

St. Teresa of Avila Parish

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
44 Leonard St., Kitchener, Ontario, N2H 6C8 Phone: 519-743-4525
E-mail: st.teresa@stteresakit.ca www.stteresakit.ca

Fourth Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2020

St. Teresa of Avila

“Truth suffers,
but never dies.”



Parish Staff & Organizations

Pastor: Fr. Marian Gil, OMI

Parish Secretary: Mary Steffler

Business Administrator: David Agnew

Facilities Manager: Jim Weber

Volunteer Gardeners:

Baptism Preparation Team:

CWL President:

Lector Co-ordinator: Mary Alice Zister

Eucharistic Minister Co-ordinator:

Kim Voelzing

Prayer Group:

Mila Navaleza - 519-579-8276

Finance Council Chair:

Don Pickett, Jr.

Pastoral Council Chair:

Barbara Daly

St. Vincent de Paul:

Bernie & Rosemary Pickett

519-749-1501

St. Teresa School

Principal: Mr. Brian Goodyear

Secretary: Mary Lavigne

519-743-2131

Parish Office Hours

Monday - Friday

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday – Office Closed

Weekday Schedule

Please check inside for
weekly schedule

Saturday Liturgy:

9:00 a.m.

5:00 p.m.

Sunday Liturgy:

10:00 a.m.

Confession: 30 min. before Mass; Sat. 4:15 – 4:45p.m.

Healing Mass: First Friday of each month – 7:00 p.m.

Prayer Meeting: 2nd, 3rd & 4th Friday – 7:00 p.m.

Fourth Sunday of Easter

This Sunday is called “**Good Shepherd Sunday**” or “**Vocations Sunday**”, a day when our Church prays especially for new shepherds and pastors, to lead the Christian communities. The image of God as the shepherd of His people has a long tradition in the history of God’s people. In today’s Gospel passage, which consists of the first 10 verses (J 10, 1-10), there seem to be two separate parables. The first is a warning against people who would want to steal the sheep and the second focuses on the relationship between the sheep and their shepherd. The central image, too, is not so much that of the shepherd, as of the gate. In fact, later on in the passage, Jesus says, “**I AM the Gate**”. Today, He presents Himself twice as the door (v. 7). To this image, others are added: the fence, the thieves and robbers, the guardian and strangers. Who are they? Whom do they represent? The feature that sets Jesus apart is tenderness: He knows His sheep by name; and calls them “one by one.” He takes interest in each of His disciples. He understands their difficulties, does not force the issues but evaluates the condition of each, and helps and respects them.

READ: The parable of the good shepherd involves faith. The sheep hear his voice and they follow. The good shepherd promises food and security. He knows each by name. He is also the door, through which, by faith, they enter.

REFLECT: Do you hear the voice of the good shepherd? Since he knows you by name, does this make you feel good?

PRAY: The good shepherd calls you by name. Pray for the grace to listen to his voice in your daily life. Pray for people involved in great disputes, especially those in the land in which Jesus lived.

ACT: Pay attention to names when you meet new people. Learn people’s names and use them.

Mass Intentions for May 4 – May 10, 2020

Tuesday, May 5 at 7 p.m. +Father Peter Watters – Dan & Pat Weiler

Wednesday, May 6 at 7 p.m. +Larry Wismer – Joan Wismer

Thursday, May 7 at 7 p.m. +David Tschirhart – Family

Friday, May 8 at 7 p.m. **Grace of healing for Matthew from his addiction** – Ewa Dabrowska-Miciula

Saturday, May 9 at 9 a.m. +John T. & Eileen Krafczyk – Bruce Krafczyk
7 p.m. +Dorothy Staal - Charlotte Wilson & Family

Sunday, May 10 at 10 a.m. – **Fifth Sunday of Easter – Parishioners of St. Teresa Parish & Mother’s Day Intentions**

Mass Intentions – For Mother’s Day, May 10th and Father’s Day, June 21st, we will accept multiple Mass intentions. Call the office if you would like to make a request at 519-743-4525

All Parish Events suspended until further notice!

