



A Novena of Prayer for Vocations to the Society of Mary

“In the first place, it is clear that the first thing he did was to pray for them: before calling them, Jesus spent the night alone in prayer, listening to the will of the Father (cf. Lk 6:12) in a spirit of interior detachment from mundane concerns. It is Jesus’ intimate conversation with the Father which results in the calling of his disciples. Vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life are first and foremost the fruit of constant contact with the living God and insistent prayer lifted up to the “Lord of the harvest...”

Message of Pope Benedict for the 48th World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2011



It is a tradition in the Society of Mary to pray through the intercession of St Peter Chanel for vocations to the Society. All are invited during this novena to join in prayer for vocations to the Society. This year the feast of St Peter Chanel falls during Easter Week. This means the novena would clash with Holy Week and Easter. So this year the novena will begin on the 6th of May and finish on Saturday the 14th – the vigil of Vocations Sunday.

All Marists, professed and lay, are invited to pray to the “Lord of the harvest” to send workers into his harvest. You may like to make use of this booklet to animate your prayer, individually, in a group or during community prayer.

Cover illustration: St Peter Chanel. Painting by John Coburn, an Australian artist. The original, previously in the Chapel at St Peter Chanel Scholasticate, Toongabbie, Australia, now hangs in Montbel, Hunters Hill, Sydney. Photo: Fr Ron Nissen, SM

Day One: Friday, May 6.

That we might all deepen our commitment to the Gospel and witness to God's call to us.

“It is a challenging and uplifting invitation that Jesus addresses to those to whom he says: “Follow me!” He invites them to become his friends, to listen attentively to his word and to live with him. He teaches them complete commitment to God and to the extension of his kingdom in accordance with the law of the Gospel: “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit ” (Jn 12:24).”

Message of Pope Benedict for the 48th World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2011

Intercessions:

For all Christians, that they might commit themselves more deeply each day to the Lord's call to follow him, giving witness to the Kingdom.

Lord, hear us.

St Peter Chanel followed the call of the Lord that led to his death and the eventual conversion of the entire island of Futuna. May his witness inspire many to commit their lives to the Gospel and so “bear much fruit”.

Lord, hear us.

That we gathered here might hear clearly the call of the Lord and work for the extension of his kingdom among us.

Lord, hear us.

May many young people hear the Lord's invitation to be his friends and listening attentively to his Word, live with him in religious life and priesthood.

Lord, hear us.

Day Two: Saturday May 7.

That families be strengthened and encouraged in their vocation as “domestic churches”.

“In particular, I turn to those who can offer a specific contribution to the pastoral care of vocations: …families… May families be “animated by the spirit of faith and love and by the sense of duty” (Optatam Totius, 2) which is capable of helping children to welcome generously the call to priesthood and to religious life.”

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Intercessions:

We pray for Christian families. May they be blessed in their life together and grow as models of community and faith for their children.

Lord, hear us.

St Peter Chanel, growing up in a large loving family, learnt faith and service from his parents. May his example and intercession inspire the youth to dedicate their lives to the Gospel.

Lord, hear us.

We remember single parent families and families whose life together is a struggle. May they be “animated by the spirit of faith and love” and grow “as a true source of light and a wholesome leaven for other families” (FS #72).

Lord, hear us.

For parents, that they might help their children “welcome generously the call to priesthood and to religious life.”

Lord, hear us.

Day Three: Sunday, May 8.

That all Marists be faithful to their vocation and call others to Marist life.

“With trust and perseverance let us invoke the aid of the Virgin Mary, that by the example of her own acceptance of God’s saving plan and her powerful intercession, every community will be more and more open to saying “yes” to the Lord who is constantly calling new labourers to his harvest.”

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Intercessions:

Mary’s gracious choice calls us to be Marist. May we, both professed and lay Marists, always follow the example of Mary in the early Church.

Lord, hear us.

St Peter Chanel with trust and perseverance strived to establish the Church on Futuna. May we too endeavour to establish the Church and renew it according to our charism.

Lord, hear us.

