

April 2024 - Calendar / Feast Days

- 7 April:** **2nd Sunday of Easter** / Divine Mercy Sunday
- 8 April:** **The Annunciation** (This year the feast of The Annunciation was transferred from its normal date March 25th to 8 April due to Holy Week.)
- 14 April:** **3rd Sunday of Easter**
- 21 April:** **4th Sunday of Easter** / Vocation Sunday
- 23 April:** **St. George**
- 28 April:** **5th Sunday of Easter**
- 29 April:** **St. Catherine of Siena**

Feast of the Annunciation



On the Feast of the Annunciation, usually celebrated on 25 March, we celebrate the day that the Angel Gabriel visited the Virgin Mary announcing that she was going to be the mother of Jesus. Even though Mary did not understand completely, she trusted God's plan for her life, and she said yes to becoming the mother of God and our mother.

Divine Mercy Sunday

Divine Mercy Sunday is always celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. This makes it a moveable feast within the Church's liturgical year since Easter also shifts.

On Divine Mercy Sunday, we, as a Church, focus on the incredible mercy of Christ, on the wonder that is His dying and rising for us even though we do not deserve it. It is an opportunity to focus on what mercy means and how we are called to live it out in our lives. We associate the prayer, "Jesus, I trust in You" with this feast.

Let us pray: "Jesus, I trust in You."



Vocation Sunday

Vocation Sunday is a worldwide day of prayer for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. It falls on the 4th Sunday of Easter – Good Shepherd Sunday. There is usually a message from the Pope for the day. Pope Francis' 2024 message was released on 19 March.

This year's theme is **'Called to sow seeds of hope and to build peace'**.

Though the global situation risks plunging people into pessimism, Christians are called to pursue their vocation of becoming 'men and women of hope', Pope Francis said in his message for World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 21 April 2024.

'As individuals and as communities, amid the variety of charisms and ministries, all of us are called to embody and communicate the Gospel message of hope in a world marked by epochal challenges,' the Pope wrote in his message for the day.

Global challenges such as war, migration, rising poverty rates and climate change, in addition to personal difficulties encountered daily, 'risk plunging us into resignation or defeatism,' the Pope wrote in his message released on 19 March. He encouraged Christians to instead

'cultivate a gaze full of hope and work fruitfully in response to the vocation we have received, in service to God's kingdom of love, justice and peace'.

To be 'pilgrims of hope and builders of peace' means 'to base our lives on the rock of Christ's resurrection, knowing that every effort made in the vocation that we have embraced and seek to live out will never be in vain', the Pope wrote.

Pursuing a vocation, he explained, is not an imposed duty but rather 'the surest way for us to fulfil our deepest desire for happiness'.

Pope Francis noted all Christians are called to welcome our God-given vocation to serve Him in the world, whether it be through the consecrated life, the priesthood, marriage, or as a single person.

'Our life finds fulfilment when we discover who we are, what our gifts are, where we can make them bear fruit, and what path we can follow in order to become signs and instruments of love, generous acceptance, beauty and peace wherever we find ourselves.'

The Pope expressed his gratitude for the 'hidden efforts' of those who consistently respond to their calls in life, namely parents, workers, consecrated men and women and priests, and he urged young people to make room for Jesus in their lives to discover their vocation.

'Let Jesus draw you to himself; bring him your important questions by reading the Gospels; let him challenge you by his presence, which always provokes in us a healthy crisis,' he told young people.

The pope also highlighted the 'synodal character' of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, noting how 'amid the variety of our charisms, we are called to listen to one another and to journey together in order to acknowledge them and to discern where the Spirit is leading us for the benefit of all.'

Prayer, he added, 'is more about listening to God than about talking to him.'

The Pope called on Christians to 'open the doors of the prison in which we so often enclose ourselves, so that each of us can discover his or her proper vocation in the Church and in the world'. He wrote:

**'Let us be passionate about life and commit ourselves to caring lovingly
for those around us in every place where we live.'**



Prayer for Vocations

Loving God, inspire those who are seeking their true vocation in life.
Guide them on the road that will lead them to deepest intimacy with you
and to a life filled with love, joy and peace which is yours alone to give.
Pour out upon them the gifts of your Holy Spirit
to guide and inspire them in all they think, do and say.
For those you are calling to follow you as a Priest, Religious Sister, or Brother,
give them a generous heart to respond to your challenging call,
the strength to spread the Good News and
to follow you wherever you lead them.
Give them courage, Lord, to say yes to their vocation
as Mary your mother said yes to hers. Amen.

