

Come Follow Me

A Rosary Novena for Vocations to the Priesthood & Religious Life
in The Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge

*"The Christian vocation is first and foremost a call to love,
a love which attracts us and draws us out of ourselves."*

- Pope Francis



The Roman Catholic Diocese of
BATON ROUGE



Throughout the past 500 years, Our Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, has been appearing all over the world in apparitions across the globe from Guadalupe, Mexico, Lourdes, France, and Fatima, Portugal, to Akita, Japan, and Kibeho, Rwanda. When Our Lady appears, she typically has a similar message from heaven to earth ... *pray the rosary and consistently practice fasting.*

Her message is not a new invitation. In the very first book of the Bible, the Book of Genesis, God commanded Adam and Eve to fast before The Fall - concerning the Tree of Knowledge, God says, "You shall not eat" (Genesis 2:17). Due to their infidelity to God's command to fast, they and their community experienced unnecessary suffering.

Later in the Book of Exodus, Moses surrendered to the first command of God and fasted for over forty days and forty nights. After he completed his season of prayer and fasting on the top of Mount Sinai, he was transformed by the grace of God. The Sacred Author writes, "Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God" (Exodus 34:29). Likewise, before Jesus Christ called the Apostles, He spent 40 days in prayer and fasting in the desert. Fasting from food and drink prepared Moses to hear God's voice and was the work of Jesus that preceded the Apostles perceiving their call to follow Christ as His first priests.

We too are being invited to hear God's voice in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. During Lent, our communal fasting can help us to hear God's voice. If we, like Moses, hear God's voice in prayer, we in turn can encourage the men and women in our land to discern a state of life vocation to the priesthood and religious life. Our prayer and fasting can also help them to hear God's call as well through their time spent in prayer with God and fellowship with other members in our community.

Our intention that we are asking everyone who picks a day of fasting to take to prayer will be simple: *"healthy & holy vocations to the priesthood & religious life from our parishes in the Diocese of Baton Rouge."* Each individual, family or small group who chooses to fast will be invited to dedicate one day during the Lenten Season to offer up this penance for our intention. The fast can be bread and water all day or one regular meal and two small meals without any snacks between meals.

As we are fasting, the rest of the parish will be invited to recite the rosary for those who are participating in this communal penance. The prayers of the community will sustain the disciples who are fasting for the people in our land to hear God's Call.

In addition to praying the rosary every day for our disciples who are fasting for healthy and holy vocations to the priesthood and religious life, we have created this e-book which will equip you and/or your group with a reflection on the life and witness of a priest or religious saint whose story can inspire all of us to strive for holiness in our walk toward eternity. This e-book is formatted as a PDF so that all of those interested in participating can easily save and print it for daily use. Please be sure to share this resource with your parishes, school and small groups.

Please join us in this necessary work of prayer and fasting that our Blessed Mother has been inviting all of us to take part in for so many years. After Moses prayed and fasted for 40 days, his life and community were transformed. Let's transform this land that our Lord has entrusted us to live in, by collaborating with each other to support healthy and holy vocations to the priesthood and religious life from our parishes in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

To download your own copy of

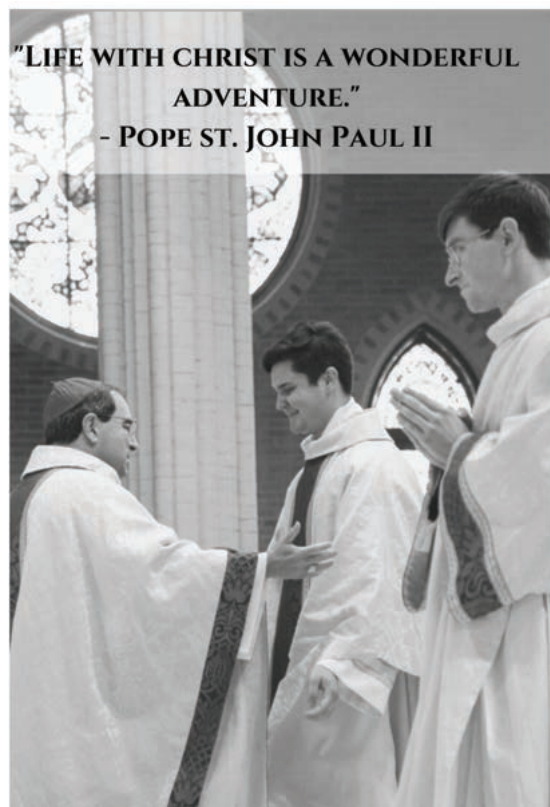
Come Follow Me: A Rosary Novena for Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge or share the link with others, please visit www.diobr.org/vocations.

DAY 1: ASH WEDNESDAY

Pope Saint John Paul II

Pope John Paul II was born in 1919 in Poland. He knew suffering from an early age. His mother died when he was a small child, his brother died when he was a teenager and his father passed away when he was a young adult. Many of his closest friends were imprisoned and murdered by the Nazis who terrorized his community. Following the injustices of the Nazis, the communists occupied his land and persecuted the Catholic Church. In the midst of all of the pain and suffering that he experienced, he chose to focus his attention daily on the face of God in prayer. His commitment to prayer in good times and in bad times began in his childhood. He and his father lived in a simple apartment on top of a local store owned by a Jewish Family. They had slept in twin beds and John Paul II would often wake up in the middle of the night to see his father on his knees praying in silence. His father's witness of prayer inspired him to intentionally set apart time throughout his day to cultivate his relationship with Jesus Christ. It was through his devotion to prayer that he was able to perceive Jesus inviting him to consider the priesthood as a vocation. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Pope Saint John Paul II and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

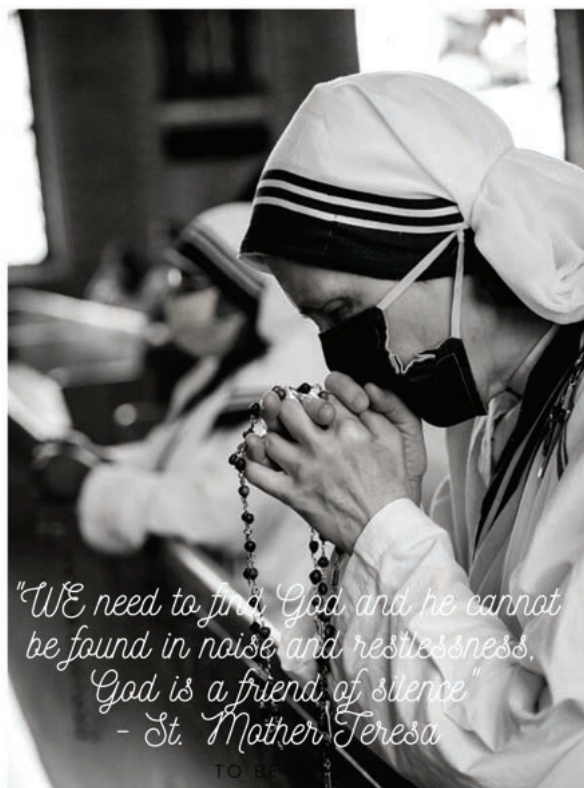


DAY 2: THURSDAY

Saint Katherine Drexel

Mother Katherine Drexel devoted her life to serving Black and Indigenous people of color in the late 1800's and throughout the 1900's through her religious community the "Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People." She was raised in a devout Catholic family that prioritized serving Jesus Christ in the poorest of the poor. In addition to her family's charitable works of mercy, she also grew up watching her father intentionally spend time with God in prayer throughout the day. His witness inspired her to imitate him and devote specific time during the day to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Scriptures. There is a saying, "Adoration leads to Imitation," and because she spent so much time looking at Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and in reading about Jesus in the Bible, she eventually began to imitate Him. She devoted herself completely to serving Black and Indigenous people in America through her works of prayer, evangelization, catechesis, charity and institutional justice. She also collaborated with and financially supported religious communities that were underfunded and lacked resources in their efforts to form saints in predominantly Black communities. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Katherine Drexel and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

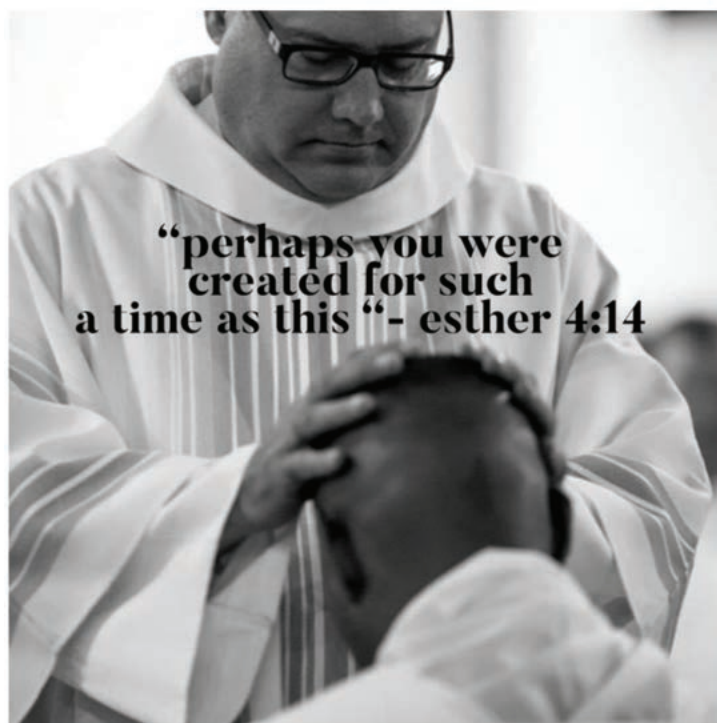


DAY 3: FRIDAY

Blessed Francisco de Paula Victor

Father Francisco de Paula Victor was born into the institution of slavery in the 1800's in Brazil. At some point in his young adult life, he became a free man of color in Brazil. Through the time he spent with God in prayer, he perceived an invitation to discern the priesthood. Unfortunately, even though he was a free man he still wasn't accepted by many of the white Catholics in his community. Upon hearing of his desire to discern the vocation of the priesthood, a white man physically assaulted him to discourage him from pursuing the path he was planning to follow. Instead of focusing on the discouraging voices that surrounded him, he reoriented his attention to the face of Jesus and responded with a generous yes to our Lord's proposal. Throughout his seminary studies and during his pastoral assignment as a priest, he continued to experience persecution, racial slurs, and rejection because of the color of his skin. However, he believed in the depths of his heart that God called him to be a priest and serve the people in his community whether they accepted him or not. He knew that God would not judge him based on whether the people in his community loved him, but rather, he would be judged on how he loved the people. He loved the people in his land so well that they protested the bishop when they discovered he was going to be moved to another assignment. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Blessed Francisco de Paula Victor and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 4: SATURDAY

Venerable Henriette Delille

Mother Henriette Delille was born in the early 1800's in New Orleans, Louisiana. She perceived an invitation from God to become a bride of Christ as a religious sister but was denied access to every religious order she applied to for over fifteen years because of the color of her skin. Even though leaders in the Church discriminated against her because of her black lineage, she never left the Catholic Church. Finally, after years of rejection, she was able to found her own religious community and make her vows in religious life for the Sisters of the Holy Family, on the feast day of St. Teresa of Avila. Her sisters continue the work she began 200 years ago of educating children, taking care of the elderly, and evangelizing the community. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Venerable Henriette Delille and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

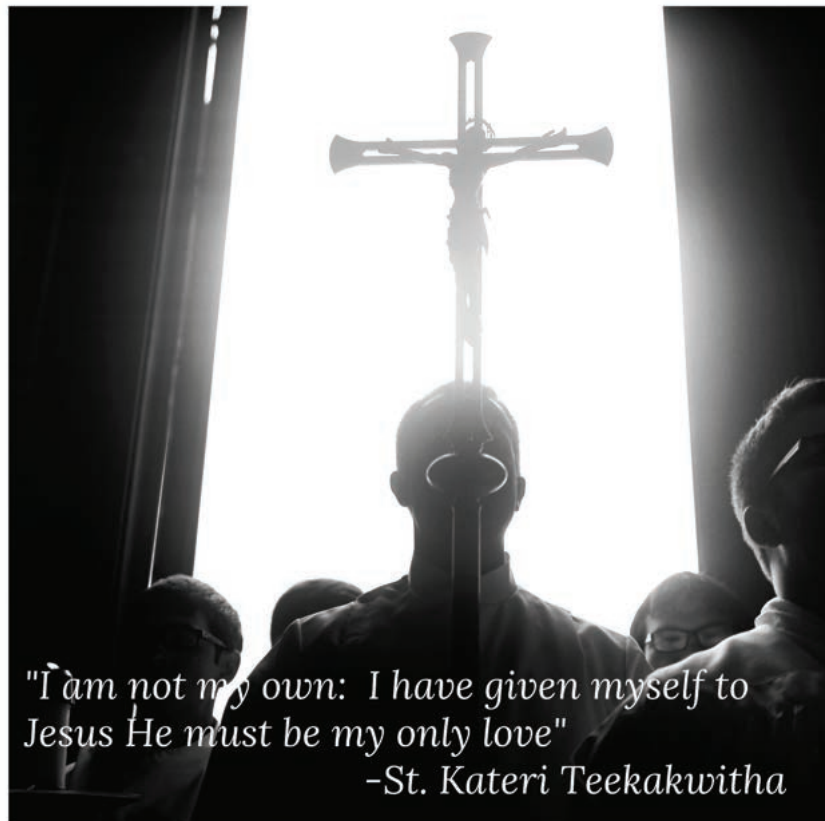


DAY 5: MONDAY

Saint Jean Marie Vianney

Father Jean Marie Vianney was born in the late 1700's in France. The first time he perceived an invitation to discern the priesthood was after he received his first holy Communion at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. He was accepted as a seminarian for his diocese when he was twenty years old. He struggled intellectually with some of the academic courses but persevered in his studies and was ordained at the age of thirty. He became the pastor of a parish in Ars that was notorious for sins of the flesh including gluttony with alcohol and lust with the flesh. He immersed himself in the practices of prayer and fasting, and spent hours visiting the people in the community in their homes, catechizing the children and hearing confessions in the Church. By the time he died, hundreds of thousands of people traveled from all over the world to visit this parish in Ars that became notorious for piety and virtue. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Jean Vianney and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

