



Remembering Vocations in Your 2022 Advent Devotions. . .

Advent marks the start of our liturgical year. In this special season of preparation for our celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we are called to renew our own faith.

As we sacrifice and prepare ourselves for Christmas, we ask the Holy Spirit to apply our devotions to the birth of new vocations to the religious life to shepherd the faithful.

“The Lord’s merciful action forgives our sins and opens us to the new life which takes shape in the call to discipleship and mission. Each vocation in the Church has its origin in the compassionate gaze of Jesus.” *Francis I¹*

The Advent Wreath

The advent wreath is a circle representing the promise of eternal life to those who follow Jesus. It is made of evergreens to symbolize that God always loves us. There are four candles—one for each week of advent; they symbolize Christ, the “Light of the World.” The first, second and fourth Sundays’ candles are purple to signify penance. The candle for the third Sunday is rose colored, a reminder that the joy of Christmas is almost at hand.

The following devotions focus on each week of advent and the need for vocations to be “born” into the Church so that Christ’s life can continue through his followers.

Prayer at the start of each Devotion²

Father in heaven, you sent us your only Son to redeem us and to build your kingdom on earth. Please give us the wisdom and strength we need to follow His call. Grant to the faithful a spirit of generosity, that Church vocations may flourish. Bless our priests with holiness and courage, that they may lead your people to Christ. Help all sisters and brothers to fulfill their sacred promises and so be effective signs of your kingdom. Lord, invite more men and women to your service. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen



St. Francis Xavier

November 27, First Sunday of Advent [One purple candle]

December 3, Feast of St. Francis Xavier

With the example of St. Francis Xavier, let us examine our vocation with a true missionary spirit. “Vocations grow within the Church. In the course of formation, candidates for various vocations need to grow in their knowledge of the ecclesial community, overcoming the limited perspectives that we all have at the beginning.”

Francis I¹

December 4, Second Sunday in Advent [Two purple Candles]

December 6, Feast of St. Nicholas, Bishop, Patron of Children

December 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary [Holy Day of Obligation]



St. Nicholas

Meditation for Week Two

We must aspire to give of ourselves like the Blessed Virgin Mary and dedicate our lives to those who are helpless and less fortunate just as St. Nicholas did. “Dear brothers and sisters, we need to open our lives to this love. It is to the perfection of the Father’s love (cf. *Mt 5:48*) that Jesus Christ calls us every day!” “It is in this soil of self-offering and openness to the love of God, and as the fruit of that love, that all vocations are born and grow.” *Benedict XVI³*

¹ *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis on the Occasion of the 53rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations, November 29, 2015*

² USCCB Prayer for Vocations

³ *Message of the Holy Father for the 49th World Day of Prayer for Vocations 29 April 2012*



December 11, Third Sunday of Advent [Two purple candles and the rose candle]
December 12, Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Meditation for Week Three

It is through the intercession of Our Lady that great things are accomplished by ordinary people. We must look to her for guidance in the formation of vocations. "In responding to God's call, young people see their own ecclesial horizon expand; they are able to consider various charisms and to undertake a more objective discernment. In this way, the community becomes the home and the family where vocations are born." *Francis I*⁴



The Immaculate Conception



December 18, Fourth Sunday of Advent [All four candles]

Meditation for Week Four

We must be open and discerning in the identification of our vocation. "To all the men and women, who are willing to listen to my voice, I wish to address an invitation to seek the paths which lead to the living and true God, including the path marked out by the consecrated life. Consecrated persons bear witness to the fact that "whoever follows after Christ, the perfect man, becomes himself more of a man". How many consecrated men and women have bent down, and continue to bend down, as Good Samaritans, over the countless wounds of the brothers and sisters whom they meet on their way!" *St. John Paul II*⁴



Our Lady of Guadalupe



Nativity, Lorenzo Lotto, 1523⁶

Prayer for Vocations⁵

O God, Who wills not the death of a sinner but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech you, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, Saint Joseph, her spouse, St. Junipero Serra, and all the saints, an increase of laborers for your Church, fellow laborers with Christ to spend and consume themselves for souls through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

Amen



For information on vocations, go to:

<https://serraus.org/> or

<https://www.catholic.org/vocations/> or

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/clergy-consecrated-life-vocations/vocations>

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⁴ Apostolic Exhortation Vita Consecrata of the Holy Father John Paul II, March 25, 1996

⁵ Serran Prayer for Vocations

⁶ Nativity, Lorenzo Lotto, 1523, Oil on Wood, National Gallery, Washington DC, www.wga.hu

⁷ Pictures of Saints and Blessed Virgin: *Wikipedia, educational/non-commercial use.*