

RELIGIOUS BROTHERS DAY GUIDE

Celebrating the life
and vocation of
Religious Brothers



Vocation of Brother



The vocation of a brother revolves around God's love in three unique but connected ways. A brother is called to personally receive God's love and then serve as an individual mediator for God's love into the world. A brother is called to share God's love with his community and to help the community be rooted in God's love. A brother is called to live in the mission of sharing God's love with everyone, especially the disadvantaged and suffering in our society. These three components of the vocation of brother all build on and complement each other and show the wide sphere of influence brothers are called to have throughout the world.

The Vatican document, *Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church*, released on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Oct. 4, 2015, during the Year for Consecrated Life, speaks of the identity of Brother as "fraternity, which is a gift that is received (mystery), a gift that is shared (communion) and a gift that is given away (mission)."

The mystery is first receiving the gift of love from God and then being a mediator of this love to the world. The accepting and receiving of God's love are the beginning of any vocation. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Sacrament of Baptism has played an essential role in the receiving of God's love in the context of salvation history; from Baptism there is the common priesthood among all the faithful.

Religious brothers distinguish and define their consecration through profession to the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. These vows express the intent to live a life that is dedicated to more deeply entering into the mystery of God. Through this commitment, a brother recognizes how he is also a mediator of the very love he has received.

Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church expresses this, noting that brothers are called to be "a witness and mediator of that same gift [God's love], of the project of communion which God has for humanity and which is based in the Trinitarian communion." (*Identity*, 13)

Brothers carry out this role of mediator not just through prayer and distance from the world, but also by connecting their daily tasks of the world to the great love of God. It is ultimately through prayer that a brother is connected to the mystery of the love of God as both recipient and mediator.

A second aspect of the vocation of a brother is the community to which he belongs. The fraternity of brothers is not held together by their own power; rather, the community exists because of God's love: "[t]he love that God has shown to humanity in Jesus Christ becomes a uniting principle for human beings among each other: 'May they be one so that the world may believe' (Jn 17:21)." (*Identity*, 21)

(continued on page 2)

The life & vocation of **Religious brothers**

Just as God's love is the key for the vocation of a brother as mediator, it is the source holding the brothers together in fraternity; the very structure of the community is oriented toward revealing God's love. The vocation of a brother is not to remain an individual worker but to be a member of a larger community to serve a greater purpose. The ministerial fraternity is the "source and fruit of mission," meaning the vocation of a brother starts and stays rooted in his community.

Religious brothers build fraternity through sharing their lives and actions that bring forth God's love.

A third aspect of the vocation of a brother is their life of mission to follow the Gospel message to go forth and bring God's love into the world. We see the Gospel in the brother's mission to meet

the human needs of people through acts such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, and to alleviate the suffering of the disadvantaged by opening themselves to being a vessel of God's love.

The life of a brother is meant to incorporate this missionary vocation into their inner dispositions of living: "[t]he task of devoting themselves wholly to "mission" is therefore included in their call ... Indeed, more than in external works, the mission consists in making Christ present to the world through personal witness." (*Vita Consecrata*, 72)

The mission of the brother is the context of being in the world; brothers are called to live this missionary life in all walks of life to truly meet all people and share God's love by meeting their spiritual and physical needs.



“Rooting his life deeply in God, the Brother consecrates all creation, recognizing the presence of God and the Spirit’s action in creation, in cultures and in daily events. Because he recognizes this active presence, he can proclaim it to his contemporaries.

This ability is the fruit of an ongoing process of openness to God through consecration, that is, through the daily experience of his baptismal priesthood.

... [H]e becomes a bridge between God and his brothers, anointed and sent by the Spirit to bring the Good News of the love and mercy of God to all, especially to the least of his brothers, the weakest members of humanity.”

Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church,
16 and 17

MAY 1

Celebrating Religious Brothers Day

History of Religious Brothers Day

Pope Francis declared 2015 the Year for Consecrated Life. On October 4, 2015, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life published a reflection on the Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church.

These two events led to the first national Religious Brothers Symposium in the United States on March 25, 2017, at the University of Notre Dame. Entitled the “Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother,” the Symposium was designed to keep alive the discussion and momentum from the Vatican document. The first Religious Brothers Day was held shortly after, on May 1, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker.

These events were organized by the “Brothers Think Tank,” an informal organization with representatives from four organizations engaged in ministry with brothers: Conference of Major Superiors of Men, Religious Brothers Conference, Religious Formation Conference, and National Religious Vocations Conference.