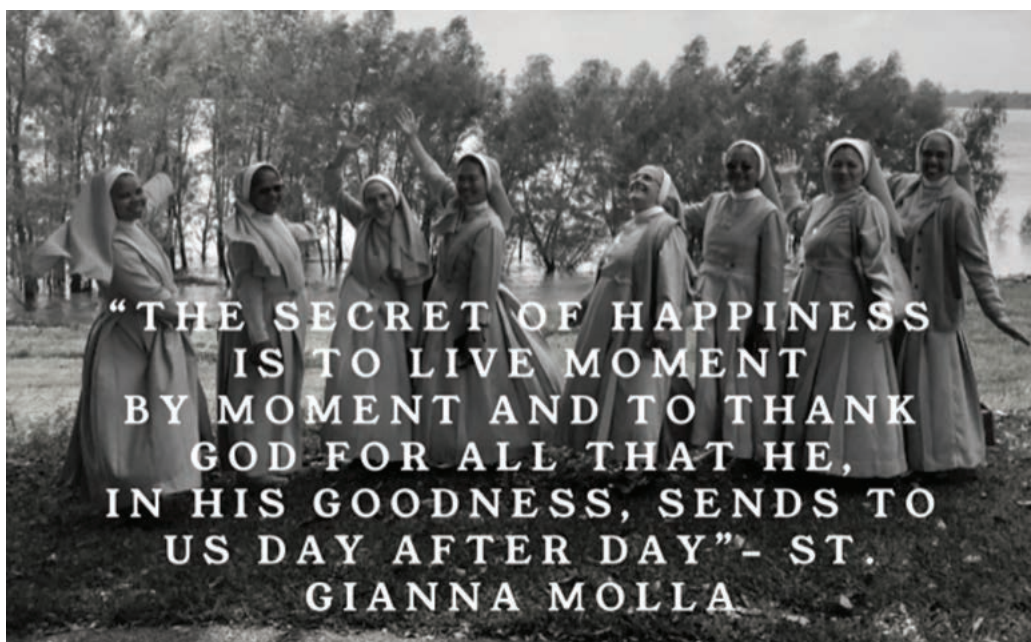


DAY 6: TUESDAY

Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity

Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity was born in 1880 in Avord, France. She grew up in a home very close to a Carmelite monastery. As a child, she was known for being stubborn and controlling. One time a priest told her that she would either be a great saint or a demon if she continued down the path she was walking. She decided to become a saint. As a teenager, she became very active in her church as a youth minister to troubled teens. She would also make frequent visits to the nuns in the Carmelite Convent. One day, while visiting with the sisters, she received a first edition copy of St. Therese's diary, *The Story of the Soul*. After reading about the life of St. Therese, she was inspired to leave her active ministry and enter the cloister as a nun. Her family asked her to postpone her entrance in the convent because they did not want to lose their daughter to religious life. Once she turned twenty one, she was finally free to make her own decision and she chose to officially discern religious life with the Carmelite sisters. Five years after entering the Carmelite community, she passed away from Addison's disease. However, her five short years in religious life were filled with a profound intimacy with Christ. She was madly in love with Jesus Christ and made it her mission to quench his thirst in prayer since He fulfilled all of her desires. Her passionate love for God reminded the nuns in her community that Jesus Christ was sufficient and loving God was the greatest they could do in their pilgrimage to heaven. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



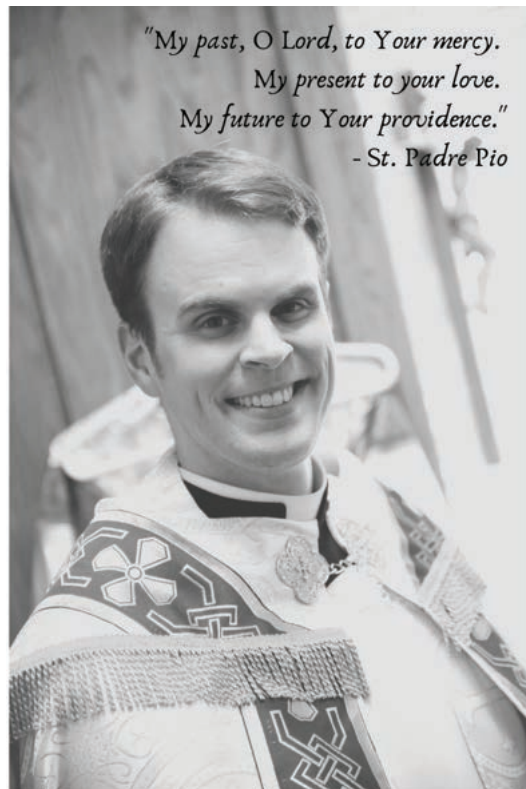
DAY 7: WEDNESDAY

Saint Oscar Romero

Archbishop Oscar Romero was born in 1917 in El Salvador. He felt called to discern the priesthood at the age of 13. Throughout his priesthood he fought many battles both internally and externally. Concerning his interior battles, he struggled with scrupulosity both before his ordination to the priesthood and during his ministry as a priest and archbishop. He brought his mental illness to the light and was able to receive counseling from a professional psychotherapist who helped him to cope with his obsessive-compulsive disorder. One of the things that helped Archbishop Romero in his ongoing healing was focusing on the needs of other people who were suffering in his community. Due to corruption in the government, many poor people and disenfranchised citizens in El Salvador were being unjustly persecuted. The Archbishop dedicated the majority of his time speaking up for the oppressed and speaking out against their oppressors. His prophetic ministry ultimately led to him being murdered while celebrating the holy sacrifice of the Mass in the chapel of the hospital of Divine Providence. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community.

May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Oscar Romero and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 8: THURSDAY

Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Mother Teresa of Calcutta was born in 1910 in Skopje. Her family worshiped at a Jesuit parish and the priests in their community disciplined Mother Teresa in her childhood years. As a teenager she was plugged into ministries in her parish and her family was rooted in service to the poorest of the poor at their home. Priests would frequently visit their home for meals and her mother would invite the homeless to stay the night because she considered all the poor to be their family. After receiving formation from her family and the parish priests, she responded to an invitation from God to become a religious sister with the Sisters of Loretto. Every year Mother Teresa would go on a silent retreat to get away from the business of ministry and enter into the silence with Jesus. One day, while on her way to her annual retreat, Mother Teresa heard Jesus invite her to leave the Sisters of Loretto and dwell with Him in the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta. After years of discernment with her superior, spiritual director and Bishop, Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity and devoted her life to quenching God's thirst in the poor, sick, suffering and unwanted people in her community. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Teresa of Calcutta and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

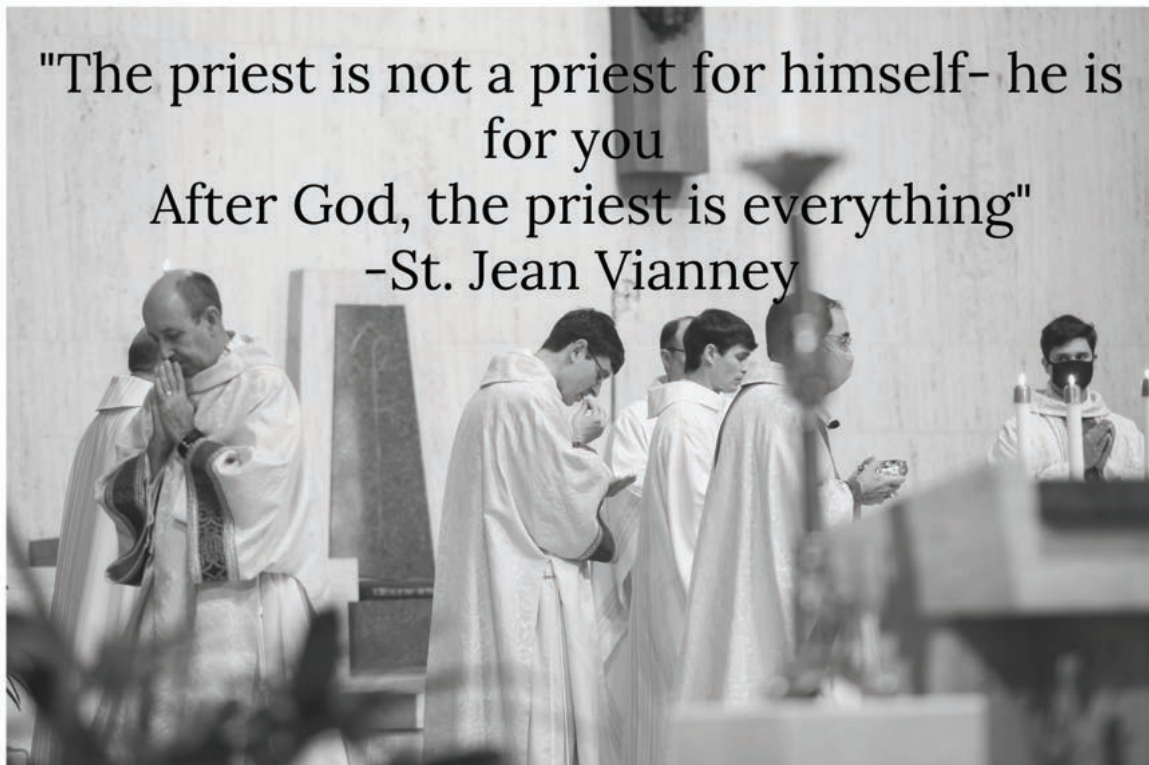


DAY 9: FRIDAY

Saint Maximilan Kolbe

Father Maximilian Kolbe was born in Poland in 1894. Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, he was rooted in an intentional and consistent prayer life as a child. At the age of ten, he experienced an apparition of Mary. She invited him to choose a life of chaste celibacy or a life of martyrdom for the Kingdom of God. At ten years old he chose both! By the time he was a teenager, he entered the Franciscan community and shortly after began his studies in seminary formation. During his time in seminary, he cultivated a small group of disciples who were devoted to the Rosary. The Rosary is a Christocentric prayer that is meant to help the disciple enter deeper into the life of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels. Since Mary was the only follower of Christ who was with Him from the beginning of His life to His passion, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, we ask her to pray for us so that we can witness the life of Jesus through her eyes. The fruit of Father Kolbe's devotion to the rosary was manifested in his fidelity to a life of chaste celibacy and his martyrdom. After speaking out against the Nazi's, Father Kolbe was abducted and thrown into a concentration camp. While in the camp with other Catholics and Jews, he volunteered to give up his life so that others could live. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Maximilian Kolbe and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