Mary said, “yes” to God’s saving plan. May those the Lord is calling to his harvest in the priesthood and religious life follow her example of faith and trust.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, you constantly call new labourers into your harvest. Call many young men and women to the work of your Mother in her Society.

Lord, hear us.

Day Four: Monday, May 9.

For those the Lord is calling to the priesthood and religious life.

“It is important to encourage and support those who show clear signs of a call to priestly life and religious consecration, and to enable them to feel the warmth of the whole community as they respond “yes” to God and the Church. I encourage them, in the same words which I addressed to those who have already chosen to enter the seminary: “You have done a good thing. Because people will always have need of God, even in an age marked by technical mastery of the world and globalization: they will always need the God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, the God who gathers us together in the universal Church in order to learn with him and through him life’s true meaning and in order to uphold and apply the standards of true humanity” (Letter to Seminarians, 18 October 2010)”

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Intercessions:

We pray for those preparing for Marist life. May the Lord bless and guide them as they continue to learn his call to them.

Lord, hear us.

St Peter Chanel left his country and went to the ends of the earth to satisfy people’s need of God. May young people, as they embark on life’s journey, find true meaning with and through God.

Lord, hear us.

We pray, Lord, that you call many young men and women to serve your Church in the priesthood and religious life. May they experience support and encouragement and feel the warmth of the whole community.

Lord, hear us.

May we all seek to grow a “culture of vocations” in our Church. Help us to encourage and call young men and women to follow you, Lord, in every vocation, and to the priesthood and religious life.

Lord, hear us.

Day Five: Tuesday, May 10.

For those studying in seminaries, formation houses and novitiate.

“It is no less challenging to follow Christ today. It means learning to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus, growing close to him, listening to his word and encountering him in the sacraments; it means learning to conform our will to his. This requires a genuine school of formation for all those who would prepare themselves for the ministerial priesthood or the consecrated life under the guidance of the competent ecclesial authorities. The Lord does not fail to call people at every stage of life to share in his mission and to serve the Church in the ordained ministry and in the consecrated life.”

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Intercessions:

For those preparing to share in Lord’s mission as priests and religious: That encountering him in his Word and the sacraments they grow ever closer to him and become holy and effective ministers of the Gospel.

Lord, hear us.

St Peter Chanel took up the challenge of following the Lord to the other side of the world. Through his intercession and witness, may many young men and women take up the challenge of service in the Church.

Lord, hear us.

May seminarians and novices grow close to the Lord as they prepare to share the Lord’s mission and serve his Church after the example of Mary.

Lord, hear us.

For all Marists, that they will always keep their gaze fixed on the Lord and grow ever closer to him.

Lord, hear us.

Day Six: Wednesday, May 11

That all Marists might be truly missionary.

“At the beginning of his public life, the Lord called some fishermen on the shore of the Sea of Galilee: “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19). He revealed his messianic mission to them by the many “signs” which showed his love for humanity and the gift of the Father’s mercy. Through his words and his way of life he prepared them to carry on his saving work. Finally, knowing “that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father” (Jn 13:1), he entrusted to them the memorial of his death and resurrection, and before ascending into heaven he sent them out to the whole world with the command: “Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19).”

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Intercessions:

For all Marists: That we might live out our calling to “make disciples of all nations” by way of our various ministries and apostolates.

Lord, hear us.

St Peter Chanel sailed to Oceania, following the Lord’s invitation to be a fisher of men and women. With his intercession and following his example, may young people dedicate themselves to the spread of the Gospel.

Lord, hear us.

We that pray many young men and women obey the Lord’s command to go and make disciples of all the nations. May they hear his call to mission as lay people and as priests and religious.

Lord, hear us.

As ones who through the Society of Mary, have heard the Lord’s call to cast out our nets, may we also have the wisdom and courage to call others to be fishers of the men and women of our time.

Lord, hear us.

Day Seven: Thursday, May 12.