On that first Religious Brothers Day, communities across the United States and

their ministries – colleges, high schools, and other ministry sites – celebrated the life and vocation of the religious brother through prayer services, special events, liturgies, and vocation events.

Religious Brother Day has been celebrated each year since and expanded to Ireland, England, Australia, and Canada.

In 2020, a second Religious Brothers Symposium is again bringing together religious brothers and their collaborators in leadership, formation, vocations, and ministerial work to hold up and promote the vocation of the Catholic religious brother.

Observing Religious Brothers Day

Religious Brothers Day celebrates the life and vocation of the religious brother, honoring the important role religious brothers play in the life of the Catholic Church. Observances vary widely, but generally they fall into four categories: pray, thank, celebrate, and share.

This guide includes suggestions and resources for celebrating Religious Brothers Day in your community, parish, diocese, or sponsored ministries.

PRAY

Pray both for vowed brothers, for men in discernment and for others to be open to responding to the call to live the life of a religious brother.

Offer a special blessing before meals, gather as a community for morning or evening prayer.

Hold a Mass or prayer service at a sponsored school, campus community, health care, parish or other ministry where brothers serve. Pray a rosary with residents of assisted living.

Engage the dioceses to increase awareness and support. Coordinate with the diocesan delegate for consecrated life to hold a diocesan-wide Mass for brothers, as is done annually in the Diocese of Brooklyn, and to prepare and send prayers of the faithful to parishes for use at Masses on or near Religious Brothers Day.

If you are in a small house, gather with brothers from neighboring institutes for communal prayer and a meal.

Examples from other institutes include:

Grace Before Meals

Jesuit communities in the Maryland and Northeast USA provinces offered a special Grace before meals on the first Religious Brothers Day in 2017.

In the context of the Vatican's message for the first Religious Brothers Day, the prayer highlights the many ministries of religious brothers and how they live their vocation in service to the world.

This prayer can be used and adapted by other religious communities to pray for specific brothers or oriented more toward the specific charism of the community. See Appendix 1 for the text.

Prayer Services

Samples of a simple prayer service, as well as morning and evening prayer developed by communities for their members to use on Religious Brothers Day are included in Appendices 2-4.

These prayers or others also can be adapted for use in school, university and health care settings. In these settings, pray for the brothers in ministry, the sponsoring institute, and vocations.

Use this opportunity to explain the vocation of brother and the spirituality and charism of your institute. Thank the brothers for their ministry, witness and dedication to service.

Religious Brothers Day Prayer Card

Print the Religious Brothers Day prayer and distribute it at your ministry sites, inviting others to pray alone, with their families, or with the brothers. Recite the prayer at the start of the day or the end of Mass in community or in sponsored ministry.

Ask your diocese to share the prayer with parishes so the entire local Church may join in prayer (Appendix 5).

Novena to St. Joseph the Worker

Religious Brothers Day is observed on the feast of St. Joseph the Worker.

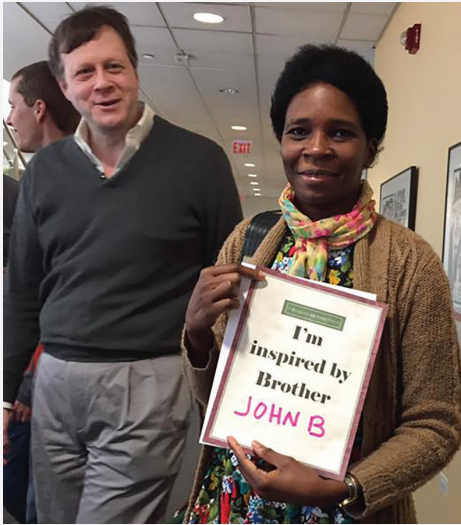
Prepare by offering a novena on the nine days leading up to the observance, praying for brothers and for vocations to the life of the brother.

Alternatively, adapt the Triduum in preparation for May 1, developed by the Salesians.

See Appendices 6 and 7 for samples.



Religious Brothers Day, Diocese of Brooklyn



Email photos, celebrations, links to articles, and planned events to

Br. Peter O'Loughlin, CFC,
oloughlin.peter@gmail.com

so they can be shared and posted on www.religiousbrothersday.org and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ReligiousBrothersDay) (@ReligiousBrothersDay).

THANK

Thank brothers for their vocation and ministry within community and with colleagues, ministry groups and the Catholic community.

At schools, talk about vocations and engage students in recognizing the brothers at the school. Let them get creative through cards, posters, an assembly, sharing favorite stories, or interviewing brothers for a video or news article. Hold a class celebration. Have students research the school's religious sponsor and write about an aspect of religious life.