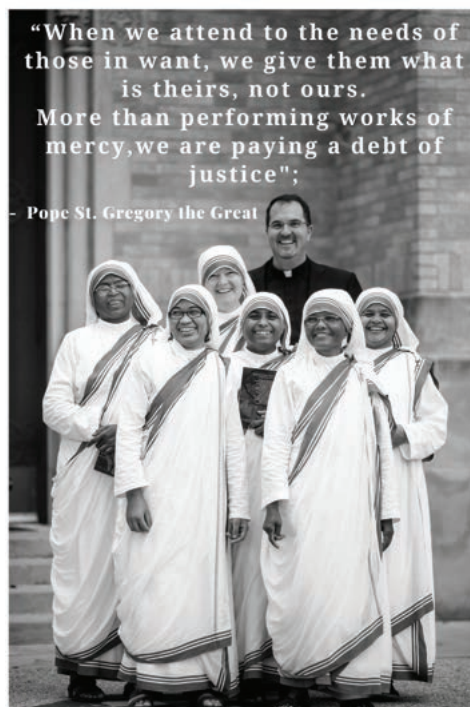


DAY 10: SATURDAY

Saint Josephine Bakhita

Sister Josephine Bakhita was born around 1869 in Sudan, Africa. As a child she was abducted and sold into slavery. The event was so traumatic that she forgot her name and age. She experienced physical, psychological and emotional abuse throughout her childhood and young adult life. One of her masters was so cruel that he cut her with a razor, poured salt in her wounds, and beat her body so that she would not appear attractive. After being bought and sold a number of times, her last owners put her in the role of nanny to their daughter, Mimmina. The owners left the country for a while, so they asked the Canossian Sisters to look after their daughter and her nanny. On November 29th, Josephine met the sisters who radiated the love of Christ. They were patient, kind and gentle. There was something different about them. She was drawn to spend time with them, and they began to tell her about Jesus. Through their ministry of evangelization and catechesis, she was able to encounter a God who was just like her: abducted, abused, stripped naked, whipped, cursed, mocked, rejected, abandoned, betrayed and tortured. For the first time in her life, she felt like she was not alone. There was someone else who knew what it was like to be wounded. She asked the Canossian Sisters to bring her in the Church and shortly after she became a Catholic, she perceived Jesus inviting her to discern religious life. The Sisters helped her escape slavery and she spent the rest of her life sharing her testimony as a Canossian Sister. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Josephine Bakhita and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

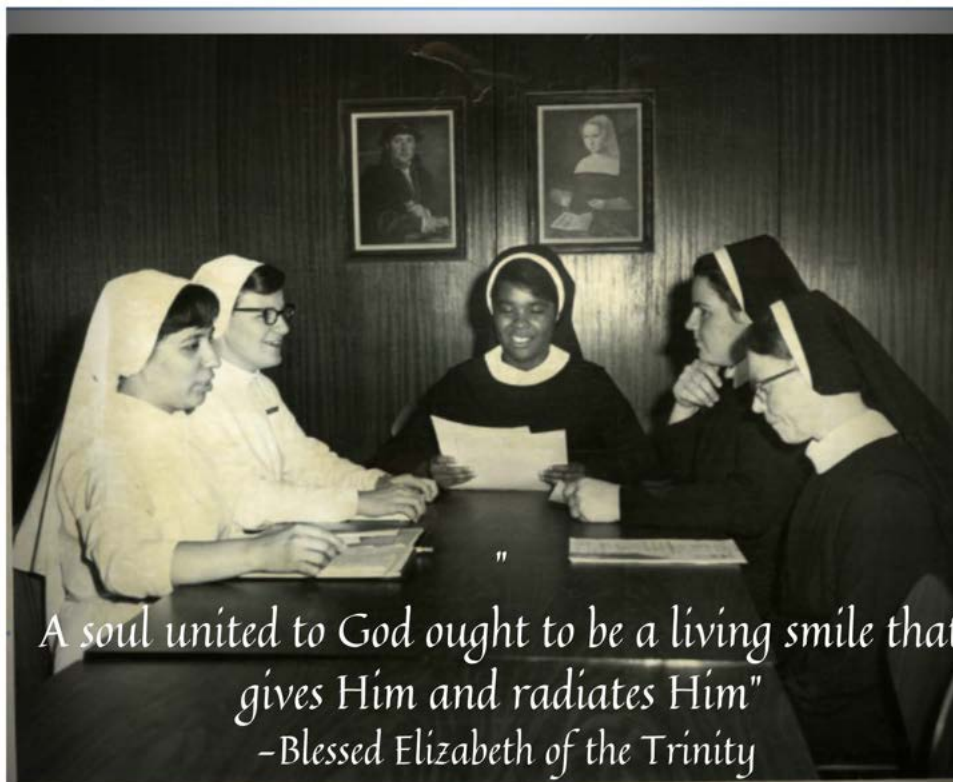


DAY 11: MONDAY

Venerable Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan

Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan was born in Hue, Vietnam in 1928. He perceived an invitation from our Lord to discern a vocation to the priesthood as a teenager and was ordained at the age of 25. Throughout his priesthood he bore a lot of supernatural fruit. He became a bishop during the Vietnam war and then became Archbishop of Saigon eight years after his episcopal ordination. On the feast day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he was arrested by the corrupt government and imprisoned for over thirteen years. During the first nine years of his thirteen-year sentence he was sentenced to solitary confinement. In the beginning, he struggled to understand why our Lord would allow him to be isolated from his people since he was such a good shepherd. After a while of being set apart from his flock, he began to recognize that he was being invited to serve the Church in a new way through a life of prayer, penance and fasting. Once again, the people in his diocese began to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ crucified through his ministry of intercessory prayer. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Venerable Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

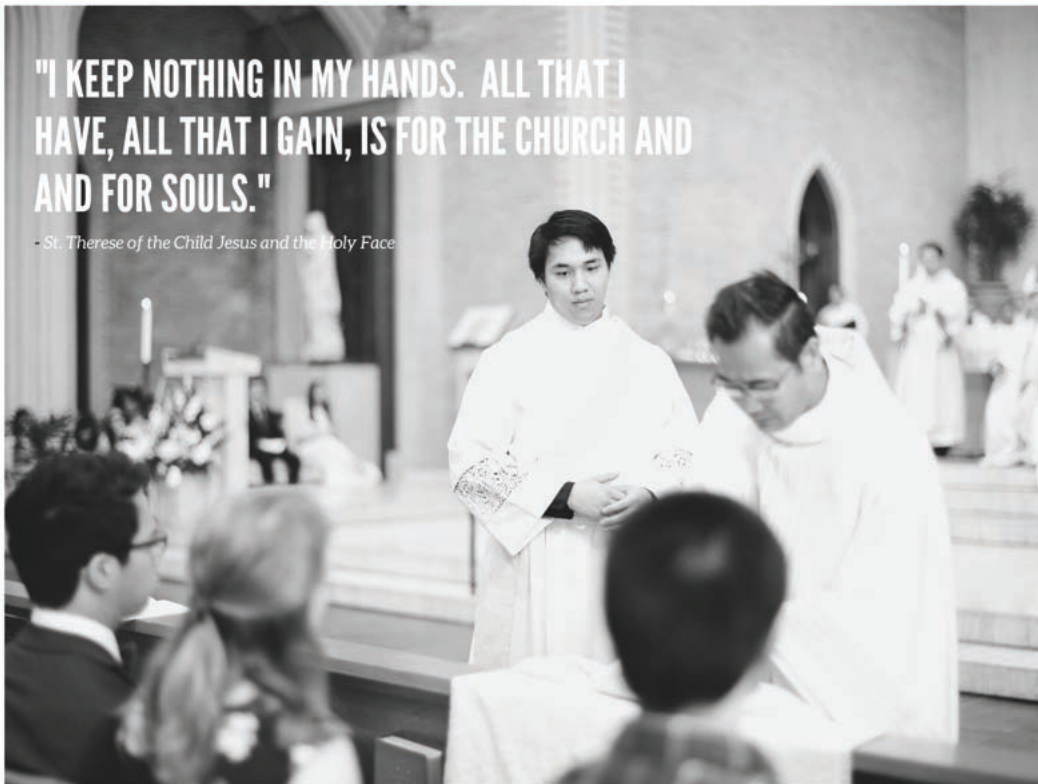


DAY 12: TUESDAY

Saint Alphonsa Muttathupadathu

Sister Alohonsa Muttahupadathu was born in India in 1910. Like Job from the Old Testament, she knew what it was like to experience intense pain and suffering. Sister Alphonsa endured illnesses throughout her entire life. As a child she had a deadly skin disease, as a teenager she was burned so badly she became disabled and as a nun she almost died from pneumonia. Her family was not supportive of her vocation to consecrated life before she entered the convent and years after she made vows. As a young sister, she was severely traumatized after a man broke into her convent cell and harassed her. Even though her life was marked with physical, psychological and emotional sufferings, she never wavered in her love for Jesus Christ. She fell in love with God and her love was not based on the benefits of physical health, financial wealth, spiritual insights or any other benefits. She loved God for God and He was enough for her. Her fidelity to God in good times and bad inspired the sisters in her community to also remain faithful to Jesus Christ at all times and under all circumstances. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Alphonsa Muttathupadathu and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

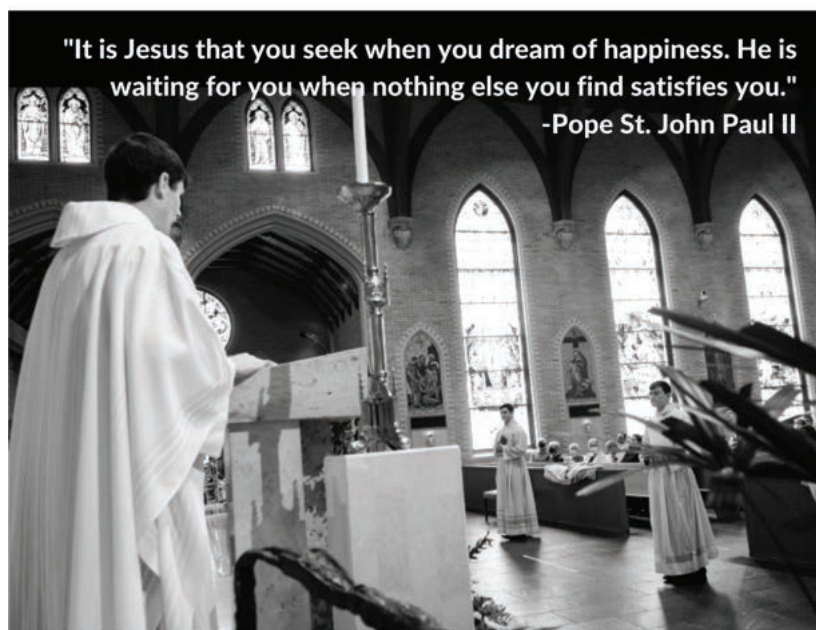


DAY 13: WEDNESDAY

Saint Martin de Porres

Friar Martin de Porres was born in 1579 in Peru. He grew up in a biracial family in poverty with his mother and his sister. His mother was a former slave of African descent and his father was a Spanish nobleman. His father rejected Martin because his skin was too dark and eventually abandoned the entire family. Martin also experienced persecution from the people in his community who did not accept biracial families. Instead of cursing those who insulted him and his family, young Martin imitated Jesus and blessed them. He prayed for his enemies and loved all of his neighbors in the midst of all of their imperfections and sins. Martin immersed himself in prayer and through his commitment to the interior life he felt a call to join the religious order of the Dominicans. Unfortunately, Peru had racist laws that did not allow people of color to enter religious life. The Order of Dominicans did allow Martin to collaborate with them as a servant. Eventually, the Dominican Friars began to see how many miracles God worked through the humble servant, Martin, and they invited him to become a lay brother in their friary. As a lay brother he served the poor by providing housing, clothes, and food to the homeless. He was also very close to the enslaved Africans in Peru and God worked many supernatural miracles in their lives through the prayers of Friar Martin de Porres. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Martin de Porres and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 14: THURSDAY

Servant of God Thea Bowman

Sister Thea Bowman was born in Mississippi on December 29, 1937. She was the granddaughter of a slave and raised as a Protestant Christian. Her family invited her to a relationship with Jesus through intentional time with the Sacred Scriptures and spiritual songs. During her youth, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration opened a school to educate Black children who were not allowed a good education due to Jim Crow segregation laws. After experiencing the joy of the religious sisters at her school she felt called to become Catholic and was welcomed into the Church at the age of nine years old. She entered the community at the age of 15. During her years in the convent, she experienced discrimination from some of her sisters, but by the grace of God, she was able to transform their hearts and minds through her patience, kindness and joy. God used her virtues to heal some of the sisters in her religious community and God used her voice to inspire the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to address racial injustices that were happening in Church parishes and schools throughout the nation. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Servant of God Thea Bowman and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 15: FRIDAY

Blessed Stanley Rother

Father Stanley Rother was born in 1935 in Oklahoma. He was raised on a farm in a small town. During his youth, he excelled in sports at his Catholic school, participated in Mass as altar server at Church and did chores around the house with his family on the farm. During his high school years, he recognized that he was called to something more and began to discern a call to serve the Church as a Catholic priest. He was accepted into seminary formation and ordained as a priest for the archdiocese of Oklahoma City. After serving in parish ministry for a few years, he requested permission to share the joy of the gospel in Guatemala where his archdiocese had set up a mission. Upon approval, he learned the Spanish language so that he could communicate the message of Jesus in a language that was conducive for the people to receive. Like the Apostles in Acts 2, Father Stanley crossed cultures to connect with people who were ethnically different from him. He spent time with the Guatemalan people in their huts, ate their food, listened to their stories, aided their sick, catechized their communities and celebrated the Sacraments with them. His work in the community was appreciated by many but not all. Many Catholics were being killed for their catechetical and educational work with the poor in the 1980's. Father Stanley was aware that his name was on a hit list but he refused to leave the people who Christ sent him to accompany in their walk toward eternity. In 1981, three men broke into his rectory and murdered him. Shortly after his death, the Guatemalan people asked his diocese if they could keep his heart in their land so that the people in their community would never forget his ministry. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Blessed Stanley Rother and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