Office Closure

Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, the Parish Office, at 44 Leonard St. will remain closed until further notice.

Mary will be working from home and therefore, you can continue to reach us at st.teresa@stteresakit.ca or 519-743-4525.

Diocese of Hamilton Prayer Calendar 2020

May 4 – Rev. Jeffery Oehring

May 5 – Rev. Henryk Krajewski, C.R.

May 6 – Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul (S.O.C.)

May 7 – Rev. Michal Kruszewski, C.R.

May 8 – Rev. Francesco Cucchi

May 9 – Rev. Vincent Kim Van Toan

May 10 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

Vocations - May 3, 2020 - World Day of Prayer for Vocations -

The Good Shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them. Is He asking you to help others to find Him? Pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood, especially for the Diocese of Hamilton, that God will raise up good shepherds in our midst. If God is calling you, contact Fr. Michael King, Vocation Director, Diocese of Hamilton at 905-528-7988; email vocations@hamiltondiocese.com www.hamiltondiocese.com

Mass Intentions for May 4 – May 10, 2020 will be celebrated by Father Gil each day, **privately**. The **Masses** will be **live-streamed**, Tuesday to Friday at 7 p.m., Saturday at 9:00 a.m., Saturday Vigil in anticipation of Sunday at 7 p.m., and on Sunday at 10:00 a.m., on Zoom. Please join Father by clicking on the following link: <https://zoom.us/j/5887658626> Password: 274733 **The Divine Mercy Chaplet** is also **live-streamed**, Tuesday to Friday at 3 p.m., on the same link.

Marian Devotion will take place during the month of May, following the Eucharist, from Tuesday to Saturday.



**Whoever has God
lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.**

St. Teresa of Avila

Catholic Education Week at the Diocese of Hamilton –

During this difficult time, it is a pleasure to share with you our initiatives to support this year's **Catholic Education Week** at the Diocese of Hamilton, in an effort to stay connected to our school community and the life of the Church.

First and foremost, we would like to announce the **live-streaming of a special Mass for Catholic Education**, from **St. Patrick's Parish, in Hamilton**. This Holy Mass will be celebrated by **His Excellency, Bishop Crosby, OMI**, on **Friday, May 8, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.**

Here is the link: <https://stpats.online.church>

(* Please note that this link is only active during Mass times)

The full texts of **Bishop Crosby's Message** in English and in French are included in this bulletin.

Bishop Crosby has also recorded a message on **YouTube**. For the English and French versions of **Bishop Crosby's Video-Message**, click on the links below:

Click here for English: <https://youtu.be/UhLJbleNe0Y>

Click here for French: <https://youtu.be/zd2eRzd65nI>

Please use the link below for the special Resource Page on the Diocesan Website, where all the resources for this year's Catholic Education Week are housed:

Click here to visit: <https://hamiltondiocese.com/cew-2020>

Stewardship Report

We have received enquiries about how parishioners might support our parish without being able to be physically present. To support our parish via credit card, please visit the special **Parish Offertory Fund: COVID-19** page at the Diocese of Hamilton:

[COVID-19 Parish Fund - Diocese of Hamilton](#)

Once you are on the Parish Offertory Fund: COVID-19 page, there are 4 sections on the form to complete. They are as follows:

- DONATION DETAILS
- DONOR & TAX RECEIPT INFORMATION
- PAYMENT INFORMATION
- IF YOU HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOUR PARISH, PLEASE SHARE IT HERE:

To ensure the funds get directed to our parish, it is imperative that you select **St. Teresa of Avila Parish, Kitchener** in the drop box in the **FUND** box of the Donation Details section.

Once you have completed the form, click on **COMPLETE DONATION NOW**. This method of giving will provide you with an **electronic tax receipt** immediately upon making your gift.

If you choose the above option, it would be greatly appreciated if you could email the parish office at st.teresa@stteresakit.ca to advise us of your donation.

