



DIOCESE OF PAISLEY

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Pastoral Letter Vocations Awareness Week 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Sunday we begin our celebration of Vocations Awareness Week in Scotland, a time when we are encouraged to pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood, the diaconate and the consecrated life.

Both inside and outside of the Catholic community, people often wonder what a life of service in the Church entails.

What does it mean to be a priest, a deacon or a religious sister or brother in contemporary Scotland today? What does serving the Church in Scotland entail in the face of rising secularism and widespread religious indifference all around?

In today's Gospel Jesus gives us an enlightening answer. Using three parables, he outlines a perfect template of the ministry of our clergy and religious in today's world. He shows us how it is all about seeking out and finding the lost.

Getting lost or being lost is an experience all of us have had at one time or another: lost in a train station or airport, or on the way home from a night out. We remember panicking when we realised we took the wrong turn off the main road or that the satnav was off and our surroundings grew ever stranger and unfamiliar.



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In the Scriptures, being lost is not just about being in the wrong place. Rather, it is about being disconnected from God, disconnected from the Church our family of faith, and disengaged from ourselves, who we really are and are called to be.

In our communities, so many of our brothers and sisters today find themselves spiritually lost; so many of our young people lost in an arid and desolate culture; so many lost in the world of addiction where everything is hurting and nothing has meaning; so many lost in a sea of apathy and indifference to the cry of the poor, the elderly and the unborn; so many, in the wake of the pandemic, who have wandered far from their faith and are snared in the anxiety of the frantic busyness of everyday life.

Our priests, our deacons and our brothers and sisters in consecrated life are chosen by God to go out and find all of these lost ones. They are sent: to be good shepherds; to be the woman who will not rest until she has found that missing drachma; and to be the father whose heart is restless until his prodigal son has returned home safe and well. They are called to bring the lost back home to the House of Our Heavenly Father where there is always hope, light and love.

Wherever there is human need and suffering, whether in Scotland or abroad, you will be sure to find the Catholic Church offering comfort, restoring hope and finding what is true, beautiful and good in human life.

This week we appeal to you to *pray* for more vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life. We ask you to *encourage* all those who are engaged in ministry in your community to keep going. And, finally, we invite you to *discern* whether you are being called by God to that most blessed and urgent of ministries, to go out and seek and find the lost and bring them home.

With the assurance of my prayers and blessings for you and your loved one,



Bishop John