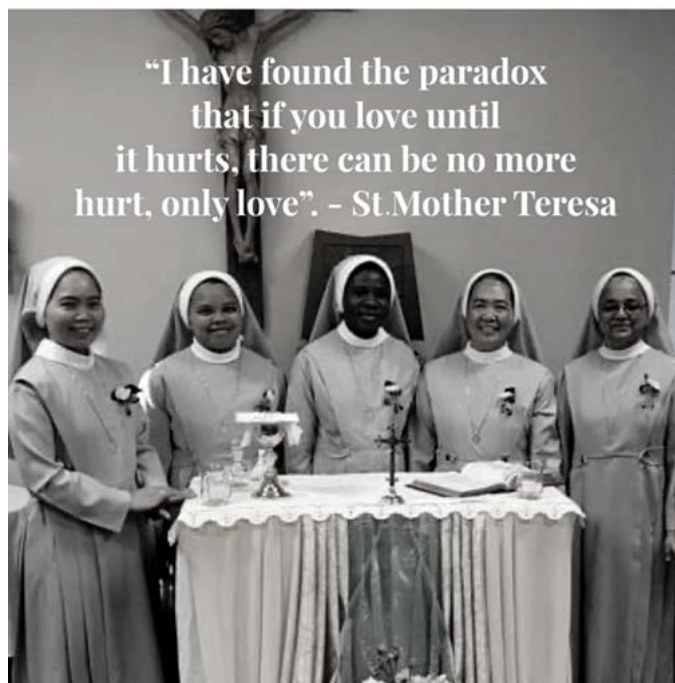


DAY 16: SATURDAY

Saint Bernadette Soubirous

Sister Bernadette Soubirous was born in 1844 in Lourdes, France. As a child, Bernadette was very simple. Academically she struggled to both read and write. Her intellectual limitations led to her being excluded by some of the other children in her community. The rejection she experienced as an adolescent would continue throughout the rest of her life because of the role she was invited to play in salvation history. At the age of fourteen, she began to experience apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. As a visionary, she was misunderstood by her family, neighbors and even the clergy. In the midst of her interior suffering, she remained faithful to her relationship with Jesus Christ through the daily recitation of the most holy rosary. Eventually, the entire community came to believe in her private revelations because of the many miracles our Lord worked through Bernadette's obedience to Mary. Unfortunately, people began to focus their attention on her and not exclusively on Jesus Christ. To avoid her newfound attention, she sought refuge in a convent. The more time she spent with the nuns in the convent, the more she began to see herself as a sister as well. Sister Bernadette was accepted as a religious sister and spent the rest of her life hidden from the public and totally available to God in prayers and through penances. To this day, people travel from all over the world to encounter God's love in the land of Lourdes, France. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Bernadette and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

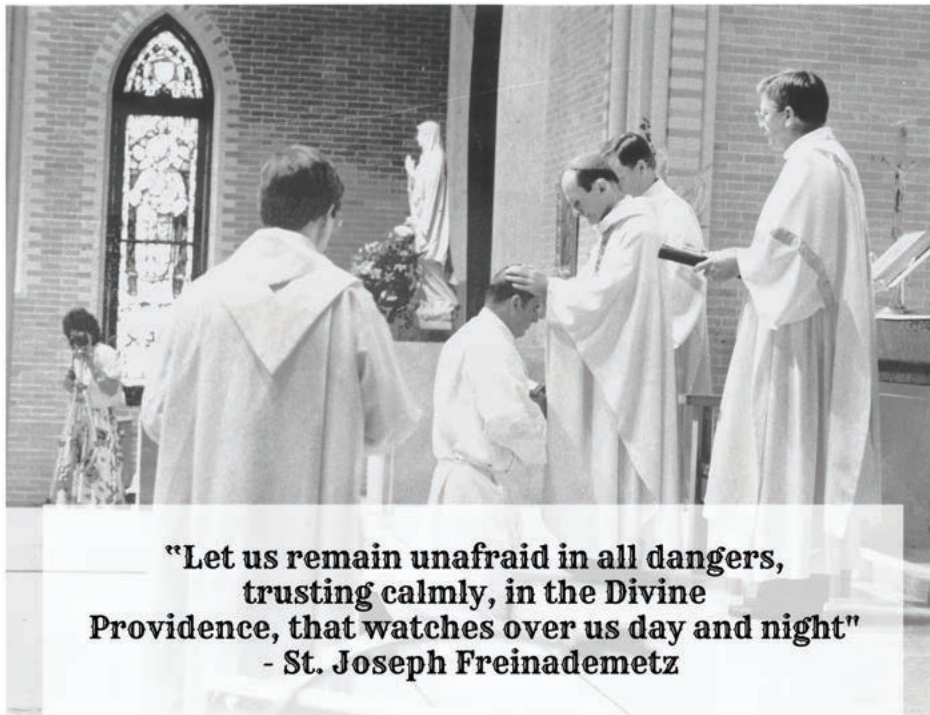


DAY 17: MONDAY

Venerable Fulton J. Sheen

Archbishop Fulton J Sheen was born in 1895 in El Paso, Illinois. As a child, Fulton was an altar server at daily Mass and attended Catholic School in his diocese. He thoroughly enjoyed academics and excelled in his studies both in high school and college. After his ordination to the priesthood, he continued to pursue further education in philosophy. As a priest, he used his intellectual gifts as a professor in the classroom, a homilist at Mass, a lecturer at conferences and a speaker on television. One of the core messages Archbishop Fulton Sheen taught in the classroom, preached about during Mass, lectured on at retreats and spoke about on television was the call from Jesus for his priests to commit to a daily hour in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Not only did he teach this message over and over again, but he also lived it in his daily life. It is reported that Archbishop Fulton Sheen spent an hour with Jesus in the Eucharist every day of his priesthood beginning with his ordination and continuing until the day he died. On December 9, 1979, Venerable Fulton Sheen was found dead on the floor of his chapel in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. His witness has inspired an entire generation of priests to commit to a daily Holy Hour with Jesus Christ in the most holy Eucharist. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Venerable Fulton J. Sheen and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



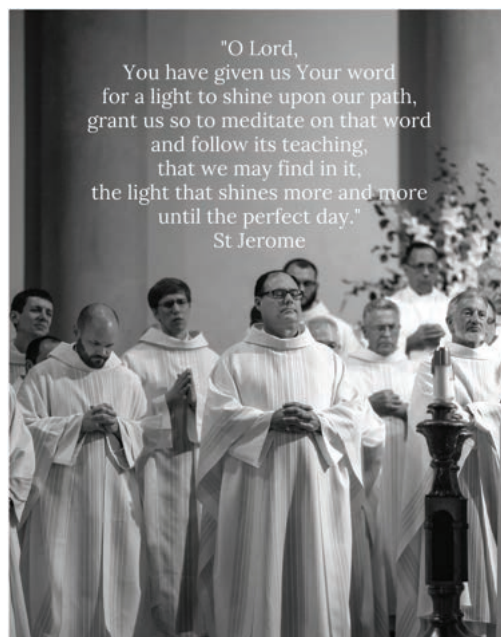
**"Let us remain unafraid in all dangers,
trusting calmly, in the Divine
Providence, that watches over us day and night"
- St. Joseph Freinademetz**

DAY 18: TUESDAY

Saint Ana of the Angels Monteagudo

Sister Ana of the Angels Monteagudo was born in 1602 in Peru. As a child, Ana grew up in a boarding school at a convent that was run by an order of nuns. She not only learned about Jesus from the sisters at the school, but she also encountered the love of Jesus through the daily witness of the sisters in the convent. Upon completing her studies, she returned home with the intention of informing her family of her desire to become a nun. Her family did not understand her vocation to religious life and discouraged her from following that way of life. In their mind, the Sacrament of marriage was the best path for her to follow in her walk toward eternity. However, Ana knew that she was being called to discern religious life. Without the blessing of her family, she left home and entered the convent. Once Sister Ana made her vows to Jesus in religious life, her family disowned her. Even though it broke her heart to lose her family she knew that happiness would only come from dwelling with Jesus as a bride of Christ. Sister Ana experienced extraordinary graces from her bridegroom including visions and apparitions of Mary and the Angels. Even though Sister Ana was rapidly maturing in the spiritual life, her fellow sisters in the convent were not. The nuns had become lax in following their rule of life over the years. Instead of leaving them for another community, Sister Ana was rooted in that land with those nuns. She continued to be faithful to Jesus and her sisters and her fidelity to our Lord and her love for them eventually reformed their entire community. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Blessed Ana and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

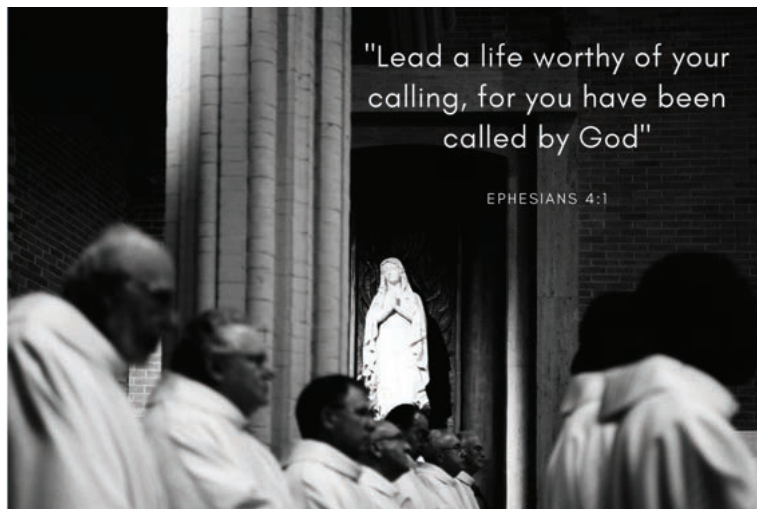


DAY 19: WEDNESDAY

Servant of God Ceferino Namuncara

Brother Ceferino Namuncara was born in 1886 in Argentina. Ceferino was raised in a divided community. Three years before he was born, his father, the leader of the Araucane Indian tribe, surrendered to the Argentine Army. In order to bridge the divide between the indigenous peoples of their community and Argentine forces who were now occupying their land, Ceferino's father sent him to a Catholic boarding school to learn the Spanish language so that he could best defend and support their people. While immersed in the Salesian school, he saw first hand the joy of community life between the Salesian priests and brothers. The Salesians were invested in the children at school who behaved well and those who were mischievous. Their love for each other and their students attracted Ceferino to want what they had. He immersed himself in the Sacraments and in imitation of the Salesian brothers and priests, he also invested his time and energy into serving the other students in his community. Although his family sent him to the school to build bridges across the cultural divide, he came back home with a new desire to be a bridge for all people to come to know Jesus in the Sacraments of the Catholic Church. When he was sixteen years old, he was accepted into the seminary to begin his formation to the priesthood. However, a few years after he began his studies, he passed away from tuberculosis. He did not work any miracles in his lifetime, write theological dissertations or suffer a martyr's death. Yet and still, his funeral in his native village brought crowds of people from all backgrounds because he manifested the virtues of patience, kindness, joy and generosity so well in his ordinary life. His ordinary love was the bridge that drew many people to abide in an extraordinary relationship with Jesus Christ in the Sacramental life of the Catholic Church. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Blessed Ceferino and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



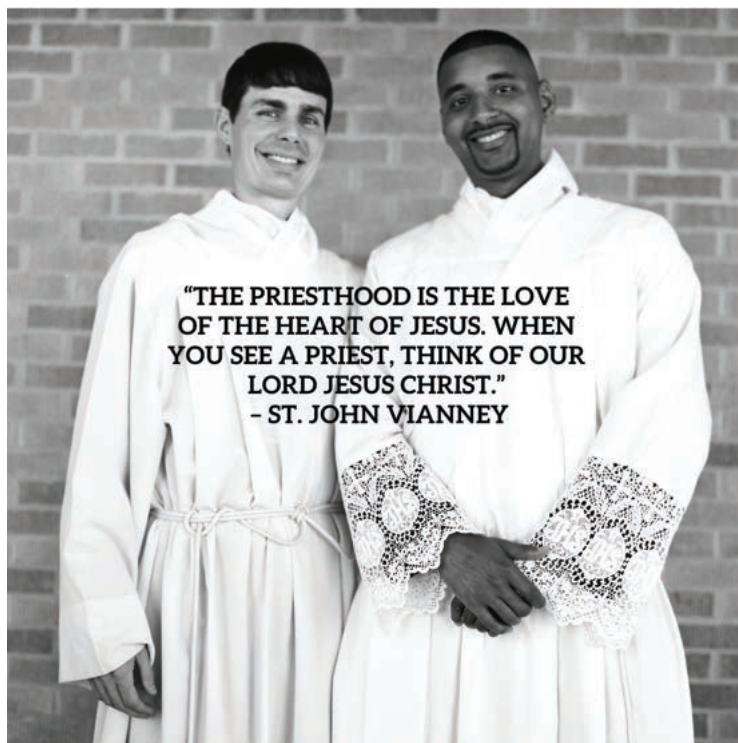
DAY 20: THURSDAY

Servant of God Mary Elizabeth Lange

Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange was born in 1784 in Santiago de Cuba. She came from a family of refugees who came to the United States of America seeking a more peaceful environment. Upon arrival, Mary Elizabeth discovered there were many needs that were not being met for people of color in the United States. For her, discernment was simple, she did not begin thinking about her calling from the standpoint of personal fulfillment. She wasn't concerned with what state of life vocation would make her the happiest in life. Rather, she began her discernment by looking at the needs of her people in the land she was living in. After she assessed the needs of the people, she took an inventory of the gifts she possessed. As soon as she recognized where her gifts matched the needs of the people, she began to serve. One of the greatest needs during her time was an adequate education for refugees and people of color in Baltimore, Maryland. Even though she was also a refugee, she was highly educated, and she had the financial resources to provide a place for the children in her community to go to school. After serving the needs of her people in this capacity for several years, she founded the first religious order in the USA for women of color.

