

HOMILY: Fourth Sunday of Easter May 12th 2019

THEME: VOCATION SUNDAY 2019

This the Fourth Sunday of Easter the Scriptures always celebrates Christ as, the Good Shepherd. Consequently, the Church throughout the World reflects annually with Parishioners like yourselves about Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious life,- that is for men and women considering being a member of a Religious Order of Sisters or Religious Priests such as a Jesuit, of which I am a past pupil and beneficiary. I owe much to the Jesuit priests who taught me as a young student, who tried to prepare me for life.

Or

I reflect at this time about the Sisters of Notre Dame, who taught here for many years past, in our own St. Rose of Lima Grade School, located on the same campus of this church building.-In my almost three years here at St Rose, I've met many Parishioners like yourselves who spoke in glowing terms about the excellent education they received thanks the Sisters of Notre Dame, setting them on the road for life.

From a Panorama Viewpoint,- we in this parish are part of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles,--the largest Catholic Archdiocese in the Whole United States comprised of 287 Parishes, of which St. Rose Parish is one. We have a catholic population of almost 5 million registered Catholics in this our Archdiocese- an average of a Third more are not registered.

(Over four weeks ago we had Holy Week Services including Easter Sunday in this Church. Attendance, we priests agree broke all records. – If every Catholic in our City of Simi Valley came to Church every Sunday,-- as they should,-- we would have to build a new Church.)

Geographically, our Archdiocese, is comprised of Los Angeles City and County, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. The Archdiocese covers 8,762, square miles. That is the UPSIDE of the Catholic Church in Los Angeles. It is PART ONE of what I want to reflect aloud with you today.

PART TWO: THE DOWNSIDE

Here we are the largest Catholic Church in the United States SHORT of Nuns and Priests. The future of our Catholic Church in Los Angeles:- is in the hands of Retired Priests like myself,... and Deacons... SADLY...! The problem is rooted in the word VOCATION.

Take English word Vocation, -- all of us here use from time to time, and trace its original meaning. - The English WORD VOCATION like so many words in the English Language finds its origin in the Latin Language , the Mother of all the Germanic languages. Open a Latin Dictionary and look up the meaning of the word Vocation... You will come across the Latin WORD...To INVITE...That's the heart of the issue.

God ,... INVITES... EVERYDAY, -- women and men to follow Him in the Ministerial Priesthood and Religious Life. Many men and women say “NO THANK YOU”-- to God’s invitation to them. – GOD find somebody else.—In so much of life, we are excellent at volunteering somebody, else but never me, when there is something I don’t want to do,-- and I will come up with an endless list of plausible excuses,.. to justify my refusal , to God. For example: I cannot marry if I become a Nun or Priest.-- To that excuse, I respond after 47 years experience as a Priest in two countries,- London, England , and here in the United States. I feel happy and fulfilled in my life.

I have met people here who have said to me;” you Priests should be allowed to marry... to which I say,... any married couple listening to me here today you will make many more painful sacrifices if you want your marriage to be a success,- more sacrifice, than I will be required to make as a priest. So to say there is a shortage of VOCATIONS is a “MISNOMER.” God is sending out plenty of INVITATIONS... EVERYDAY. - There are not as many acceptances by men or women.

CONCLUSION

In everything I do in my life, irrespective of our wide variety of vocations, gathered here in our Father’s House - out of intense love and respect for me,- and the free will God gives me and everyone gathered : God, my Father always INVITES and MOTIVATES me... but never OBLIGATES me... PURE LOVE AT ITS BEST...!

Maybe there is some woman or man here today, -- God is Inviting you, through me His Priest... After all -- I’m only God’s instrument...! What is your response to your Father’s invitation to you today ?

AMEN.