At the Catholic Theological Union in 2017, participants at a communal prayer service for the first Religious Brothers Day expanded the celebration by distributing copies of a flyer that read, "I'm inspired by Brother ____." People filled in the name of a brother who had been meaningful to them in their lives and the completed flyers were posted on a bulletin board and made into a simple video slide show.

This is a fun idea for schools and parishes.

CELEBRATE

Parties/Socials

Prepare a special meal for your community or invite others to join you: colleagues, friends, people you serve in ministry and other collaborators. Spend time as a community.

The Benedictines of St. John's Abbey in 2019 prepared a wonderful meal and had fun singing afterward.

If you are in a parish, have doughnuts and coffee or dessert after Sunday Mass to celebrate and increase awareness of the vocation. (Make sure you have vocation brochures or prayer cards there.)

Prepare a slideshow or video of the life and work of the brothers to show at any celebration, and post photos online or on a celebration wall.

Invite friends and supporters to sign a poster or card, thanking the brothers for their service.

Joint Service Activity

Organize a service activity as a community, or with students, a parish, young adults or the broader community. This is an opportunity to introduce people to the vocation of brother, which incorporates service to others in prayer or action, and builds relationships.

SHARE

Media

Contact your diocesan newspaper/website editor (or local media outlet) two to four weeks in advance. Invite them to cover Religious Brothers Day events, interview brothers about their life and vocation, or highlight brothers and their ministry. Offer to submit a short reflection on the vocation of brother.

Prepare: be specific about an activity, date, time and place. Look around you for interesting human-interest stories (100-year-old brother, brothers who are brothers, someone with an unusual vocation story, a brother with an unusual hobby, etc.).

Social Media

People love to see photos of brothers, and respond well to invitations to pray, as well as vocation stories.

- Use #religiousbrothersday hashtag on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Let your brothers, colleagues and supporters know about the hashtag and encourage them to post and like.
- “Like” the Facebook page, Religious Brothers Day.
- Tag the page in your posts (@religiousbrothersday).
- Add a Religious Brothers Day Facebook frame to your profile photo. Click “edit” on your Facebook profile photo, choose “add frame,” then type “Religious Brothers Day,” and select that choice.
- Make sure the communications teams at your schools, parishes, and other ministries know in advance about Religious Brothers Day and the hashtag. Have them promote your community on their official social media pages.



Marist Brothers at a Religious Brothers Symposium

- pray for them
- Photo and mini-profile of a brother (fun facts, ministry assignment)
- Vocation story
- Invitation to a Come and See event
- Video of a brother reflecting upon his ministry or life as a brother
- Photo and link to your website to learn more (especially on Twitter)
- Photos from a Religious Brothers Day celebration and a thank you.

Websites, Blogs and Podcasts

Put a Religious Brothers Day banner on the home page. Write an article or post about the day. Highlight one or more brothers (also share these on social media) reflecting on their life and ministry.

Where do they find joy? What does it mean to be part of community in Christ and in service? If a mixed institute, what is the history of brothers for your institute.?

Video Tributes

These can be used in many ways – at events, on a website, in social media, for vocation and promotional work on Religious Brothers Day and beyond. These can be professionally recorded, but a mobile phone with a good camera and audio plus free editing software on the phone also can work. Some ideas for a video tribute:

- Profile of a specific brother, his vocation story as current ministry.
- Profile showing community life and helping people see the beauty of the fraternity in the life as a religious brother.
- History of a religious community, highlighting some brothers who have passed as well as those who carry on the mission today.

What should you share?

- Group photo of the brothers or of men in formation, asking people to



APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1: GRACE BEFORE MEALS

Presiding Minister:

Today, on this Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker, we celebrate the first-ever Religious Brothers Day.

“Conscious of the immense contribution made by generations of brothers to the growth of the Church in the United States through their schools, hospitals and other forms of religious and social outreach, the Holy Father trusts that this day of recognition will confirm them in their distinctive witness of consecrated life and their generous service to God’s Kingdom.”

In that light, we come to pray as we gather for our evening meal.

Pause

We give thanks to you, O Lord our God, for all Brothers—servants and witnesses of time past;

(names of specific brothers past or present can be inserted here)

For martyrs, managers, and ministers; doorkeepers, infirmaries, and teachers; administrators, fundraisers, and archivists; for artisans, actors, dancers, and playwrights; farmers, cobblers, mechanics, and treasurers; librarians, coaches, computer technicians; for launderers, painters, chefs, and cooks; bookstore managers, guidance counselors, and architects; engineers, health care providers, and media experts; for astronomers, gravediggers, sacristans, and directors; for scientists of every stripe; for protectors and hidiers of priests under persecution and friends of scholastics in study; for chaplains, retreat directors, attentive listeners; for every talent not here mentioned but done in your name — all friends in the Lord.