Her community continues to provide a Catholic education to children in Baltimore to this day. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Servant of God Mary Elizabeth Lange and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 21: FRIDAY

Blessed Solanus Casey

Father Solanus Casey was born in 1870 on a farm near Oak Grove, Wisconsin. Solanus was one of sixteen children. He and his siblings enjoyed outdoor activities such as baseball, hunting, fishing, swimming, skiing and skating. As a family, they were rooted in Sunday Mass and daily prayer through the recitation of the rosary. While worshipping God at Mass, Solanus had the idea that he could see himself leading the community in the role of the priest. The thought continued to come to his mind and finally at the age of twenty-one, he decided to enter the seminary to discern the priesthood. He recognized that the only way he would know if he was called to the priesthood or not is if he went to the place that was most conducive to discernment: the seminary. After many years of formation, he was finally ordained to the priesthood. His ministry as a priest was very simple. He wasn't given the faculty to preach at Mass or hear confessions. However, he never complained about the at his place he was assigned in his ministry. He did not have expectations on what his priesthood should look like because he knew that his vocation did not belong to him. His priesthood was not his own. He knew that he was ordained to do the will of God and not his own. Throughout his ministry, he was always assigned to minor roles in his community, but like St. Therese, he fulfilled all his duties with great love. Through his fidelity to his place in the body of Christ, he was able to invite people into an extraordinary relationship with God in the most ordinary ways. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Blessed Solanus Casey and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

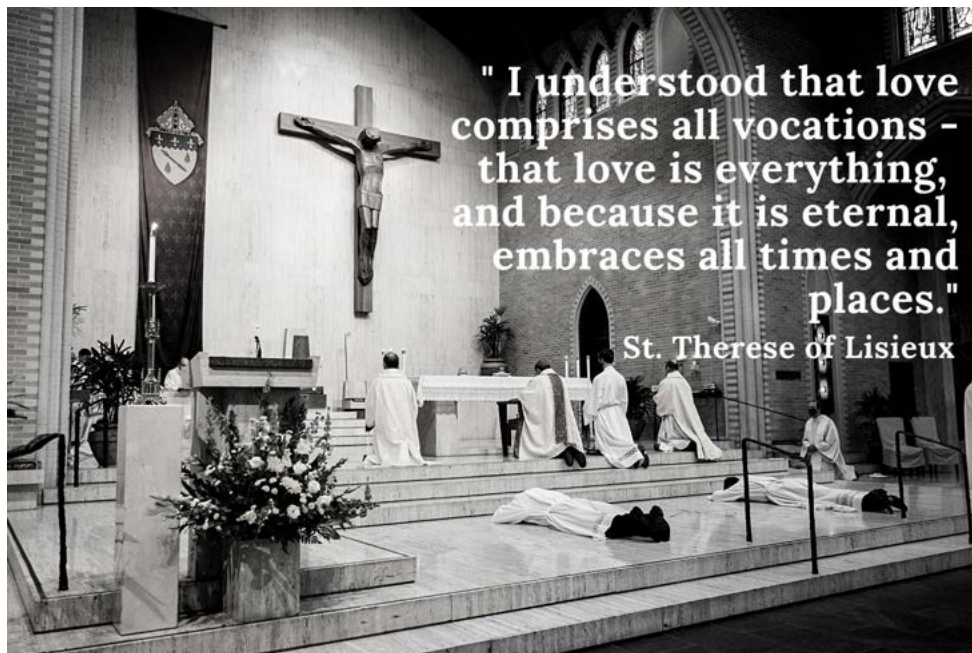


DAY 22: SATURDAY

Servant of God Maria Lucia of the Immaculate Heart

Sister Lucia was born in 1907 in Portugal. At the tender age of ten years old, she began to experience apparitions of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Fatima. The Blessed Mother invited Lucia and her young cousins to faithfully pray the rosary every day. Young Lucia consented to Our Lady's proposal and prayed the rosary every day in good times and in bad. At one point, she and her cousins were being persecuted and imprisoned by the authorities in their community. While in prison, she continued to recite the rosary and her decision to pray in jail inspired the men who were also imprisoned to join them in prayer and fix their attention on the merciful face of Jesus. Shortly after the death of her cousins, she was sent to a Catholic school with the Dorothean Sisters of Villar. Through her time in prayer and reflection and through her proximity to the sisters, she perceived an invitation from our Lord to become a nun. She eventually entered the Carmelites and spent the rest of her life in prayer and penance for the salvation of the world. Even though she embraced a life of sacrifice, she was filled with a joyful personality and was known for her sense of humor in the convent and with her visitors. Her joy for the Lord which was rooted in her devotion to the rosary impacted everyone she met. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate the Servant of God Maria Lucia of the Immaculate Heart and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 23: MONDAY

Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos

Father Francis Xavier Seelos was born in 1819 in Germany. Ever since he was a child, he admired priests and wanted to serve the Church as an ordained minister. He found fulfillment in the Sacraments and wanted everyone else to know the love of God in the Catholic Church. After hearing about a religious order that evangelized those who were most abandoned by society, he knew that he found his calling. He entered formation for the Redemptorist and completed his studies in Baltimore, Maryland, where he was ordained to the priesthood. He had a gift of speech and his preaching brought people from all ages, genders, ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds to Jesus Christ. Even though his preaching attracted such a diverse audience, his passion was always to minister to the poorest of the poor and the most abandoned. In his last assignment, he served the sick and suffering in New Orleans, Louisiana, and through his proximity to the ill and abandoned people, he contracted a deadly fever that took his life. He died sharing the Sacraments with the abandoned people who inspired him to serve the Church as a religious priest. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

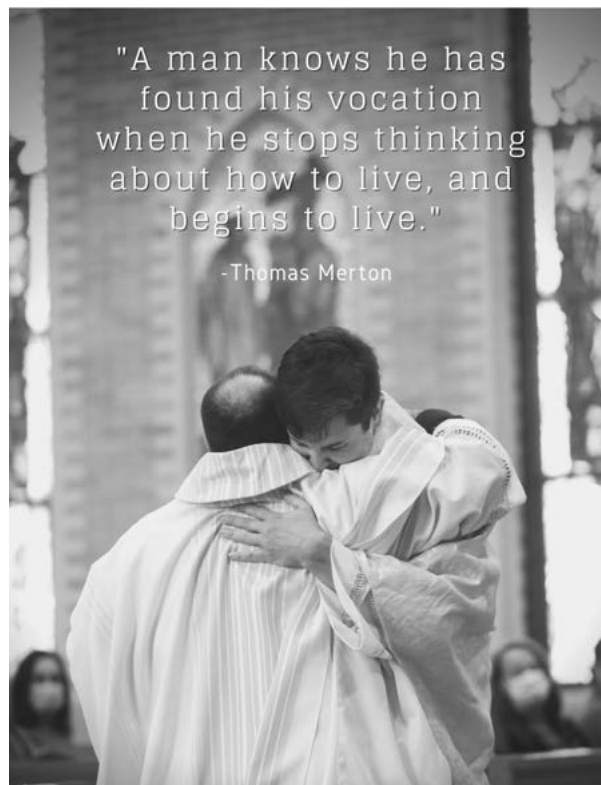


DAY 24: TUESDAY

Saint Rafqa Pietra Choboq Ar-Rayes

Sister Rafqa was born in 1832 in Lebanon. Her life was marked with suffering and hardships. Her mother died when she was a small child and her father sent her to work as a servant in a private home. When she was a teenager, her father remarried a woman who Rafqa did not get along with. Everyone in her family and community had plans for Rafqa but she did not experience any peace from the constant opinions of others regarding her vocation. Instead of dwelling on the plans of other people for her life, Rafqa asked Jesus what He wanted her to do with her life. In prayer, she perceived that God was inviting her to become a nun. She spent many years working as a teacher with her sisters in the Mariamette community. Her ministry bore a lot of supernatural fruit in the land she was serving. However, after an encounter with St. Anthony of the Desert in her dreams, she decided to join a contemplative order of nuns and spent the rest of her life in prayer, silence and sacrifice. During her years in the cloister, she became blind and paralyzed. Instead of complaining about her physical disabilities, she united her sufferings with Jesus Christ on the cross and offered up her pain for the conversion of sinners. Through her sufferings, many people repented of their sins and became disciples of Jesus. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Rafqa and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 25: WEDNESDAY

Blessed Michael McGivney

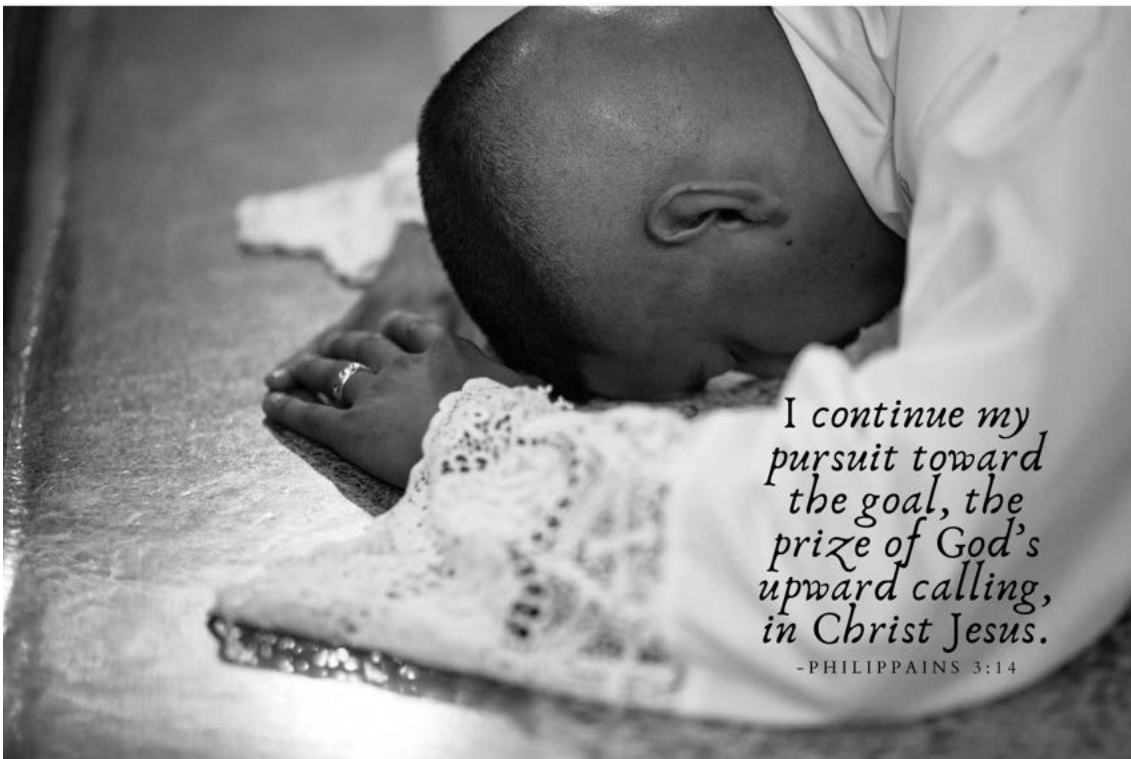
Father Michael McGivney was born in 1852 in Waterbury, Connecticut. He grew up in a devout

Catholic family in a very anti-Catholic environment. After he discerned a vocation to the priesthood, he dedicated his ministry to the oppressed Catholic families in Connecticut. He knew the hardships many Catholic families were experiencing in their community since he had to leave seminary formation for a period to help provide for his siblings after the death of his father.

