



VOCATIONS FOR ALL



Father Brown's
Corner

“HERE I AM, LORD, I COME TO DO YOUR WILL!”

The 4th Archdiocesan Synod has invited all Catholics belonging to our Archdiocese to open our ears to the Word of God, to incline our hearts to be docile to the Holy Spirit for a new springtime of faith.

Of the 360,000 who identified themselves as Catholics, some one-third are actively living their faith in daily prayer, Sunday worship together and faithfully following the commandments of God in their behaviour. Another third usually make an annual effort to attend Mass for Christmas and Easter. A final third, for whatever reason, have practically abandoned their faith but for the census they claim to belong. What is our obligation? What does our heavenly Father expect us to DO and BE?

On Ascension Day our Saviour, having completed His mission to reconcile mankind to the Father, making our own possible, gave His famous MISSION ASSIGNMENT to the Apostles and us.

“Make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them everything I have taught you and behold, I am with you till the end of time.”

Mission means, “to send”. It implies movement, not necessarily to go to another country or area, but to other people – spread the Good News: peace, not war – truth, not falsehood – forgiveness, not retaliation – gentleness, not violence – sobriety, not intoxication – married love, not commercial sex – respect, not contempt – to be truly happy, not just excited or thrilled – to have lasting joy, not passing fads.

This March, I will have spent 60 years on my pilgrimage as a priest, serving in various parishes and ministries. In that time much experience has developed in joys and sorrows, in failures and success. Our human nature is our frail and quixotic vessel allowing freedom of choice with its enduring consequences of natural laws and spiritual reality. Our promise of service to God and neighbour is often muted or diluted by a self-interest that is constantly nibbling at our higher standards and lowering our horizons. It is a struggle daily, weekly, and monthly as we grow physically and, hopefully, spiritually in our relationship to God and neighbours whom we had promised

to serve. I am with you till the end of time.

But this call or mission is not just for priests or bishops, brothers or sisters. We are all called “to serve” by Jesus who Himself came, not to be served but to serve.

Our childhood catechism gave us the purpose of our human existence, i.e. “to know, to love and serve Almighty God here on earth and to be with Him forever in heaven.”

Vocation comes from the Latin “vox” meaning voice and signifies the actual choice or call God has for our life of service according to our gift of nature and grace.

Most people are called to the married vocation. The world population is almost 50-50 males and females and in all known civilizations anthropologists have found the basic monogamous bond of marriage exists which honours fidelity, includes cooperation procreation and training of children, as well as honouring their elders. Mankind’s male population has at times and places suffered self-destroying warfare, which caused local imbalances and some deviation towards polygamy. The Judeo-Christian teaching supports the monogamous bond and demands a strong mutual teaching role. When a couple enter marriage as a call from God, attend to His commandments and train their children by word and example, they will have a difficult but happy life.

Not all marriages are happy but the defective is often found to be a failure of at least one of the parties to try to serve the other, rather than to serve oneself.

Not all people are called to marriage. It is not easy. No vocation is promised to be easy. On earth we are at work serving. It can be joyful and more often is. So much depends on our knowledge and attitude and accepting help from God. “Husband” and “Wife” are noble titles. “Father” and “Mother” are more noble as co-creators with God of a new life.

In the last 50 years, our Western secular culture seems to have abandoned many of the standards on which our pioneers built a rich economy of income and a wealth of technological wonders to make life “easier”. However at the same time this craving for “easier” has given into a ravishing, self-indulgent, sensual and hedonist philosophy. Tobacco, alcohol and drugs

became available to the many more young well-to-do's. University lifestyle changed for many. Harvard and Yale, created by religious leaders, had hired teachers who openly flaunted rebellious, disturbing, permissive and self-indulgent behavioural changes.

Marriage itself has been the target of many "new" philosophers who see no danger to our overall community. Some women felt marriage has been unfair to them. Particularly if the husband is not a good man, he can hurt the woman and children but one should not blame marriage itself. Some say you don't need marriage to have children; but such irresponsible behaviour again is always wrong and rightfully condemned because of the consequences to society. Young people today are being deluged by the media where sex-violence "sells". Western culture, by print, radio and visual technology, drown them all day long with a hostile philosophy of life.

Single people are also called to serve after their personal cares have been satisfied, employment, health, social, etc. More time is available for the many, many needs of people around us – if we could but notice and generously respond. The youth of England during Empire years were urged to give two years as volunteer service. The Mormons have a similar two-year graduation service period. President J. F. Kennedy promoted

the Peace Corps to go to needy situations and give volunteer service. President G. W. Bush has urged the same today. Many retired executives have found joyful fulfillment and spiritual profit in sharing their knowledge and experiences. Volunteers are very valuable here at Columbus Residence in our Chapel helping us to have Daily Mass and faith comforts. Married couples, when healthy and feeling lonesome once the children have moved to their own residences, can find fulfilling volunteer activity. Every parish can help you help others, in the service of our Father.

If I were still active in a parish, I would provide a parish position for a COORDINATOR of Volunteers, to recruit, train and guide them. We need some help to NOTICE and appreciate what is needed by those around us.

Hospitals, nursing homes, young mothers, parish schools, catechetical classes, elementary and secondary, can prove to be very satisfying to ourselves and pleasing to those helped and to our Father.

What seems to be the key is "Time"? When we find ourselves with time on our hands or even wanting to do something but don't know what, look to your parish and offer your talents.



可了

愛與被愛是人的基本需要和能力，可以廣延為生命的本質，也是生命的原動力。

愛是人生之源，人生的意義。因了它，人生之旅充滿了善意、充滿了色彩、充滿了自由、充滿了活力、充滿了發展、使人得以享受人生，使人步步昇華。

有了愛，人間才有溫暖、希望、快樂、信任、安慰、寬恕、平安、和平，愛可以戰勝冷漠、消解仇恨。所以，愛是人生之旅的最佳伴侶，而帶著愛撒手塵寰更是最舒適的歸宿。

人因愛而生，為愛而活，在愛中去世，多麼美妙、美滿、美麗！

雅威是愛、天主是愛、基督是愛、造物主是愛！因為天主先愛了我，所以我也愛主、愛人；因為至高者之愛廣被眾生、萬物，所以我也愛惜眾生、萬物。

因為父母相愛，而且愛我、也愛我的兄弟姐妹，所以我愛父母、也愛我的兄弟姐妹、也愛我的配偶、也愛我的兒女。

愛不因回報而生、不因回報而行、不因回報而止，愛只是為了愛，愛就是愛，愛生愛。

被愛是無條件的接受，愛是無條件的釋放，有條件的都稱不上真愛。

愛自為因果，綿延不斷，擴散無邊；愛是無限，愛是無盡，愛是永恆。