As we remember these Brothers, inspire our Brothers today to join their ranks—those here present, those of every land and nation. Give them only your love and your grace to be as bold as their predecessors and brave as well, generous and untiring, witnessing to your unfailing justice and abiding love— all to your greater glory as we pray:

Bless us, O Lord . . .

APPENDIX 2: PRAYER SERVICE (Salesian)

Religious Brother Witnesses and Instruments of the Mystery of Communion

Reading:

*From Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church
(Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life,
2015, p. 6)*

Reader:

Religious Brothers ... reflect the essence of the Church, the mystery of communion.
They keep alive the obligation of brotherhood as a confession of the Trinity.

The vocation of the Brother is part of the answer
that God gives to the absence of brotherhood which is wounding the world today.

Litany & Prayer

Presider:

Loving God, through the intercession of St. Joseph, the holy Religious Brothers,
and all the saints, we pray that you strengthen our Brothers in their total gift
of themselves to you, bless us with new vocations to the Salesian Brotherhood,
and help us and the young people you entrust to us grow as your instruments of
communion.

Reader:

St Joseph	All: pray for us
St. André Bessette	St. John Bosco
St. John of God	St. Gerard Majella
St. Martin de Porres	Blessed Edmund Rice
Blessed Stephen Sandor	Venerable Simon Srugi
Blessed Brothers Martyrs of Spain	Blessed Artemides Zatti

Presider:

O God, we humbly ask you that by Saint Joseph's example,
cherishing in our hearts the gift of love and communion
given to us by your Son,
we may be instruments of your communion,
and thus respond to your call for us to be holy.
We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord.

APPENDIX 3: MORNING PRAYER (Edmund Rice Christian Brothers)

Making Jesus Alive In our World: We are All Brothers!

CALL TO PONDER

Document: "Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church"

"Rooting his life deeply in God, the Brother consecrates all creation, recognizing the presence of God and the Spirit's action in creation, in cultures and in daily events, Because he recognizes this active presence, he can proclaim it to his contemporaries. This ability is the fruit of an ongoing process of openness to God through consecration, that is, through the daily experience of his baptismal priesthood. Through the gift of Brotherhood given, he becomes a bridge between God and his brothers, anointed and sent by the Spirit to bring the Good News of the love and mercy of God to all, especially to the least of his brothers, the weakest members of humanity."

CALL TO PRAYER

All: Jesus the Christ,
You became our brother, shared our flesh and blood and shared in solidarity with
the human sufferings of your brothers and sisters!

Leader: Jesus the Christ,
You gave us, your disciples, the honor of being
called "Brother" after your Resurrection and so we are!

All: Jesus the Christ,
You are our Good Shepherd and our Good Samaritan,
As we journey into the future, may we, Brothers,
be reflections of your great love and compassion for all your people.

OPENING HYMN (You Tube)

Brothers and Sisters in Christ | Terry Dittmer Arr. by Craig Alea

Sing Alleluia! Amen!
Let your prayers and your praises ascend.
Lift up your voices and sing to our Lord God, our Savior and King!
Here brought together by grace, we are gathered as friends in this place.

Chorus

And assembled as one, in the name of the Son,
lifting hearts, lifting hands, celebrating as friends,
and proclaiming the Lord, all our praises afford.
We are brothers and sisters in Christ.

Man walked alone and in need,
without faith, hope or promise or creed;
wandering aimlessly lost; unaware of the staggering cost;
that God in his mercy would save all his people from death and the grave.

Chorus

APPENDIX 3: MORNING PRAYER (cont.)

Lord, teach us how to proclaim
all your goodness, your love and your name!
Lord, teach us how to forgive, and in love, teach us Lord, how to live.
Raising our voices in song, help us tell all the world we belong.

Chorus

CALL TO LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD

Isaiah 42:1-7: The Servant of God

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased.
Upon him I have put my spirit; he shall bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry out, nor shout, nor make his voice heard in the street.

A bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench.
He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow dim or be bruised
until he establishes justice on the earth; the coastlands will wait for his teaching.