Throughout his priesthood, rather than giving into bitterness about the ways in which Catholics were being alienated from a seat at the table in his land, he worked diligently to build his own table that would accommodate and give access to Catholics. One of the tables that he established was an organization called the Knights of Columbus. He founded the Knights to provide spiritual formation to Catholic men and financial support to the Catholic families in their community who were struggling because of the loss of the breadwinner in the household. His organization, the

Knights of Columbus continues to form men in the spiritual life and financially assist Catholic families. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Blessed Michael McGivney and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 26: THURSDAY

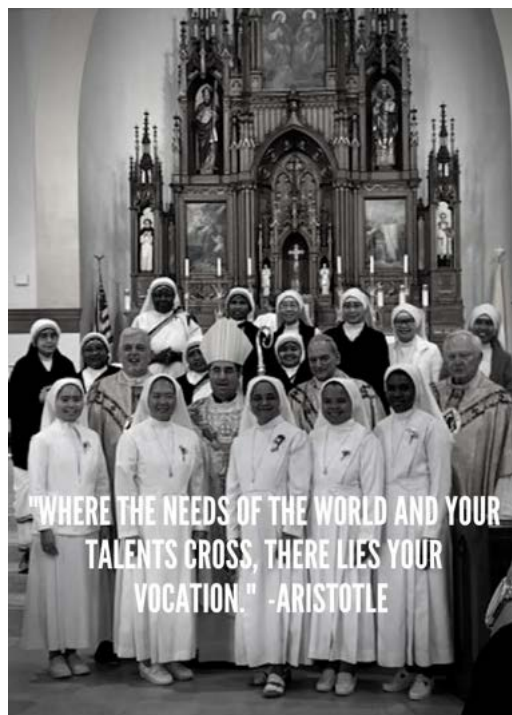
Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton was born in 1774 in New York. She was raised in a wealthy Protestant family and was privileged to a good education. As a child she enjoyed spending her time reading literature and novels. As she got older, her passion for reading led her to devour the Sacred Scriptures. Meditating on the Bible day and night satisfied her more than anything else in the world.

At the age of twenty, she married the love of her life, William Seton. Their first years of marriage were comfortable, but everything changed after the death of William's father. The couple inherited his seven half-siblings to take care of, and they were entrusted with the family's importing business. The demands of family life and the business world was too much for William and the stress affected his emotional and physical health. After filing for bankruptcy, he became seriously ill and passed away. After his death, Elizabeth was introduced to the Catholic faith. Participating in the Sacraments of the Catholic Church satiated the ache her heart experienced after the death of her husband.

Through her time serving the needs of the people in her community and in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, Elizabeth discerned a call within a call to religious life. As a sister she established Catholic schools and orphanages and became a spiritual mother to hundreds of children. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 27: FRIDAY

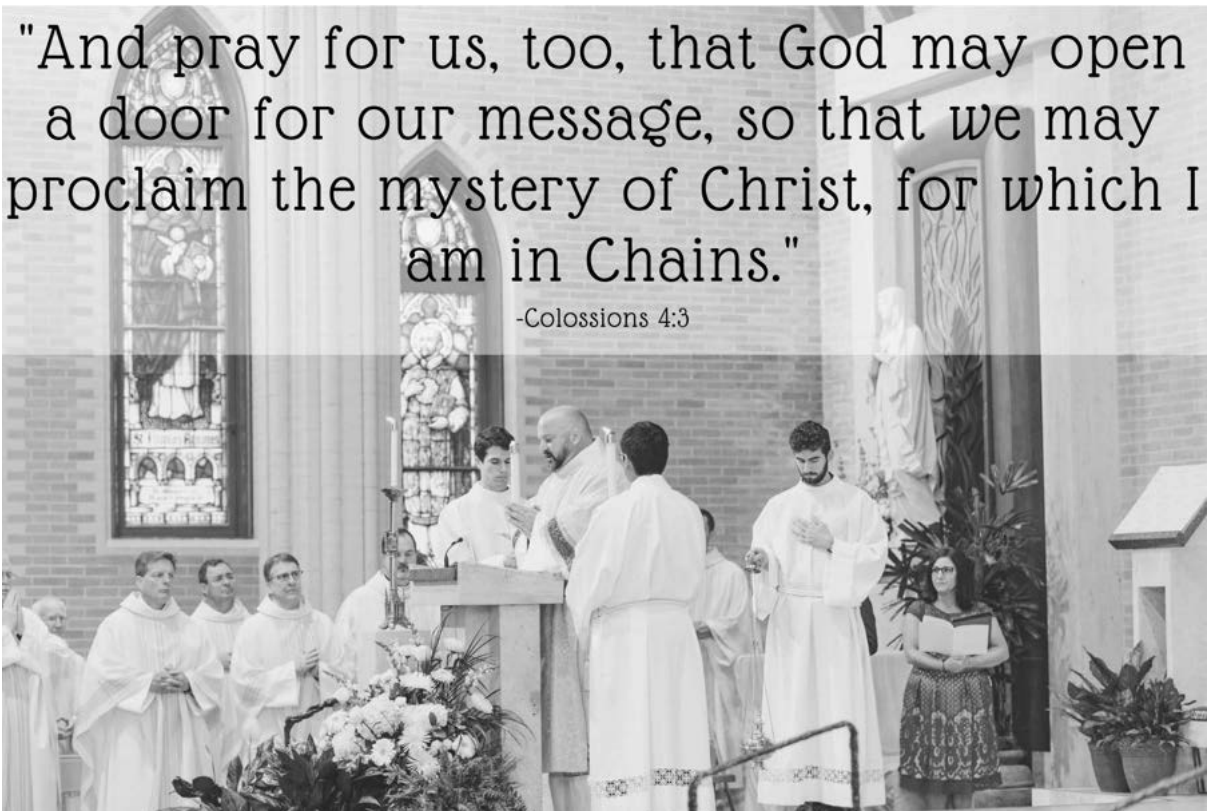
Saint Charbel Makhlouf

Abuna Charbel Makhlouf was born in 1828 in Lebanon. Charbel was raised in a religious home where he grew up learning about the lives of the saints. He also was inspired by the witness of two of his uncles who lived as hermits in the community. As a child, he was drawn to spending hours in solitude with God in prayer. He established a place of prayer outside with an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This sacred space was a physical reminder to reorient his attention to God. In his early twenties, he left home to enter a Lebanese Maronite Order of Monks. After his profession in religious life, he was ordained and sent to the St. Maron Monastery where he served the Church with his hidden prayers and fasting. After a number of years in community life, he was given permission to imitate his uncles and serve the Church as a hermit. After his death, his body remained incorruptible for many years and hundreds of physical miracles and spiritual conversions have been attributed to his intercession from heaven. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Charbel and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

"And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in Chains."

-Colossions 4:3

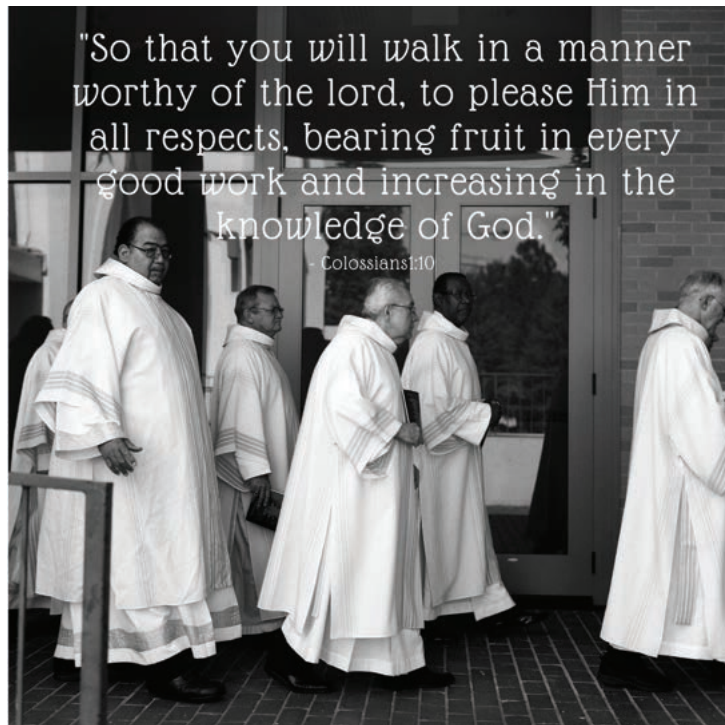


DAY 28: SATURDAY

Saint Teresa of Avila

Mother Teresa of Avila was born in 1515 in Avila, Spain. Teresa was raised in a divided home. Her father was extremely ridged in his faith and her mother was lax. Her father wanted the family to only read spiritual works and her mother was more interested in romance novels. As a teenager, she was less interested in her father's version of Catholicism and more drawn to flirting with boys, hanging out with her girlfriends, and wearing the most fashionable clothes. In an effort to reform his daughter who he thought was going down the wrong path, he sent her to a convent. In the convent, she experienced a less rigid version of Catholicism and was attracted to the person of Jesus Christ. Through her time in the convent, she discerned with the sisters that she was being invited by God to become a nun. As a sister, she struggled with many vices for decades, but God never gave up on her. Eventually, after twenty years of religious life, she found freedom from her bad habits and began to grow exponentially in the spiritual life. She found a spiritual director who helped her to mature in her relationship with Christ and through her conversion she helped many other sisters experience a renewal in religious life. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Teresa of Avila and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

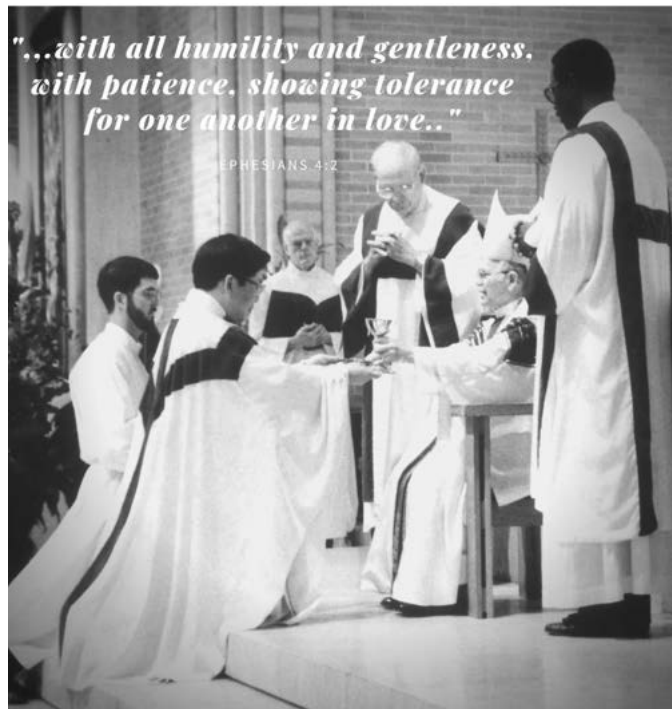


DAY 29: MONDAY

Venerable Augustus Tolton

Father Augustus Tolton was born in 1854 in Missouri. His life began under the sinful institution of slavery. During the Civil War, his father was able to escape slavery to fight alongside the Union Army. He and his mother remained slaves until he was six years old. At that age, she and Augustus finally escaped their masters and found freedom from slavery in Illinois. A local priest, Father Peter, invested intentional time into mentoring and tutoring Augustus in the Catholic faith. Father Peter's witness to the joy of priesthood inspired Augustus to consider a vocation to the priesthood as well. Unfortunately, because of the color of his skin, no seminary in the United States of America would accept Augustus into their formation program. His pastor continued to encourage Augustus to pursue the priesthood and he was eventually accepted to a seminary in Rome. After his ordination to the priesthood, he was sent back home and became the first recognized African American priest in the USA. Throughout his priesthood he was loved by the people in the land that he served and hated by most of the priests. In response to the disdain from his brother priests, he prayed for their conversion and continued to focus his attention on evangelizing and catechizing the people he was assigned to serve. He poured himself out day and night, serving the needs of his people, and eventually died from exhaustion at the young age of 43. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Venerable Augustus Tolton and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

