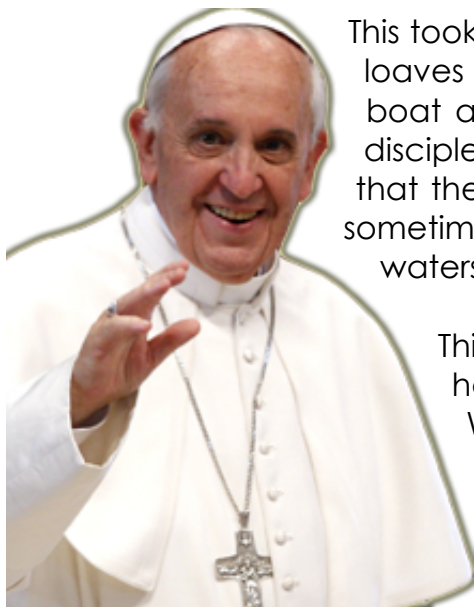


POPE FRANCIS' LETTER FOR VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2020

ADAPTED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

For Vocations Sunday this year, Pope Francis wants everyone to reflect on the Gospel passage of the stormy night on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:22-33).



This took place after Jesus had astonished the crowds by multiplying loaves and fish to feed the 5000. He told his disciples to get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other shore. The image of the disciples crossing that large lake is like our own life's journey. We trust that the boat of life is being steered on the right course. However, sometimes it drifts off course, heads in the wrong direction, or the waters can be choppy and we get fearful.

This is true of our first vocation in life – the call to follow Jesus. We have ups and downs and can be scared that we're not up to it. When being a disciple gets challenging, the Gospel tells us that Jesus is there for us: he walks on the troubled waters to join the disciples; he invites Peter to come to him on the waves, saves him when he starts to sink and, once in the boat, makes the winds die down.

Gratitude

Taking the right course is not something we do on our own. The Lord points out our destination on the opposite shore and he grants us the courage to board the boat. In calling us, he accompanies and guides us; he keeps us safe and even enables us to walk on stormy waters.

Every vocation is born of that gaze of love with which the Lord came to meet us, perhaps even at a time when our boat was being battered by the storm. We discover and embrace our vocation once we open our hearts in **gratitude** and respond to Jesus' call.

Encouragement

When the disciples see Jesus walking towards them on the sea, they first think that he is a ghost and are filled with fear. Jesus immediately gives **encouragement** with words that we can always use in our vocational journey through life: **"Take heart, it is I; have no fear"**.



Courage

When, as adults, we are called to leave safe shores and say “yes” to a state of life – like marriage, priesthood, or religious life – the first reaction is often one of fear for the future. Surely, this vocation is not for me? Can this really be the right path? Is the Lord really asking me to do this?

The Lord knows that to say “yes” to him calls for us to have **courage**. He knows the questions, doubts and difficulties that toss the boat of our heart, and so he reassures us: “Take heart, it is I; have no fear!” We know in faith that he is with us and comes to meet us, that he is always at our side, even amid stormy seas. Knowing this helps us experience the beauty of our vocation.

Fatigue

Every vocation comes with responsibility. The Lord calls us because he wants to help us, like Peter, to “walk on water” – to live his Gospel in everyday ways that he shows us.

Like Saint Peter, our desires and enthusiasm come with failings and fears. If we let ourselves be daunted by our responsibilities, we will soon turn away from the gaze of Jesus and, like Peter, we will begin to sink. Whenever **fatigue** or fear make us start to sink, Jesus holds out his hand to us. He gives us the enthusiasm we need to live our vocation with joy and energy.

Praise

When Jesus at last boards the boat, the winds die down and the waves are calmed. Here we have a beautiful image of what the Lord can do at times of turbulence in our lives. He stills the winds, so that evil and fear no longer have power over us.

Take heart, do not be afraid! Jesus is at our side, stretching out his hand to take hold and save us. Even amid the storm-tossed waters, then, our lives become open to **praise**.

Pope Francis asks us on this Vocations Sunday - and always - to continue to promote vocations. This means **encouraging** people to be like our Mother Mary: to **gratefully** discover God's call in their lives, to find **courage** to say “yes” to God, to overcome all **fatigue** through faith in Christ, and to make of their lives a song of **praise** for God – for their brothers and sisters, and for the whole world.

May our Mother Mary accompany us and pray for us.



Franciscus