Thus says God, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth
and its produce,
Who gives breath to its people and spirit to those who walk on it:

I, your God, have called you for justice, I have grasped you by the hand;
I formed you, and set you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,
To open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement,
and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.
The Word of God. All: Thanks be to God

SILENT TIME FOR REFLECTION

CALL TO RESPOND

Psalms 62 (Psalms for Praying, Nan C. Merrill)

Antiphon: My soul thirsts for the living God.

For You alone my soul waits in silence;
From the Beloved comes my salvation.
Enfolding me with strength and steadfast love,
My faith shall remain firm....

In the Silence rests my freedom and my guidance, for
You are the Heart of my heart,
You speak to me in the Silence.

Trust in Love at all times, O people
Pour out your heart to the Beloved;
Let Silence be a refuge for you. ...

APPENDIX 3: MORNING PRAYER (cont.)

Once You have spoken,
Twice have I heard;
Our potential gifts belong to You;
To You, O render to us all that we offer to You—
Fear begets fear,
Love begets love.
For You alone my soul waits in silence;
From the Beloved comes Life, Love and Light.

Glory to the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Antiphon: My soul thirsts for the living God!

CALL TO INTERCESSION

Leader: The thread of abiding in the love of Jesus weaves through a Brother's life and his presence in the world transmits that abiding thread of being sent as a sign of the maternal tenderness of God and the fraternal love of Jesus for all. Conscious of this mission, let us now offer our intercessions to our God.

1. We pray that the witness of religious Brothers and Sisters in the Church may draw all persons to know, love and serve God in this world, we pray.

R: May we be great witnesses to God's immense love for us, his brothers and sisters!

2. We pray that the image of the Good Shepherd, like the image of Jesus wrapped in a towel washing the feet of his disciples, may speak to us of service, love and sacrifice, and may we Brothers be devoted to our mission of bring others to know this same Jesus, our Lord and Brother, we pray.

R: May we be great witnesses to God's immense love for us, his brothers and sisters!

3. For all religious Brothers and Sisters whom God has sent in the name of Jesus to serve the people in love and service that they will be blessed with continued faithfulness to Jesus and inspire many more to consider a vocation to consecrated life, we pray.

R: May we be great witnesses to God's immense love for us, his brothers and sisters!

4. We pray God's blessing on all religious Brothers who have devoted their lives to building up God's Kingdom of love, peace and justice. We ask you to guide them, strengthen them, sustain them and shower them with your grace. May they always be close to you in prayer and reach out, in turn, to help their neighbors in need. We pray.

R: May we be great witnesses to God's immense love for us, his brothers and sisters!

APPENDIX 3: MORNING PRAYER (cont.)

All:

God, Creator of Life,
May we be prophets in our time and place!
May we witness with our lives your openness and loving acceptance
of all creatures, your constant care and protection of life in all its forms.
May we give a great witness to that human search for a
deeper spirituality and a greater humanization of all society.
We ask this prayer in the name of Jesus, your Son and our brother. Amen.

Leader: Let us now raise our voice to our God in prayer as Jesus taught us!

OUR FATHER

CALL TO BENEDICTION

All:

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!” (Is 52:7)
May we, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus,
bring his Good News of healing love, compassion, joy and liberation
to all to whom we serve and minister.
We ask our prayer in the Name of Jesus the Christ who lives forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: The Servant Song

Will you let me be your servant, Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I might have the grace To let you be my servant too

We are pilgrims on the journey, We are brothers on the road
We are here to help each other, Walk the mile and bear the load

I will hold the Christ light for you, In the night time of your fear
I will hold my hand out to you, Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping, When you laugh, I'll laugh with you
I will share your joy and sorrow, Till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven, We shall find such harmony
Born to all we've known together, Of Christ's love and agony.

MAY JESUS ALWAYS LIVE IN OUR HEARTS – FOREVER!

APPENDIX 4: EVENING PRAYER (Edmund Rice Christian Brothers)

Call to Prayer

Leader: In the quiet of this evening moment, as darkness creeps in

All:

We wait for you, O God, for it is in You alone,
We find our real joy and hope.
Glory be...

CALL TO AWARENESS

All:

As light gives way to darkness
And the busyness of the day concedes to night's stillness,
As conscious thought surrenders to dreams
And our bodies long for rest
We pause to listen....

For the beat of Your presence in all things
Pulsing in the light of the distant galaxies
Sounding in the depths of our soul
Vibrating in every vein of earth's body.

One sound as vast as the universe
One universe filled with Presence
One Life within every life.

In the darkness of this night
In the stillness that surrounds us
In the unknown depths of our being,
We pause.