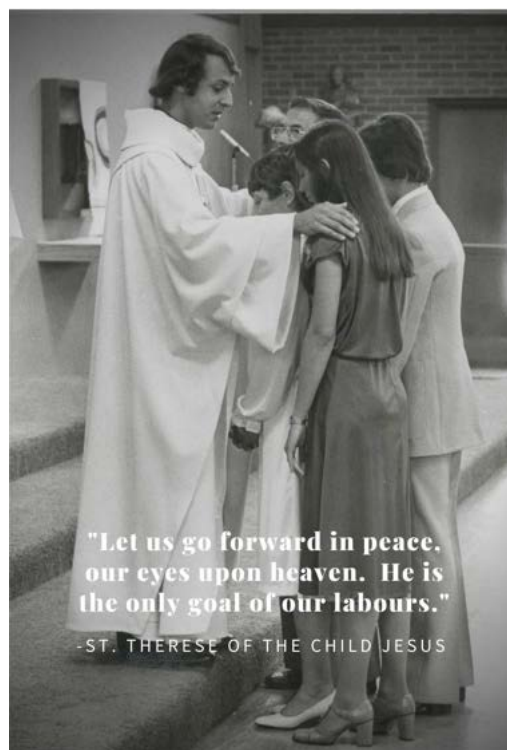


DAY 30: TUESDAY

Saint Maria Faustina Kowalski

Sister Maria Faustina Kowalski was born in 1905 in Poland to a low-income and growing Catholic family. She was the third of ten children. As a young child, she was obedient in the home, prayerful in Church and charitable to the poor in the community. It was apparent to Sister Faustina and her family that she had characteristics of a young woman called to religious life. However, the timing was not right for her to enter when she initially wanted to because of her family's financial situation. For a season, she put her desires for religious life on the shelf so that she could focus her attention on her vocation of the present moment, which was to assist her family. However, after a few years of waiting, she was finally able to enter into religious life. At some point in her religious life, she began to receive apparitions of Jesus. Our Lord invited her to become his secretary and record in her diary the infinite and intimate love that He has for everyone, but especially sinners. Many years after her death, Saint John Paul II used his platform to share her messages that she received in a Polish convent with the entire world. Since her Diary has been published, hundreds of thousands of men and women have experienced radical conversions to Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Maria Faustina and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

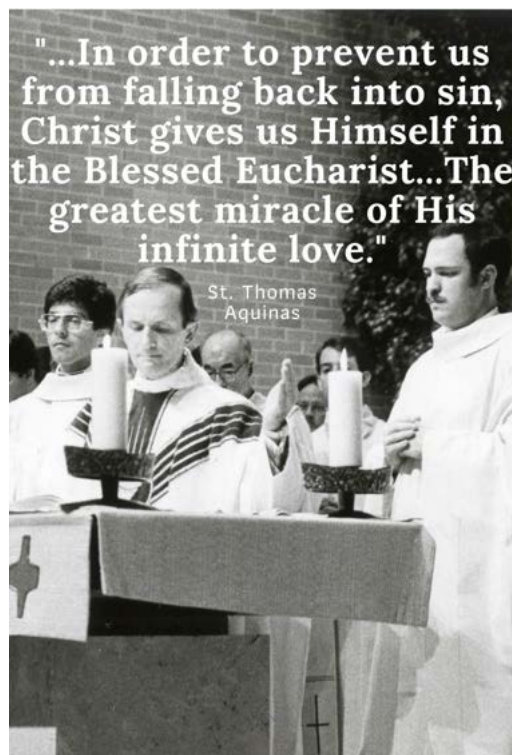


DAY 31: WEDNESDAY

Saint Philip Neri

Father Philip Neri was born in 1515 in Florence. As a teenager, he traveled to San Germano to support his family's business which he planned on inheriting one day in the future. Yet, like the apostles in the Sacred Scriptures, he experienced a life changing and unexpected encounter with Jesus that completely rerouted the course of his life. Not much is known of the specifics of his mystical encounter with Christ, but it is reported that he no longer desired earthly success or worldly possessions after his event with Jesus. To build upon his encounter with Christ, he began to dedicate intentional time every day to prayer and he consistently fasted throughout the week in his efforts to grow in virtue. His structured rule of life with Christ inspired him to imitate Jesus who called him while he was out in the world to also go out and share Jesus with people in their ordinary lives. He invited the people he met to join him in serving the poor, visiting the sick, praying in the church and evangelizing others in the streets. Through his proximity with the people in the community, he recognized their greatest need was the Sacraments so he pursued the priesthood so that he could accompany his people in the confessional and through the Mass. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Philip Neri and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

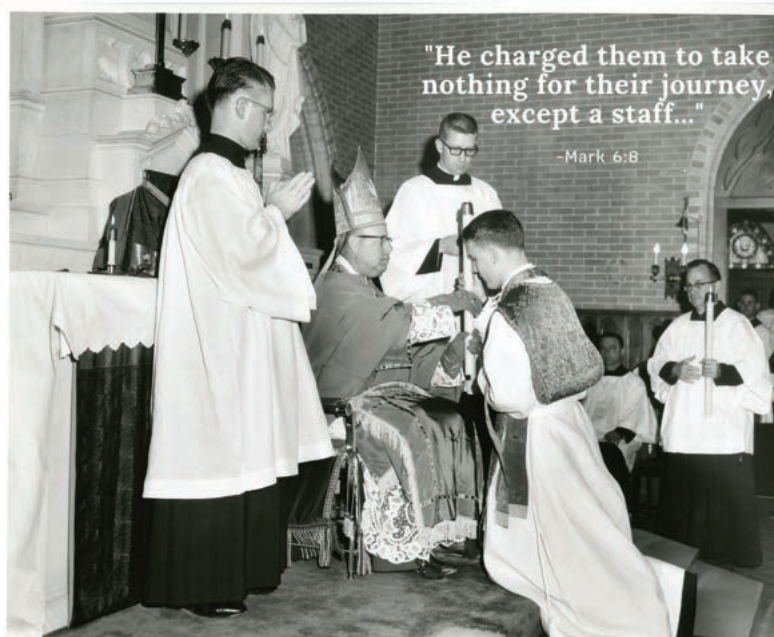


DAY 32: THURSDAY

Saint Mary MacKillop

Sister Mary MacKillop was born in 1842 in Melbourne, Australia. Mary was the oldest of eight children and they were raised on a farm. Her family struggled financially to make ends meet each month, but they always had enough to survive. Mary began working multiple jobs at the age of fourteen to help provide for her family. One of her jobs was taking on the role of governess for her aunt and uncle who ran an estate. She helped to raise their children and educated them as well. While on the estate, she always included the poor children whose parents worked on the property in addition to her obligations to her wealthy cousins. A local priest noticed the good work she was doing in the community and invited her to take on a paid position as a teacher at his school. After a few years of working as a teacher, she was invited to found a school for the poor. She and her sisters taught at the school and devoted their lives to God and to the poor. Their pastor helped them to establish a rule of life that was conducive to their work, prayer and community life. The bishop of their diocese recognized their good works and invited them to formally begin a new religious order in his land. Their new community, "The Sisters of St. Joseph," went on to transform the lives of the poor in their community through their work with children in orphanages, young girls who were being trafficked, old people who were being neglected, prisoners who were condemned by society and the dying who were alone. Her "yes" to serving the needs before her in the present moment as a child led to her "yes" to serving God's people as a religious sister. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Mary MacKillop and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 33: FRIDAY

Saint Moses the Black

Abbot Moses was born in Egypt in 330. In his young adult life, he made a number of bad choices that led to him getting involved with the wrong crowds. He eventually became a member of a gang and then the leader of the gang. His group of terrorists broke many of the commandments including "Thou shall not steal," "Thou shall not commit adultery," and "Thou shall not kill," to name a few. As he grew in age, he grew in the vice of wrath. Due to his spreadsheet of crimes, he was a wanted man. While fleeing from the authorities, he discovered a monastery in the deserts of Egypt. The monks in the monastery welcomed all their guests with wide open arms. Moses quickly noticed that there was something different about these men from every other person he met in his life. They were patient with him, kind to him and forgiving of his offenses. Above all, they found their happiness in meditating on the Bible and not in sin. Moses recognized in the depths of his heart that he was unhappy with his life and he wanted what they had, or rather, who they had. He asked to be accepted into their community as a monk and they welcomed him with open arms. As a monk, he inspired other men who once lived in mortal sin to repent and dedicate their lives to God as well as monks. Eventually, Moses became Abbot of his monastery and was murdered in his attempt to show the mercy of God to a new gang who attempted to steal from his community. His witness inspired his young monks to always be patient, kind and forgiving to all people under all circumstances. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Moses the Black and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

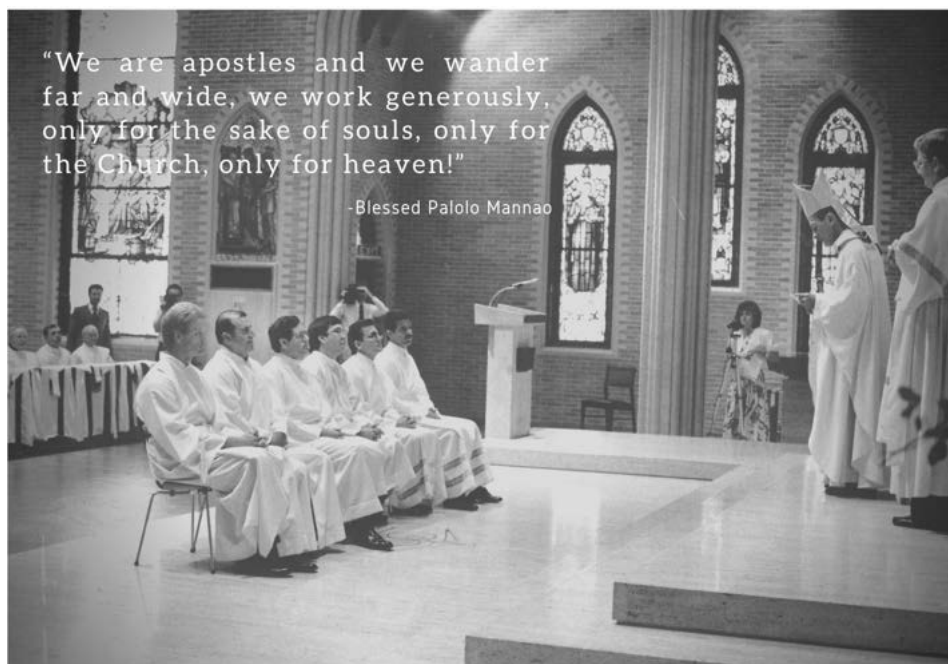


DAY 34: SATURDAY

Saint Clare of Assisi

Sister Clare was born in 1194 in Assisi. She grew up in a wealthy Catholic family. Her mother's witness of intentional time with God in prayer inspired her to also commit to consistent time with Jesus as a child. She spent a lot of her time participating in the many projects and programs that were being offered at her Church. One day, while at Church, she heard Francis of Assisi preach the gospel. She was so inspired by his love for the word of God that she asked him to be her mentor in her relationship with Jesus Christ. Like the man who would go on to become a great saint, she renounced her worldly possessions, emptied herself of her privilege, cut off her hair, and wore a simple robe and veil for the rest of her life. Recognizing that she would not be able to sustain a life of poverty and chastity alone, she joined an established Benedictine monastery of nuns to help her remain accountable to the life of prayer and penance she was inspired to follow encountering Francis. After spending years in the Benedictine monastery with the other nuns, Clare was given permission to live a more austere life of prayer, penance and poverty. Other women began to join her in this new way of living out religious life. Francis continued to visit with Clare to mentor her and her sisters who became known as "The Poor Ladies of San Damiano." Compared to St. Francis, Clare's life was very hidden but she was just as important. Her life of prayer transformed just as many lives as his life of good works. Just two years after her death, she was canonized by the Pope as a saint. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Clare of Assisi and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

