Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church

Week Of Prayer For Vocations To Priestly Ministry And Consecrated Life

November 21–27, 2026 A.D.

Parish Youth Meeting

WITH THAT, THEIR EYES WERE OPENED

Luke 24:31

Manual Guide for Priests and Youth Leaders



VOCATION

GOD'S GIFT AND OUR RESPONSE

Conference for the Week of Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life, November 21–27, 2026

1. God Calls Each of Us to Follow Him

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

From November 21 to 27, 2026, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church invites us to pray in a special way for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. This week begins on the Feast of the Entrance of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple. We ask the Lord to raise up new priests, monks, and nuns, and we seek to make our homes and parishes places where people can hear God's voice. So let us ask ourselves what it means to be called and how we can help others respond to God's invitation.

Every vocation begins with God's love. The Lord knows each person. He sees our hearts, our gifts, our weaknesses, and the circumstances of our lives. He calls every baptized person to holiness, to friendship with Christ, and to love and serve our neighbor. Within this common calling, different paths open before us, including Christian marriage, the priesthood, monastic life and other forms of consecrated life, and service to the Church and society. Choosing a vocation goes deeper than choosing a profession. It leads us to ask, "Lord, who are You calling me to become, and whom can I serve?"

The Most Holy Mother of God offers us a profound example of openness to God. When the Archangel Gabriel announces God's will to her, Mary has questions and the future is still hidden from her. She asks, reflects, and keeps her heart open. Her answer is an act of faith. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). We can trust God even while we have fears and questions. Trust means being willing to walk with Him when we can see only part of the road ahead. Christian discernment therefore takes time, prayer, honesty, and inner freedom.

Christ also calls His first disciples in the middle of their daily work. Simon and Andrew are casting their nets, James and John are mending theirs, and Levi is sitting at the tax booth. Jesus says, "Follow Me" (cf. Mark 1:16–20 and 2:13–14). He invites them into a personal relationship with Him and gradually prepares them for their mission. The disciples begin by taking a concrete step. God calls us in the midst of our lives as they are. We can begin listening to Him, with all our imperfections, and let Him work in us.

The guide for young people uses the road to Emmaus to help us understand this (Luke 24:13–35). The disciples are walking along, saddened and confused. The risen Christ is already beside them, though they do not recognize Him. He listens to them, explains the Scriptures, and stays with them. Then their eyes are opened. Something similar happens when we discern our vocation. God's purpose may become clear gradually as we learn to recognize the Lord in Sacred Scripture, in prayer, in the Eucharist, in the people we meet, and in the events of everyday life. Our first task is to take the next step with Christ today.

2. Vocations Grow in the Family and the Parish

A vocation begins in a person's heart and usually needs the support of others to grow. The Christian family, the domestic Church, has a special place in this process. The Gospel tells us how Mary and Joseph searched for the twelve-year-old Jesus and found Him in the Temple (Luke 2:40–52). They did not immediately understand His words about His heavenly Father's affairs. Mary kept all these things in her heart. This scene reminds parents that each child has a path of his or her own before God. To love a child is to help that child grow in faith and freedom and learn to make decisions about the future.

Families can nurture vocations in simple ways. They can pray together, speak appreciatively about the priesthood and monastic life, take part in the Divine Liturgy, and talk openly about life choices. A child should feel free to ask about God, the Church, and the future, knowing that those questions will be taken seriously. If a son is considering the priesthood, or a son or daughter is drawn to monastic life, parents can give them time, pray and listen with them, and help them find a wise spiritual guide. Their support should give the young person room to discern freely.

The parish has an equally important role. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that the first Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42). The Church grew where people prayed together, shared what they had, and cared for one another. Our parish should be such a community, where people gather for worship and each person knows they have a part to play. Young people need to see the joy of faith in the way we respect one another, show mercy, and serve.

The example of someone's life often awakens the first desire to explore a vocation. A young person sees a priest who shepherds the people entrusted to him and leads the flock by example (cf. 1 Peter 5:2–3). Or they meet a monk or nun whose life shows that we can entrust everything to Christ. In the Gospel, Jesus looks at the rich young man with love before inviting him to leave everything and follow Him (Mark 10:21). That loving gaze is where consecrated life begins. The monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience are a particular way to respond to Christ's love and to serve God and others.

The parish should pray for new vocations and for those who are already serving or preparing to serve, including bishops, priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters, seminarians, and all those in formation. They need our prayers and support as they persevere in their calling. It helps when young people can speak personally with a priest or a consecrated person, hear an honest account of that person's life, and ask difficult questions. A parish that makes room for such conversations helps God's gift come to fruition.

3. Listening and Discerning and Responding

Today especially, we need to speak with young people in a spirit of trust and respect. They already have a living place in the Church. Saint Paul reminds us that we form one Body in Christ and have different gifts (cf. Romans 12:4–8). Some have a gift for teaching, encouraging others, organizing, singing, helping people in need, or listening attentively. Each of these gifts can become a way to serve. When we talk with young people about

school or work, we can also ask whose needs touch their hearts, what good work brings them joy, and how their gifts might serve others.

Discernment takes three things. The first is silence and prayer. Amid constant notifications, the rush of daily life, and other people's expectations, it is easy to lose the ability to listen. A few minutes of daily prayer, attentive reading of the Gospel, participation in the Divine Liturgy, and a sincere Confession help us put our hearts in order. The second is honesty with ourselves. We need the courage to ask, "What draws me? What am I afraid of? What gifts do I have? Am I open to the possibility that the Lord may be calling me to the priesthood or monastic life?" The third is a willingness to take a concrete step. We might talk with a spiritual guide, visit a monastery or seminary, take part in a ministry, or ask for advice. A decision for life can mature over time.

Young people may be afraid of making a mistake, disappointing their parents, losing their freedom, or ending up alone. These concerns deserve a patient hearing and a thoughtful response. God invites us to love freely. A vocation calls for a free and mature response, supported by prayer, time, and spiritual guidance. If the thought of the priesthood or consecrated life arises in your heart, give yourself time to consider it, even if you feel unworthy. The apostles grew into their calling gradually. God calls us, forms us, and strengthens us as we open ourselves to His grace.

The Week of Prayer for Vocations gives us concrete ways to begin. Families can set aside a few minutes each day to pray and talk together. A parish can pray for vocations at its services and organize a gathering where young people can hear priests, monks, nuns, and seminarians share their experiences. Each of us can bring before God one person we want to support and decide on one act of kindness we are ready to offer. A culture of vocations grows when prayer, personal witness, and spiritual guidance continue throughout the year.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us return in our minds to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Christ walked beside them in their confusion, spoke to their hearts, and opened their eyes. May He do the same for us. Let us ask the Lord that prayer may remain alive in our homes, that our parishes may know the joy of serving, and that young people may have the courage to ask, "Lord, what do You want of me?" And when they hear Him say, "Follow Me," may they have the faith, freedom, and courage to respond.

Closing Prayer

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, You call each of us to holiness and service. Bless our families and parishes, that they may help us recognize Your voice. Send Your Church good and zealous priests, deacons, monks, and nuns. Strengthen those who have already answered Your call, and enlighten young people who are seeking their path. Give us hearts as open as that of the Most Holy Mother of God, and grant us the courage to follow You.

For You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and we give glory to You, together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.