CALL TO SILENT LISTENING

CALL TO SING PRAISE

"Eye Has Not Seen" by Marty Haugen

**R: Eye has not seen, ear has not heard what God has ready for those who love him;
Spirit of love, come, give us the mind of Jesus, teach us the wisdom of God.**

1. When pain and sorrow weigh us down, be near to us, O Lord,
forgive the weakness of our faith, and bear us up within your peaceful word.
2. Our lives are but a single breath, we flower and we fade,
yet all our days are in your hands, so we return in love what love has made.

APPENDIX 4: EVENING PRAYER (cont.)

3. To those who see with eyes of faith, the Lord is ever near,
reflected in the faces of all the poor and lowly of the world.
4. We sing a mystery from the past in halls where saints have trod,
yet ever new the music rings to Jesus, Living Song of God.

CALL TO LISTEN

Colossians 3:12-15

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves,
You must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy,
kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.
Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you.
Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.
Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.
Let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts.
For as members of one body you are called to live in peace.
Always be thankful!
The Word of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

CALL TO RESPOND

Psalm 119 (Nan Merrill)

O, how I love your friendship!
I walk with You wherever I go.
Your Love is the life-giving force
Of Creation, Imbue us with your living rays
Of peace and joy.

For, as we surrender ourselves to
Your living Presence,
We will be filled with the radiance of Love.
As we open our hearts to the spiritual Life,
We will be filled with wisdom and freedom, ready to serve.

O, how glorious are the ways of the Spirit!
How wondrous are your Works!
The path of love is sure, unhurried
And filled with mystery.

How sweet are your words to my taste,
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Through your Mind I receive understanding;
I no longer take pleasure in my Former ways.

Yes, your Truth is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.

APPENDIX 4: EVENING PRAYER (cont.)

You give me strength as I descend into the inner sanctum,
To uncover the hidden blessings,
To seek the treasures of the Spirit.

When I am filled with fear,
I meditate upon your Light.
I yearn to have every doubt and fear
Quelled and transformed;
O Heart of all hearts, bless me with your healing Light,
That I may be a loving presence.

Though the ignorant lay snares for me,
Let me not stray from You.
Your Word is my heritage forever;
Yes, it is the joy of my heart.
I shall open my heart's ear to converse
With You Forever, to the end.

When I meditate upon your Light,
My heart opens with compassion for all life. Glory

CALL TO REFLECTION

Brothers and Sisters:
Jesus speaks these words to us each day and always:
May we allow our ears to hear and our heart to respond:

*"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored?
It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.
You are the light of the world.
A city built on a hill cannot be hid.
No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket,
But on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house.
In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see
Your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:13-20)*
The Word of God. All: Thanks be to God.

CALL TO SILENCE

To whom were you salt and light today in your encounters with others?

CALL TO INTERCESSION

Leader:

To our Creator God whose gift to us is the Word of Life, Jesus Christ our Brother,
we make these prayers. Our response will be:

Response: Jesus, Your Word, is Spirit and Life for us!

APPENDIX 4: EVENING PRAYER (cont.)

1. For us Religious Brothers in the Church who live the charism of our founders that we may be tireless witnesses in the world to the infinite love and mercy of our gracious God, we pray.
2. We bring to God's Presence this evening those brothers and sisters who are sick in mind or body and all those who suffer oppression and persecution because of their faith, that they may find the strength and consolation they need, we pray.
3. We pray that the Jesus the Lord will give to all people an abundance of the good things of this earth. We pray for a just and fair distribution of the earth's goods founded on true brotherhood, we pray.
4. We pray for religious vocations that abundant witness to the love of Jesus Christ may flourish in the Church and world as a proclamation of God's Reign promised by our Brother Jesus, we pray.
5. For all of us, whom the Lord has called to his service, that by prayer, study and witness of our lives, we may be empowered to speak of God's love in truth, we pray.

Leader:

Lord God, turn a favorable ear to our prayers which we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Brother. Amen.

CALL TO PRAISE GOD THE FATHER

Leader:

Gathering all our prayers and praises into one, let us offer our lives to our God in the words Jesus taught us. Our Father

CALL TO BLESSING

May the almighty angels of Heaven
Guard the four corners of earth this night.
May the mighty messengers of Life

Hold in balance the sacred elements of the universe.
May the mighty bearers of Presence
Safeguard the direction of our hearts this night
That we may sleep in peace
That we may dream of justice
That we may wake again to the world's oneness
That we may wake to the world's newborn oneness.
Amen!