You may also send a gift directly to our parish through the mail. Continuing support of our parish is an act of generosity and faith. We are very grateful for any contributions you may be able to make at this time

Stewardship Report April 29, 2020

Collection.....	\$3079.00
Rosa Gerger Funeral	\$ 100.00

The Waterloo Knights of Columbus Fish Fry – Available every Friday. **Pick up only:** from **4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**, 145 Dearborn Place, Waterloo. Please call Derek, at 226-748-8378, to order. 1 pc. - \$14.00; 2 pc. - \$16.00 Best in Town.

15th Annual Bishop's Banquet - Tuesday, May 5, 2020 – The 15th Annual Bishop's Banquet at Resurrection Catholic Secondary School, Kitchener has been **POSTPONED** until further notice, due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Historical roots of the May devotion: The tradition of the dedication of May to Mary, finds its beginnings in the writings of Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), who wrote ten encyclicals between 1883 and 1889, on the value of the Rosary and the intercessory role of Mary. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "The May devotion in its present form originated in Rome by Father Latomia at the Roman College of the Society of Jesus. From Rome the practice spread to other Jesuit colleges and thence to nearly every Catholic church of the Latin rite."

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is a meaningful and consoling practice, and has been, since the dawn of Christianity. Prayer to the Mother of Jesus, is a source of inexhaustible blessings and graces, for those who seek to deepen their faith, grow in love for Christ and the Church, and walk in hope. Consecrating oneself to Our Lady, has also a rich theological and spiritual significance, for the more we are devoted to Mary, the closer we will come to Jesus, and through Him, to the Father, in the Spirit. The Virgin Mary, as Vatican II teaches, is our model and mother, type and most eminent member of the Church, shining forth as "a sign of sure hope and solace to the people of God during its sojourn on earth."

Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful for the Month of May 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of May is approaching, a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family. The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this "family" aspect, also from a spiritual point of view.

For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May. This can be done either as a group or individually; you can decide according to your own situations, making the most of both opportunities. The key to doing this is always simplicity, and it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow.

I am also providing two prayers to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the Rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you. I include them with this letter so that they are available to everyone.

Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 25 April 2020

Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist

FIRST PRAYER

O Mary,
You shine continuously on our journey
as a sign of salvation and hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who, at the foot of the cross,
were united with Jesus' suffering,
and persevered in your faith.
"Protectress of the Roman people",
you know our needs,
and we know that you will provide,
so that, as at Cana in Galilee,
joy and celebration may return
after this time of trial.
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,

to conform ourselves to the will of the Father
and to do what Jesus tells us.
For He took upon Himself our suffering,
and burdened Himself with our sorrows
to bring us, through the cross,
to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.
We fly to your protection,
O Holy Mother of God;
Do not despise our petitions
in our necessities,
but deliver us always
from every danger,
O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.

SECOND PRAYER

"We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God".

In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection.

Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.

Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health.

Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone.

Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus.

Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity.

Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out His all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

Brief history of consecrating Canada to our Blessed Mother

Consecrating Canada to our Blessed Mother began with the early Jesuit missionaries, (the first Jesuits arrived at Québec, in June, 1625) who consecrated their missions to Mary Immaculate. A number of Canadian dioceses, eparchies, parishes, schools, cities and buildings have been named in her honour.

On December 2, 1841, the first Oblate missionaries arrived in Canada. Before they boarded the ship, they dedicated their mission to the Blessed Mother, at the church in Marseille – Notre Dame de la Gard. The statue of Mary, measuring 11 meters, is located at the top of the church. The first missionaries who left for Canada in 1841, would have boarded a ship, looked at the statue and asked Mary to intercede for them. Notre Dame de la Garde has great significance, to all Oblates.

