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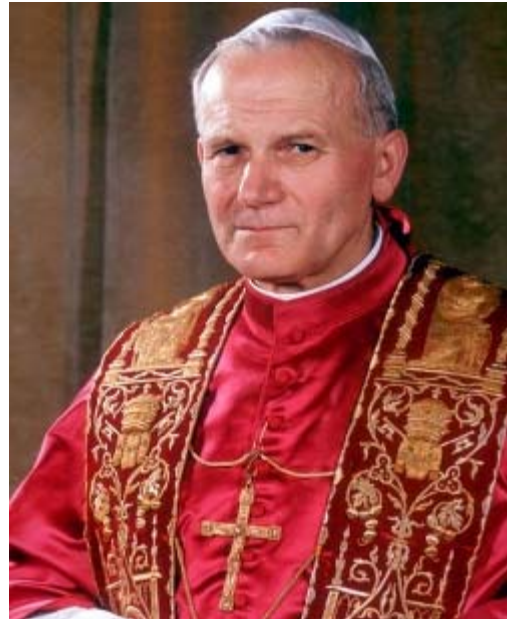
## **Blessed John Paul II: Champion of Catholic Youth and Vocations**

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*"Young people of the world, hear the voice of Christ! Hear His voice and follow Him!"*

Blessed John Paul II proclaimed this message of hopeful challenge to youth throughout the universal Church during his pontificate. From the first moment he sat in the throne of St. Peter, he made this message a priority.

Having experienced a full complement of life situations during his own youth (from the death of his mother and brother to a life of hard labor under the rule of an invading army), he knew what challenges face every young person – and what potential fills them!



In celebration of his Beatification, here are some select quotes from Blessed John Paul II which provide encouragement and direction for vocational discernment:

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*"It is always Christ Who sends. But whom does He send? You, young people, are the ones He looks upon with love. Christ, who says, 'Follow Me,' wants you to live your lives with a sense of vocation. The search and*

*discovery of God's will for you is a deep and fascinating endeavor. Every vocation, every path to which Christ calls us ultimately leads to fulfillment and happiness, because it leads to God, to sharing in God's own life."*

Manila, Philippines, January 13, 1996

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*"It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is He who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is He who reads in your heart your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be grounded down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal."*

August 19, 2000 at World Youth Day in Rome

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*"What do you seek? Each one of us here must ask himself this question. But you above all, since you have your life ahead of you. I invite you to decide definitively the direction of your way. With the very words of Christ, I ask you: 'What do you seek'? (Jn 1:38). Do you seek God? The spiritual tradition of Christianity not only underlines the importance of our search for God. It highlights something more important still: it is God who looks for us. He comes out to meet us. Our pilgrimage means wanting to give an answer to our needs, to our questions, to our search; it also means going out to meet God who looks for us with a love so great that we can understand it only with difficulty. This meeting with God is achieved in Jesus Christ. It is in Him, Who has given His life for us, in His humanity that we experience the love which God has for us. 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life' (Jn 3:16)."*

Compostella, Spain 1989

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*"The priestly vocation is a mystery. It is the mystery of a 'wondrous exchange'-admirabile commercium-between God and man. A man offers*

*his humanity to Christ, so that Christ may use him as an instrument of salvation, making him as it were into another Christ. Unless we grasp the mystery of this 'exchange,' we will not understand how it can be that a young man, hearing the words 'Follow Me!,' can give up everything for Christ, in the certainty that if he follows this path he will find complete personal fulfillment.*

*"In our world, is there any greater fulfillment of our humanity than to be able to re-present every day in persona Christi the redemptive sacrifice, the same sacrifice which Christ offered on the Cross? In this sacrifice, on the one hand, the very mystery of the Trinity is present in the most profound way, and, on the other hand, the entire created universe is 'united' (cf. Eph 1:10). The Eucharist is also celebrated in order to offer 'on the altar of the whole earth the world's work and suffering,' in the beautiful expression of Teilhard de Chardin. This is why in the thanksgiving after the Holy Mass the Old Testament canticle of the three young men is recited: Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino. For in the Eucharist all creatures seen and unseen, and man in particular, bless God as Creator and Father; they bless Him with the words and the action of Christ, the Son of God."*

Gift and Mystery, Ch. VIII

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### **Prayer for Vocations by Blessed John Paul II**

*Lord Jesus, as You once called the first disciples to make them fishers of men, let Your sweet invitation continue to resound: Come, follow Me!*

*Give young men and women the grace of responding quickly to Your voice. Support Your bishops, priests and consecrated people in their apostolic labor.*

*Grant perseverance to our seminarians and to all those who are carrying out the ideal of a life totally consecrated to Your service.*

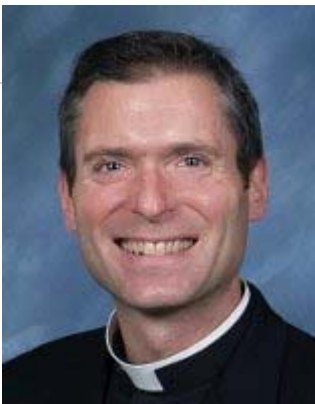
*Awaken in our community a missionary eagerness. Lord, send workers to Your harvest and do not allow humanity to be lost for the lack of pastors, missionaries and people dedicated to the cause of the Gospel.*

*Mary, Mother of the Church, the model of every vocation, help us to say "yes" to the Lord, Who calls us to cooperate in the divine plan of salvation.*

*Amen.*



Thank you for taking the time to consider your vocation.



If you think God may be calling you to the serve Him in the ministry of the priesthood, please contact me.

May God bless you!

*Fr. Luke Ballman*

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