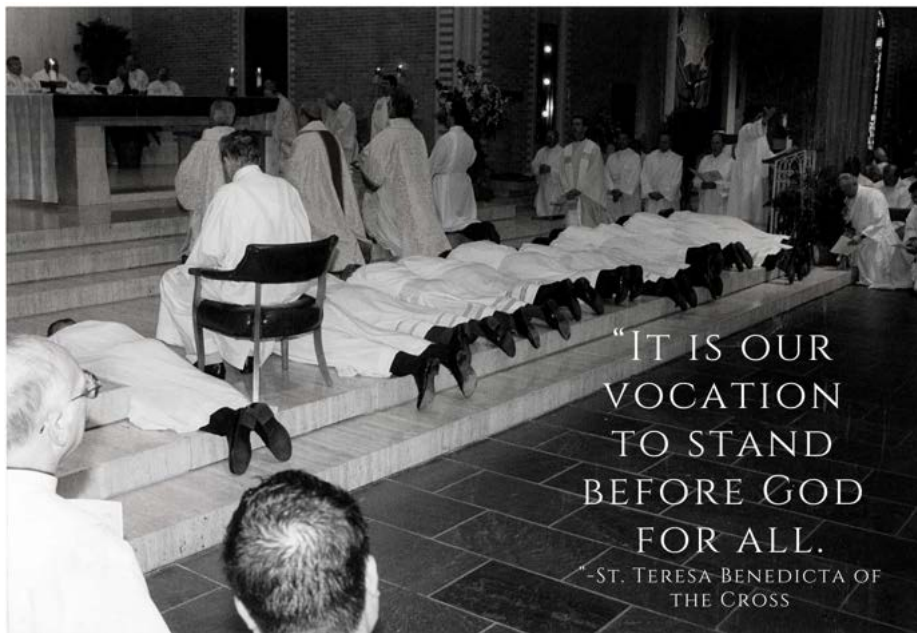


DAY 35: MONDAY

Saint John of Avila

Father John of Avila was born in 1499 in Almodovar Dei Campo, Spain. John lived during the time of the chaotic Protestant revolt that began with the former Catholic priest, Martin Luther. Through his commitment to prayer and study, he perceived our Lord call him to be a priest and he was ordained nine years after the Protestant revolt began. Even though he planned on being a missionary elsewhere, his superiors invited him to stay in his own land to help re-evangelize the Catholics in their community who were abandoning the Sacraments for Protestantism. In an effort to form the Catholics in his community, he asked other diocesan priests to collaborate with him so they could utilize their gifts and talents together to address the needs of their people. Two of the charisms John possessed was teaching and encouragement and he used these gifts to aid several men and women who would become canonized saints in their interior lives. He provided spiritual direction for Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Saint Peter of Alcantara, Saint John of God, Saint Francis Borgia and Saint John of Ribera. Not only did he accompany these saints in their walk toward eternity, but he also helped to reform the diocesan priesthood. Under his guidance, over twenty priests began to live together in community to hold each other accountable to prayer, study, worship, fellowship and service to the people in their land. John's main point of teaching that was emphasized with the people he disciplined in ministry was the necessity of their personal holiness. He called them to be saints and many of them have become canonized saints. John of Avila is the first diocesan priest to be named a doctor of the church. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint John of Avila and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

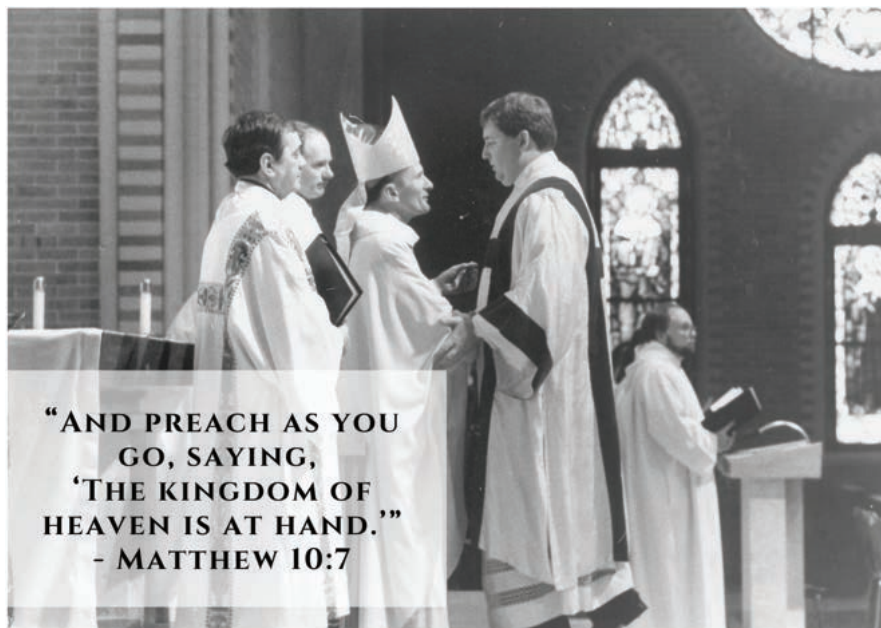


DAY 36: TUESDAY

Venerable Teresa Chikaba

Sister Teresa Chikaba was born in 1676 in West Africa. She was born into the world as a Ghanaian princess. However, at the age of ten, she was kidnapped by Spanish sailors and sold into slavery in Spain. While in Spain, she was baptized by her masters as Catholic. One of her masters worked as a guard at a convent of nuns, so Teresa spent a lot of her time in close proximity to the Blessed Sacrament. The Eucharist became her place of refuge. In the midst of receiving cruel beatings on a daily basis by the other servants during her captivity, she found the chapel with the Eucharistic Presence of Jesus to be her only solace. Eventually, her masters released her from slavery, and she expressed her desire to enter the convent and become a nun. Unfortunately, the diocese perpetuated racist practices that did not allow black women to become nuns, so she was denied entrance to each convent she approached. Eventually, the Dominican convent of Salamanca received permission from their bishop to accept her as a maid. After years of service to their community as a maid, the sisters in her convent became aware that she was far more patient, kind, gentle, humble, forgiving, faithful and prayerful than them. Her witness began to inspire them to deeper conversions. They decided to go against the institutional practice of their time and welcome her into their community as a fully professed sister in religious life. She lived forty years as a nun and inspired her community of sisters to be more rooted in their relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Blessed Sacrament. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Venerable Teresa Chikaba and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 37: WEDNESDAY

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Father Ignatius was born in 1491 in northern Spain. He was raised in a large Catholic family with twelve siblings. As a young man, he entered the military and hoped to win many battles for fame and fortune. Tragically, he became injured during battle when a cannonball shattered his leg.

During his time of recovery, he wanted to read romance novels and delight in lustful thoughts.

However, these kinds of books were not available to him. He decided to settle for the religious books that were accessible to him. One by one, he devoured books about the saints and the life of Christ. Inspired by the heroic witness of the many saints who preceded him in his walk toward eternity, he now wanted nothing more than to join them and become a warrior for Christ. Ignatius began his journey to becoming a soldier for Jesus by spending intentional time in prayer. During his time of prayer, he experienced a vision of the Blessed Mother and decided to pilgrimage to a shrine dedicated to her near Barcelona. Through his time dedicated to prayer, Ignatius was able to discern his vocation to the priesthood and as a priest he was able to help many other disciples persevere in what he saw as one of their greatest battles: fidelity to prayer. Through his “yes” to God’s invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Ignatius of Loyola and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



“THE END FOR WHICH GOD HAS INSTITUTED THE PRIESTHOOD HAS BEEN TO APPOINT ON EARTH PUBLIC PERSONS TO WATCH OVER THE HONOR OF HIS DIVINE MAJESTY, AND TO PROCURE THE SALVATION OF SOULS.” – ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

DAY 38: HOLY THURSDAY

Saint Therese of the Child Jesus

Sister Therese of Lisieux was born in 1873 in Alencon, France. Her mother died from breast cancer when she was just four years old. Her father and her older four sisters stepped up to the plate and provided for all her needs in childhood. Her sisters were all rooted in the spiritual life, so Therese grew up in an environment where prayer was as normal as eating. At the young age of thirteen, she felt called to become a nun. She begged her dad, her bishop and eventually Pope Leo XIII himself to give her permission to enter religious life. At the age fifteen, she was given permission to enter the Carmelites. As a nun, she was inspired by many of the saints whose lives she studied. However, she also recognized that she wasn't as gifted as many of them. She wasn't as smart as St. Thomas Aquinas or bold as St. Joan of Arc. She wasn't a gifted preacher like St. Dominic or wise as St. Teresa of Avila. Though she wanted to be a great saint like them, she knew her path to heaven would be different from their walk with our Lord. In prayer, she discerned a little way, not filled with extraordinary works or deeds, but rather, small acts everyday that were filled with great love. She intentionally would reach out to help the meanest nun in the community, hold her tongue when she was falsely accused or misunderstood, and not complain when the temperature was too hot or cold. Her little way of holiness has gone on to inspire generations of disciples to strive for sainthood by also serving Jesus through small and hidden acts filled with great love. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Therese of the Child Jesus and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

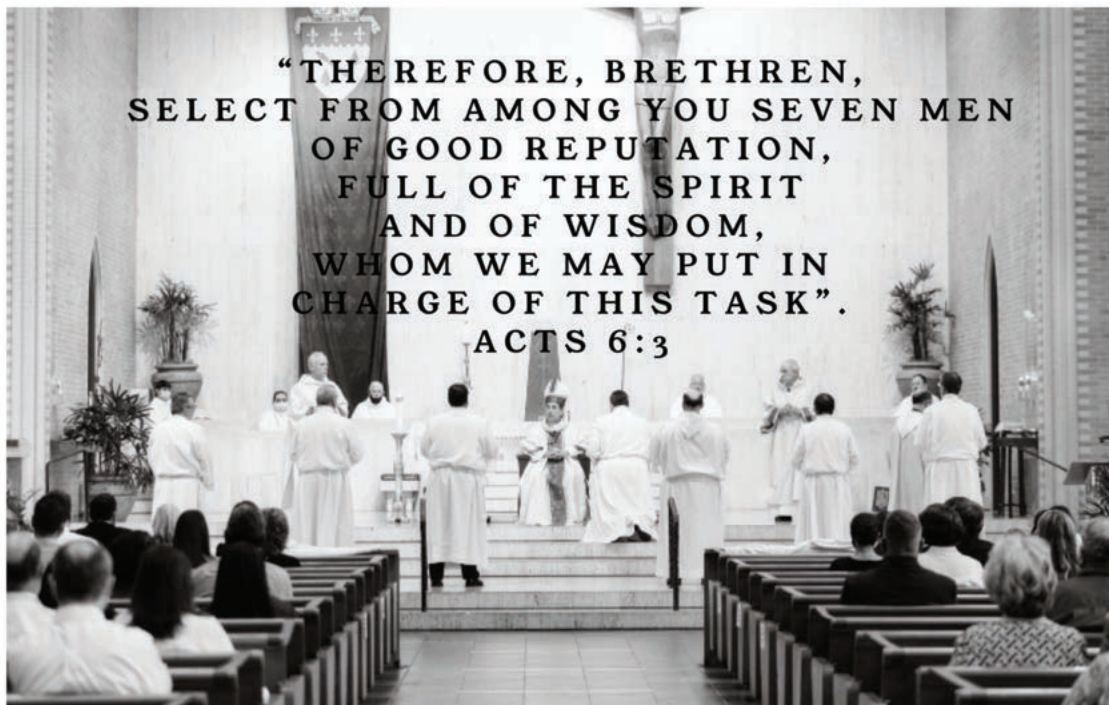


DAY 39: GOOD FRIDAY

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Padre Pio was born in 1887 in Pietrelcina, Italy. He was raised in a family of farmers who were devout in their Catholic faith. As a young kid, he frequented daily Mass and served as an altar boy for the majority of his youth. He began to think about the priesthood as an adolescent but the community of friars that he wanted to join discerned that he was not suitable because of his intellectual limitations. Undeterred by their rejection, he began to work with a tutor and eventually he was able to prove suitable to enter the religious order at the age of fifteen. As a Capuchin Franciscan, he tried to imitate St. Francis of Assisi in his relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church. St. Francis is the Church's first known cleric to receive the stigmata, which is the wounds of Christ on his hands, feet and side. After a number of years in the Franciscan community, Padre Pio also began to experience the stigmata which caused him immense exterior and interior suffering. For fifty years he felt the passion of Christ in his body and for fifty years he offered up his pain and suffering in reparation for the sins of his brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. Even though he wasn't personally responsible for their sins, he recognized that he was responsible as a disciple of Jesus with offering up penances for their conversions on earth and their purification in purgatory. Through his "yes" to God's invitation, he was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in his community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Saint Pio of Pietreclina and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.



DAY 40: HOLY SATURDAY

Blessed Agnes Phila

Sister Agnes Phila was a religious sister with the Congregation of the Lovers of the Cross in Thailand during the early 1900's when the police were persecuting the Catholic Church. Parish priests were forced to leave the villages they were serving, and the sisters were forbidden from teaching the faith in their Catholic Schools. On Christmas Day, the chief of police informed the religious sisters in Sister Agnes Phila's community that he would kill them all if they did not stop speaking about Jesus. Sister Agnes stood up to the chief of police and told him that he better "bring enough bullets!" After her encounter with the chief of police, Sister Agnes wrote a letter testifying to her community that they would never deny Jesus. She and a number of people from her community were shot and killed the next day. Sister Agnes fell in love with Jesus as a child through the witness of her family members who were intentional disciples of Jesus Christ and stayed in love with Jesus through her intentional and consistent time that she set apart for God in prayer every day. Through her "yes" to God's invitation, she was able to be used by God as an instrument of renewal and reformation in her community. May we pray for the grace to imitate Blessed Agnes Phila and commit to a daily life of prayer so that we too can perceive how our Lord is inviting us to become saints and accompany saints in the land of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Recite the Rosary for the Person/Family who is Fasting for Holy & Healthy State of Life Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life from our Parishes for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