The first time the country, as a whole, was consecrated to the Blessed Mother, took place in 1947, during the National Marian Congress, which was held in Ottawa. Ranked at the time, as the largest religious gathering until then, in North America, the celebration marked the centenary of the Archdiocese of Ottawa and focused on the hope for lasting world peace. A message by Pope Pius XII was broadcast during the Eucharist, and was carried by a number of radio stations across the country. The prayer of consecration was led in French and English, by two federal Cabinet ministers, the Right Honourable Louis St-Laurent, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the Honourable James J. McCann, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of War Services. Archival information on the 1947 consecration is available on the website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/mariancongress1947/>

As part of the 1954 Marian Year, during a celebration at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Cape, near Trois-Rivières, Quebec, all the Catholic Bishops of Canada, led by Their Eminences James Cardinal McGuigan and Paul-Émile Léger, then Archbishop of Toronto and Archbishop of Montreal respectively, consecrated the country to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. That first, of what until now, have been two Marian Years, declared by the Supreme Pontiff, marked the centenary of the solemn proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. More information on the National Shrine (in French, Notre-Dame-du-Cap) is available on its bilingual website: <https://www.sanctuaire-ndc.ca/>

In 2017, the Bishops of Canada, were invited to consecrate the country to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as part of the celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of Confederation. Each Bishop was invited to consecrate his individual diocese or eparchy, on July 1, 2017 or at another date thereabouts, that might better suit the local pastoral situation. Similarly, pastors were also invited to consecrate their specific parish or mission, as part of the celebrations marking the anniversary of Confederation.

Later in the year, all the Bishops of Canada, participated jointly, in the consecration of the country to the Blessed Mother, following the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, during the CCCB Plenary Assembly, in September 2017.

In solidarity with a number of Episcopal Conferences throughout the world, all diocesan and eparchial Bishops have been invited to consecrate their individual dioceses and eparchies to Mary, Mother of the Church, seeking her maternal intercession during the Coronavirus pandemic. On Friday, May 1, 2020, in fraternal communion with the Catholic Bishops of Canada and the United States, His Excellency Bishop Douglas Crosby, OMI, will consecrate the Diocese of Hamilton to Mary, Mother of the Church, during a Mass celebrated at the Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King, at 9:30 a.m. At 3:00 p.m., he will consecrate St. Mary's Parish, in Hamilton, on the occasion of the 160th Anniversary, of the opening, of the original Cathedral Church, of the Diocese of Hamilton.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church,
in this time of pandemic, we turn our gaze to you,
and in Christ consecrate to you *the faithful of our parish together with all the people of Canada*.

At the Annunciation,

fear gave way to trust as you embraced the mysterious and loving plan of God, who through his providence, care and concern brought about newness of life in you and through you.

Intercede, we pray, on our behalf as your children, *Virgin most faithful*.

Grant us faith, hope and perseverance, as we strive to serve and bear witness to all persons, responding to the needs of those affected by this virus.

Standing at the foot of the Cross at Calvary,

you united yourself with the sufferings of Christ and so uniquely contributed to the mystery of our redemption.

We beseech you as *Health of the sick*, draw to yourself in maternal compassion the brothers and sisters of your Son Jesus and all those who are grieved by this pandemic.

Strengthen the dying and comfort those who weep so that all may experience the healing grace of Christ our Divine Physician.

At the Cenacle, after the Resurrection,

you accompanied the Apostles with prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In your maternal care as *Consoler of the afflicted*, accompany healthcare professionals, all who minister to the sick and those who seek a cure to end this pandemic, that the Holy Spirit may renew the face of the earth.

To all of us, dearest Mary, Mother of all the living,

be present and show forth your tenderness, as we raise our eyes to you who shines forth before the entire community as a merciful and compassionate companion on our journey. Time and time again, with burdens weighing heavily on their hearts and in their many necessities, the Christian faithful have sought refuge under your mantle of protection.

Come quickly to our aid at this time, Mother of Mercy, and deliver us from the dangers that surround us in our hour of need; watch over especially the elderly, the weak and the infirm, our children and the unity of our families, and all those who give of themselves selflessly in pastoral care to those in need until in your arms and in your gentle embrace we all find safety and solace.