John Philip Newell "Praying With the Earth"

Leader:

May Jesus live in our hearts this night and always.

All: Forever and ever. Amen.

APPENDIX 5: RELIGIOUS BROTHERS DAY PRAYER CARD



+ RELIGIOUS BROTHERS' DAY +

God of mercy and compassion,
thank you for the extraordinary life, witness, and ministry
of Religious Brothers in our Church.

In your wisdom, you have called these ordinary men
to generously serve, pray,
and share your healing love with others.

As we prepare for our annual Religious Brothers Day,
deepen our appreciation for the vocation
of Religious Brothers, their congregational charisms,
and their commitment to vowed community life.

Strengthened by our baptismal call to holiness,
inspire us to invite men
to consider religious life as a Religious Brother.

Grant all Religious Brothers the grace and perseverance
they need to proclaim your Holy Word
for the life of our Church and our world.
Amen.

Artwork: "Servanthood" by Debbie Saenz, used with permission.



+ RELIGIOUS BROTHERS' DAY +

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thank you for the extraordinary life, witness, and ministry
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Amen.

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APPENDIX 6: NOVENA TO ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER

St. Joseph, by the work of your hands and the sweat of your brow, you supported Jesus and Mary, and had the Son of God as your fellow worker. Teach me to work as you did, with patience and perseverance, for God and for those whom God has given me to support.

Teach me to see in my fellow workers the Christ who desires to be in them, that I may always be charitable and forbearing towards all. Grant me to look upon work with the eyes of faith, so that I shall recognize in it my share in God's own creative activity and in Christ's work of our redemption, and so take pride in it.

When it is pleasant and productive, remind me to give thanks to God for it. And when it is burdensome, teach me to offer it to God, in reparation for my sins and the sins of the world.

O good father St. Joseph! I beg you, by all your sufferings, sorrows and joys, to obtain for me what I ask.

(Name your petition)

Obtain for all those who have asked my prayers, everything that is useful to them in the plan of God. Be near to me in my last moments that I may eternally sing the praises of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)

APPENDIX 7: TRIDUUM IN PREPARATION FOR THE MEMORIAL OF ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER (Salesian)

Day 1: Religious Brother – Witness and mediator
“We believe in the love of God”

Reading:

*From Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church
(Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 2015,
p. 13)*

What is the origin of the vocation of the Brother if not the experience of God’s love? “We have known the love God has for us and put our faith in it” (1 John 4:16). That is also the source of every Christian vocation. “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction”
(Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter Deus Caritas Est, 25 December 2005, 1).

The vocation of the Brother is not only intended to be that of a recipient of God’s love, but also of being a witness and mediator of that same gift, of the project of communion which God has for humanity and which is based in the Trinitarian communion. This project, the Mystery which has been revealed to us in Christ, seeks to establish a horizontal relationship between God and humankind at the very heart of humanity, precisely where God wants to be present.

Relationships of affiliation are thus transformed simultaneously into Brotherly relationships. For that reason, saying “brother” is like saying “mediator of God’s love”, the God who “so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life” (John 3:16).

To be a “Brother” is also to be a mediator of the love of the Son, the Mediator par excellence, who “loved them to the end” (John 13:1) and asked us to love one another as He loved us (John 13:34).

In this world that God loves so much, the Brother cannot hide. On the contrary, he experiences the impulse to go out to encounter and embrace God. In contemplating the saving work of God, the Brother discovers himself to be an instrument which God wants to use to make the covenant, God’s love and concern for the weakest, more visible.

Intercession:

Lord, we thank you for calling our Salesian Brothers to be signs and instruments of your love for us and young people, especially those who are in need. We pray to the Lord.

APPENDIX 7: TRIDUUM IN PREPARATION FOR THE MEMORIAL OF ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER (cont.)

**Day 2: Religious Brother – Memory of the love of Christ:
“The same thing you must do...” (John 13:14-15)**

Reading:

*From Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church
(Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 2015, p. 12)*

To deepen our understanding of the identity of the Brother, we will allow ourselves to be enlightened as we contemplate one of the most evocative icons of the four Gospels: Jesus washing the feet of his disciples.

The story that the evangelist John offers us regarding the meal on Holy Thursday begins with the solemn and intimate statement: “Jesus... having loved those who were his own who in the world, loved them to the end” (John 13:1). The Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples takes place in an context of commissioning: Jesus urges his disciples and, through them, the whole Church, to continue the ministry of salvation which reaches its culmination in the death of Jesus on the cross, although he had developed it during his life, as reflected in his answer to John’s disciples, “Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see again, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life and the good news is proclaimed to the poor” (Luke 7:22).

