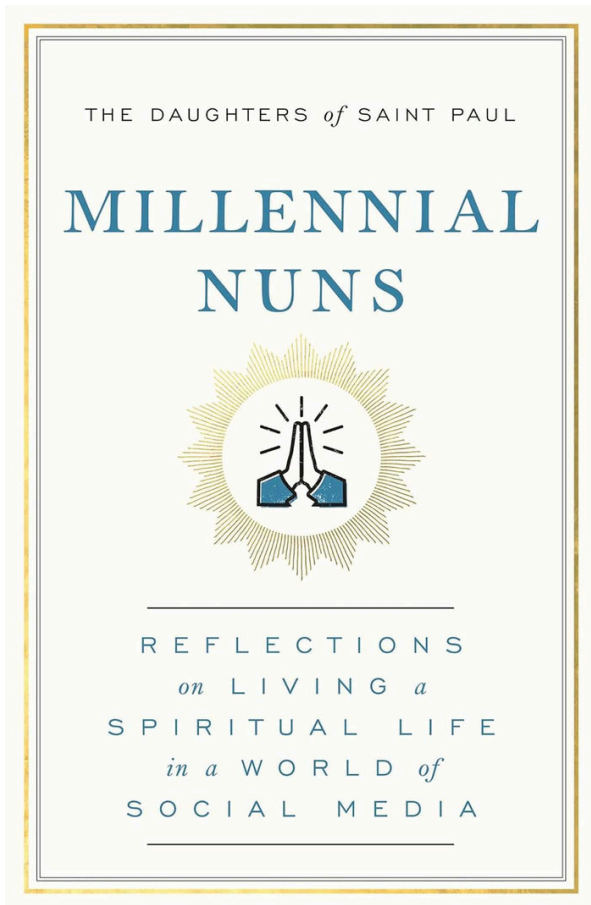
The Gift of Vocation

This is a beautiful article articulating the call to the priesthood for Fr Chris Gault. He is now serving as a Dominican Priest, and is from the same Diocese as Sr Coeey (who is part of our Dominican community in the New Forest).

I could do so much more for this man now if I were a priest, says Fr Chris Gault OP

“It’s just who I am.” So came the simple response with which I was met on an evening around 10 years ago, sitting in the living room of my student house with my friend and housemate – now himself also a priest – after exasperatedly imploring him to tell me how he had decided to enter the seminary. The ‘problem’ of vocation had been one I had wrestled with for several years at that point. I was in the final stages of my studies to become a doctor (as was that same friend), but all throughout my time at university, and even before it, the thoughts of a priestly vocation had never left me. When this friend mentioned quite matter-of-factly that he would be pursuing a priestly vocation, I was dumbfounded and indignant. How had it been so apparently easy for him? How had he made up his mind?”

Click here to continue reading the rest of this article [The gift of Vocation - The Irish Catholic](#) shared with the permission of The Irish Catholic www.irishcatholic.com.



Book Recommendation

In this collective memoir, eight of these Sisters share their own discernment journeys, struggles and crises of faith that they've overcome, and episodes from their daily lives.

Through these reflections, the Sisters also offer practical takeaways and tips for living a more spiritually - fulfilled life.

More and more people - especially millennials - are turning to religion as a source of comfort and solace in our increasingly chaotic world. But rather than live a cloistered life of seclusion, the Daughters of Saint Paul actively embrace social media, using platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to evangelize, collectively calling themselves the #MediaNuns.

This is a great read for anyone discerning the will of the Lord in their life.

Seminarian of the Month – Rev. Diego Hoyos

Dcn Diego writes:

“I’m a Deacon and seminarian in my last year of formation at Oscott college.

For this month’s newsletter, I’d like to share with you the story of the biggest bet of the century: two men, and a stranger who went around promising this life and the next!

It was about 9 in the morning when a stranger approached two men by the river who were putting their nets away after a whole night’s shift.



He said to them: "Follow me and I'll make you fishers of men"

Fishing was everything to the two men, it was their trade and, however arduous and even tedious, it was their only livelihood. What to do? Trust this man and effectively lose the only fortune their poverty allowed in terms of work and social status?

If this stranger can truly give what he promises, this is the one in a lifetime opportunity to have more than any other man however powerful has ever being able to have: The whole world gathered together in a net in the hands of a fisherman!!

If however the stranger is just a charlatan and they foolishly fall in his trap, they'll lose everything, and will be remembered in history as the worst gamblers the world's ever known.

They take their breath and fixing their eyes in the immense sea of God's providence, they drop their nets without second thoughts and followed him on a journey which saw entire kingdoms and empires subdued to the name of the stranger of Nazareth.

In a sense, vocation can be said to be the biggest bet of the century, because when the gain is high the stake is high. It's only by letting go of the nets that a person can grasp in their hands the infinity of the merciful gift of God. Throughout the month of September, let us pray for our men who have made "the bet of the century" in the quest for the biggest prize of all."

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