R. Amen.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

The purpose of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations is to publicly celebrate vocations to ordained ministry and religious life in all its forms. Many parishes and religious institutes commemorate this day with prayer for vocations and vocation promotion events.

Dear friends, on this day in particular, but also in the ordinary pastoral life of our communities, I ask the Church to continue to promote vocations. May she touch the hearts of the faithful and enable each of them to discover with gratitude God's call in their lives, to find courage to say "yes" to God, to overcome all weariness through faith in Christ, and to make of their lives a song of praise for God, for their brothers and sisters, and for the whole world. May the Virgin Mary accompany us and intercede for us.

--Pope Francis, World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 2020.

Prayer for World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Holy Spirit, stir within us the passion to promote vocations to the consecrated life, societies of apostolic life, diocesan priesthood, and permanent diaconate. Inspire us daily to respond to Your call with boundless compassion, abundant generosity, and radical availability.

Help us to remember our own baptismal call to rouse us to invite the next generation to hear and respond to Your call. Inspire parents, families, and lay ecclesial ministers to begin a conversation with young Catholics to consider how they will live lives of holiness and sacred service.

Nudge inquirers and motivate discerners to learn more about monastic life, apostolic life, missionaries, cloistered contemplative life, and evangelical life.

Ignite our Church with the confident humility that there is an urgent need for religious sisters, brothers, deacons, and priests to live in solidarity with those who are poor, neglected, and marginalized.

Disrupt our comfortable lives and complacent attitudes with new ideas to respond courageously and creatively with a daily 'YES!' Amen.

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
FOR THE 2020 WORLD DAY OF VOCATIONS
(3 May 2020)**

Words of Vocation

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On 4 August last year, the 160th anniversary of the death of the Curé of Ars, I chose to write a letter to all those priests who daily devote their lives to the service of God's people in response to the Lord's call.

On that occasion, I chose four key words – *pain, gratitude, encouragement* and *praise* – as a way of thanking priests and supporting their ministry. I believe that today, on this 57th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, those words can be addressed to the whole people of God, against the backdrop of the Gospel passage that recounts for us the remarkable experience of Jesus and Peter during a stormy night on the Sea of Galilee (cf. *Mt 14:22-33*).

After the multiplication of the loaves, which had astonished the crowds, Jesus told his disciples to get into the boat and precede him to the other shore, while he took leave of the people. The image of the disciples crossing the lake can evoke our own life's journey. Indeed, the boat of our lives slowly advances, restlessly looking for a safe haven and prepared to face the perils and promises of the sea, yet at the same time trusting that the helmsman will ultimately keep us on the right course. At times, though, the boat can drift off course, misled by mirages, not the lighthouse that leads it home, and be tossed by the tempests of difficulty, doubt and fear.

Something similar takes place in the hearts of those who, called to follow the Teacher of Nazareth, have to undertake a crossing and abandon their own security to become the Lord's disciples. The risk involved is real: the night falls, the headwinds howl, the boat is tossed by the waves, and fear of failure, of not being up to the call, can threaten to overwhelm them.

The Gospel, however, tells us that in the midst of this challenging journey we are not alone. Like the first ray of dawn in the heart of the night, the Lord comes walking on the troubled waters to join the disciples; he invites Peter to come to him on the waves, saves him when he sees him sinking and, once in the boat, makes the winds die down.

The first word of vocation, then, is *gratitude*. Taking the right course is not something we do on our own, nor does it depend solely on the road we choose to travel. How we find fulfilment in life is more than a decision we make as isolated individuals; above all else, it is a response to a call from on high. The Lord points out our destination on the opposite shore and he grants us the courage to board the boat. In calling us, he becomes our helmsman; he accompanies and guides us; he prevents us from running aground on the shoals of indecision and even enables us to walk on surging waters.

Every vocation is born of that gaze of love with which the Lord came to meet us, perhaps even at a time when our boat was being battered by the storm. "Vocation, more than our own choice, is a response to the Lord's unmerited call" (*Letter to Priests*, 4 August 2019). We will succeed in discovering and embracing our vocation once we open our hearts in gratitude and perceive the passage of God in our lives.

