ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE,
WESTMINSTER, LONDON SW1P 1QJ

Pastoral Letter for the Fourth Sunday of Easter
26th April 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, Good Shepherd Sunday, the whole church prays for vocations to the priesthood. We are blessed with so many wonderful priests serving in the Diocese and I ask you to join with me in praying in thanksgiving for their ministry amongst us all. Please pray, too, for those who are in formation for the Priesthood and for the staff in our seminaries who are entrusted with the important work of their formation.

The ministry of the priest is one of service. This was expressed during Holy Week in the Renewal of Priestly Promises, which took place at the Chrism Mass as our priests resolved to continue their ministry, following "Christ the head and shepherd, not seeking any gain, but moved only by zeal for souls."[1] This spirit of service, itself a self-emptying in imitation of Christ Himself, brings with it the utmost joy for all those called by the Lord to share in His priesthood.

Priestly ministry flows, in a very particular way, from the celebration of the Eucharist. The celebration of the Eucharist is the "source and summit" of our lives.[2] This celebration is vital for our lives, for the life of the Church and the priest is called by Christ Himself to celebrate the Eucharist with and for the People of God. From this celebration flows his ministry of servant-leadership for all those entrusted to his care -in whatever circumstance he may carry this out.

This priestly service: a response to Christ's call, rooted in His gift of the Eucharist and nourished by the Word of God and daily commitment to prayer, is a great endeavour, enabling all whom the priest serves to grow in Christian life and in the mission of the Church.

The discernment of this vocation, as Pope Leo reminds us, calls for "a relationship based on prayer and silence."[3] Such prayer and silence require a commitment of time, but this is time that will bear great fruit. It is important for us all – in our parish communities, schools and homes – to foster time for such prayer and support those whom the Lord calls to share in His priesthood.

A diocesan resource has been produced that will assist us in this path of prayer for vocations to priesthood leading to the celebration of Pentecost.

The practice of Eucharistic Adoration is an aspect of parish life in many parts of the Diocese. Times

[1] ROMAN MISSAL, Renewal of Priestly Promises at the Chrism Mass.
[2] VATICAN II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* on the Church, n. 11.
[3] POPE LEO XIV, Message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 2026.

of Adoration provide excellent opportunities for prayer for priestly vocations and I ask every parish to hold a Holy Hour each week over the next month for this intention.

The praying of the Rosary is a part of many people's lives of prayer. I invite parishes to form groups of people who will commit to praying the Rosary for vocations to priesthood, whether this be together or alone but united with others through prayer.

The call to priesthood, more often than not, comes in quiet ways: the example of a priest; the example of parents and family members as they persevere in faith; a thought about service to the Church; a renewed experience of God's presence when on retreat or at a day of prayer and celebration; a reawakening of awareness of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Above all, the call to priesthood comes through the gentle promptings of the Holy Spirit.

To those of you who sense these stirrings of the Holy Spirit, calling you to service of Christ and his Church, "pause, listen, entrust yourselves. In this way, the gift of your vocation will mature, bringing you happiness and yielding abundant fruit for the Church and the world."[4]

With every Blessing,

Yours sincerely in Christ,



✠ Archbishop Richard Moth
Archbishop of Westminster

[4] Ibid.