For vocations to the priesthood and the religious life

“... to grow into a genuine and affectionate friendship with the Lord, cultivated through personal and liturgical prayer; to grow in familiarity with the sacred Scriptures and thus to listen attentively and fruitfully to the Word of God; to understand that entering into God’s will does not crush or destroy a person, but instead leads to the discovery of the deepest truth about ourselves; and finally to be generous and fraternal in relationships with others, since it is only in being open to the love of God that we discover true joy and the fulfilment of our aspirations. “Proposing Vocations in the Local Church” means having the courage, through an attentive and suitable concern for vocations, to point out this challenging way of following Christ which... is capable of engaging the whole of one’s life.”

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Intercessions:

Peter Chanel with Br Marie Nizier was able to live Marist life in the face of severe difficulties. May their example of friendship with the Lord, prayer, openness to the Word, and fraternal love be an example for all Marists and a inspiration to those considering religious life.

Lord, hear us.

For Marist religious; fathers, brothers and sisters. That truly opening themselves to the love of God, they might discover true joy and fulfilment in their vocation.

Lord, hear us.

May the Lord call many young people to answer the challenge of following Christ in the priesthood and religious life. May they discover the richness of this way of life that can engage the whole of their lives.

Lord, hear us.

For all who minister in the Church: that attentive and concerned for vocations, we might have the courage to point out the challenge of following Christ to young people.

Lord, hear us.

Day Eight: Friday, May 13

For missionary vocations

“... you should “foster priestly and religious vocations as much as possible, and should take a special interest in missionary vocations” (CD 15). The Lord needs you to co-operate with him in ensuring that his call reaches the hearts of those whom he has chosen... I would also remind you ... of the concern of the universal Church for an equitable distribution of priests in the world. Your openness ... will become a blessing from God for your communities and a sign to the faithful of a priestly service that generously considers the needs of the entire Church.”

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Intercessions:

Peter Chanel and the first Marists didn't hesitate to leave family, home and nation to preach the Gospel to the peoples of Oceania. Inspired by their example, may Marists, lay and religious, continue to offer themselves for work in foreign missions.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, we pray for Marists around the world who preach your Word in missions far from their homes and families. Keep them safe and guide and bless their ministry among those to whom they have been sent.

Lord, hear us.

We pray that units of the Society blessed with financial or human resources might generously consider helping those areas that are in need, in order to foster the work of Mary.

Lord, hear us.

For an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life: that many young men and women might respond to your call, offering themselves for mission in the developing Churches of Africa, Asia and America and for the renewal of established Churches.

Lord, hear us.

Day Nine: Saturday May 14

For an increase in vocations to the Society of Mary

“Dear brothers and sisters, your commitment to the promotion and care of vocations becomes most significant and pastorally effective when carried out in the unity of the Church and in the service of communion. For this reason, every moment in the life of the Church community – catechesis, formation meetings, liturgical prayer, pilgrimages – can be a precious opportunity for awakening in the People of God, and in particular in children and young people, a sense of belonging to the Church and of responsibility for answering the call to priesthood and to religious life by a free and informed decision.”

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Intercessions:

While on the island of Futuna Peter Chanel had a continued interest in the young people of the college of Belley. May he intercede for the Society, and for Marist students, that many young people hear and answer the call to Marist life.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, call many young men and women to commit themselves to doing the Work of your Mother in her Society.

Lord, hear us.

For all Marists: that we remember that all ministry calls people to belong to the Church. As our work awakens in children and young people that sense of belonging, help us to encourage those you call to answer your invitation to priesthood and religious life.

Lord, hear us.

For the Society of Mary, that through the intercession of Mary, many young men and women will commit themselves to life and service in her “little congregation”.

Lord, hear us.

St Peter Chanel,

you left your homeland
to proclaim Jesus,
Saviour of the world,
to the peoples of Oceania.

Guided by the Spirit of God,
who is the strength of the gentle,
your bore witness to love,
even laying down your life.

Grant that, like you,
we may live our daily life
in peace, in joy, and in fraternal
love.

May your prayer and example
call forth from our midst
many workers for the Gospel
so that God's Kingdom may reach
to the ends of the earth.
Amen.



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