When the disciples see Jesus walking towards them on the sea, they first think that he is a ghost and are filled with fear. Jesus immediately reassures them with words that should constantly accompany our lives and our vocational journey: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear" (*Mt 14:27*). This, then, is the second word I wish to offer you: *encouragement*.

What frequently hinders our journey, our growth, our choosing the road the Lord is marking out for us, are certain "ghosts" that trouble our hearts. When we are called to leave safe shores and embrace a state of life – like marriage,

ministerial priesthood, consecrated life – our first reaction is often from the “ghost of disbelief”. Surely, this vocation is not for me! Can this really be the right path? Is the Lord really asking me to do this?

Those thoughts can keep growing – justifications and calculations that sap our determination and leave us hesitant and powerless on the shore where we started. We think we might be wrong, not up to the challenge, or simply glimpsing a ghost to be exorcized.

The Lord knows that a fundamental life choice – like marriage or special consecration to his service – calls for *courage*. He knows the questions, doubts and difficulties that toss the boat of our heart, and so he reassures us: “Take heart, it is I; have no fear!” We know in faith that he is present and comes to meet us, that he is ever at our side even amid stormy seas. This knowledge sets us free from that lethargy which I have called “sweet sorrow” (*Letter to Priests*, 4 August 2019), the interior discouragement that hold us back from experiencing the beauty of our vocation.

In the *Letter to Priests*, I also spoke about pain, but here I would like to translate the word differently, as *fatigue*. Every vocation brings with it a responsibility. The Lord calls us because he wants to enable us, like Peter, to “walk on water”, in other words, to take charge of our lives and place them at the service of the Gospel, in the concrete and everyday ways that he shows us, and specifically in the different forms of lay, priestly and consecrated vocation. Yet, like Saint Peter, our desire and enthusiasm coexist with our failings and fears.

If we let ourselves be daunted by the responsibilities that await us – whether in married life or priestly ministry – or by the hardships in store for us, then we will soon turn away from the gaze of Jesus and, like Peter, we will begin to sink. On the other hand, despite our frailty and poverty, faith enables us to walk towards the Risen Lord and to weather every storm. Whenever fatigue or fear make us start to sink, Jesus holds out his hand to us. He gives us the enthusiasm we need to live our vocation with joy and fervour.

When Jesus at last boards the boat, the winds die down and the waves are calmed. Here we have a beautiful image of what the Lord can do at times of turbulence and tempest in our lives. He stills those winds, so that the forces of evil, fear and resignation no longer have power over us.

As we live out our specific vocation, those headwinds can wear us down. Here I think of all those who have important responsibilities in civil society, spouses whom I like to refer to – not without reason – as “courageous”, and in a particular way those who have embraced the consecrated life or the priesthood. I am conscious of your hard work, the sense of isolation that can at times weigh upon your hearts, the risk of falling into a rut that can gradually make the ardent flame of our vocation die down, the burden of the uncertainty and insecurity of the times, and worry about the future. Take heart, do not be afraid! Jesus is at our side, and if we acknowledge him as the one Lord of our lives, he will stretch out his hand, take hold of us and save us.

Even amid the storm-tossed waters, then, our lives become open to *praise*. This is the last of our vocation words, and it is an invitation to cultivate the interior disposition of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Grateful that the Lord gazed upon her, faithful amid fear and turmoil, she courageously embraced her vocation and made of her life an eternal song of praise to the Lord.

Dear friends, on this day in particular, but also in the ordinary pastoral life of our communities, I ask the Church to continue to promote vocations. May she touch the hearts of the faithful and enable each of them to discover with gratitude God’s call in their lives, to find courage to say “yes” to God, to overcome all weariness through faith in Christ, and to make of their lives a song of praise for God, for their brothers and sisters, and for the whole world. May the Virgin Mary accompany us and intercede for us.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 8 March 2020, the Second Sunday of Lent