Thus the Church experiences itself being constituted as a ministerial people commissioned by Jesus. The evangelists represent the institution of the ecclesial ministry through two icons. The three Synoptics choose the icon of Jesus breaking and sharing his Body and Blood with his disciples, while requiring of them: “Do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19). Differently, the Gospel of John presents us with the icon of Jesus with the towel tied around his waist, washing the feet of his disciples, and making a request of them later: “I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.” (John 13: 14-15).

In the consciousness of the Church, it is in the light of this icon of the washing of the feet that the other icon, in which Jesus shares out his Body and his Blood, finds its full meaning. That is to say, the commandment of brotherly love gives us the key to understanding the meaning of the Eucharist in the Church.

This testimony which the Church receives from Jesus points to two aspects or dimensions of the ministry of salvation which unfold in the Church through diverse specific ministries. On the one hand, through the ministerial priesthood, instituted by a specific sacrament, the Church guarantees its fidelity to the memory of the surrender of Jesus, his death and resurrection, and makes it present in the Eucharist. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit stirs among the faithful the memory of Jesus showing the attitude of service, and the urgency of his mandate: “by this everyone will recognize you as my disciples” (John 13:35). Because of this, many charisms are raised up among the faithful to develop communion through fraternal service. That is how salvation comes to the poorest: the blind see, the lame walk, prisoners are released, youth are educated, the sick and the elderly are taken care of.

Consecrated life arises in the Church in response to this call of the Spirit to faithfully keep alive the memory of the love of Christ who loved His own to the end. This response is expressed in many forms, but at the deepest level there is always the option of “a radical gift of self for love of the Lord Jesus and, in Him, of every member of the human family.

The vocation and identity of the Religious Brother acquire meaning in this dynamic, which is both inclusive of and complementary to the various ministries, but which also needs and promotes prophetic signs.

Intercession:

Lord, you have commissioned our Salesian Brothers to serve as you have served. May your love fill them, our charism guide them, and our communities support them in their service of your Kingdom. We pray to the Lord.

APPENDIX 7: TRIDUUM IN PREPARATION FOR THE MEMORIAL OF ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER (cont.)

Day 3: Vocation of Religious Brother – Ministers of Communion

Reading:

*From Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church
(Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 2015)*

The Religious Brother (and sister) by participating in the saving mystery of Christ and the Church, are permanent reminders for all Christian people of the importance of the total gift of self to God and a reminder that the mission of the Church, respecting the various vocations and ministries within it, is one and is shared by all. (#1)

Being part of [God's] people and its mission, the Religious Brother lives the call to be memory of the covenant by his consecration to God in a fraternal life in community for mission. Thus he makes more visible the communion that all God's people are called to embody. (#5)

The bonds of communion of the Religious Brother extend beyond the boundaries of the Church, because he is driven by the same "universal character that distinguishes the People of God." The vocation of the Brother is part of the answer that God gives to the absence of brotherhood which is wounding the world today. At the root of a Brother's vocation lies a profound experience of solidarity that essentially matches that of Moses before the burning bush: he discovers himself as the eyes, ears and heart of God, the God who sees the oppression of his people, who hears their cry, feels their anguish and comes down to liberate them. In this intimate experience, the Brother hears the call: "Come, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt." (Exodus 3:7-10). Therefore, the dimension of communion is closely linked in the Brother to a fine sensitivity for everything that affects the least privileged of people; those oppressed by various forms of injustice, abandoned on the margins of history and progress, those who, ultimately, are less likely to experience the good news of God's love in their lives. (#6)

Religious consecration itself, which presents life as a witness to the absoluteness of God, and also as a process of openness to God and people in the light of the Gospel, is a call to all the faithful, an invitation to each person to orient his or her own life along a radical path, in different situations and states of life, open to the gifts and invitations of the Spirit. (#7)

Intercession:

Lord, we pray for those young men you are calling to be brothers recognize their call and respond with generosity; and help us to guide and accompany them. We pray to the Lord.

The Brothers Think Tank is a group of that meets twice annually to address issues related to Brothers and to discuss ways of promoting that lay religious vocation for men. The Think Tank is comprised of Brothers from various institutes across the United States, in addition to representatives from the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, Religious Brothers Conference, National Religious Vocations Conference, and Religious Formation Conference.

This guide was created by the Brothers Think Tank with great support from the staff of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and Jonathan Harrison of the Catholic Apostolate Center.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE
AND VOCATION OF THE
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