

- The great American Supreme Court justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes, once wrote that: “every calling is great when greatly pursued.”
- Recognizing that all of us are “called” to particular things in life, Holmes was making the point that it matters not so much to what we are called, but how we respond to that call.
- In our readings today we hear of three particular callings. In our first reading from Jeremiah we hear the prophet predicting our Lord calling the Israelites back from their exile in Babylon to the Promised Land.
- While Jeremiah was speaking of a real, historical event, the Israelites being called back to Jerusalem after their exile in Babylon is symbolic of God’s constant calling of all of us back from a life of sin and darkness so that we might experience His healing mercy and live in the light of Truth.
- This first reading is a great reminder that our Lord loves us and wants to be a father to us.
- Our second reading from Hebrews speaks of the particular call to the priesthood. As this year is the Year of the Priest, it is a very appropriate reading for all of us to meditate upon, and I hope that as you do, you will remember to pray for all of us priests.
- As the author of the Letter to the Hebrews points out, priests are called to be representatives of mankind before God, and therefore being a priest is not easy. Thus, we rely very much on your prayers to procure for us the grace we need to serve you.
- Like all men we, too, are beset by weaknesses, and we need your support and your prayers in order to carry out the awesome responsibilities that are placed upon our shoulders.
- But being a priest is also a great honor, and no man can ever presume to take this honor upon himself, but may only pursue the priesthood when he has been called by God.
- For most of us priests, the call to the priesthood begins as an attraction to God and to living one’s life for a noble cause. Over time it develops into an attraction to the mystery of the priesthood itself and to those things that are sacred.
- Eventually, if a man who is called to the priesthood prays, he will find in his prayer a certain abiding sense that priesthood is something that should and must be considered.
- I have no doubts that some of you young men and boys here today will be called by our Lord to the priesthood, and I hope and pray that those of you who feel some calling toward priesthood will have the courage to pursue that call.
- Certainly, if you recognize that one of the young men in our parish may have a calling to the priesthood, by all means speak up and tell him. One of the tell-tale signs of being called to the priesthood is that other people recognize that call to the priestly life.
- So please pray for and encourage our young men and boys here at St. Ann’s whom you think may have a calling to the priesthood.
- Lastly, in our Gospel today we have the wonderful story of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar on the outskirts of Jericho. In response to Bartimaeus’ plea for mercy, Jesus calls him, and the people around Bartimeaus tell him: “Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you.”
- In truth, my friends, Jesus is always calling all of us. Sometimes He is calling us out of the darkness of sin, just as He called the Israelites out of Babylon. Sometimes He calls us to a particular task or vocation, like the priesthood.
- But He’s always calling us to Himself to heal us and make us whole! However, what good is the call if we cannot hear it?

- In Revelations 3:20 our Lord tells us: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me.”
- Our Lord is constantly calling to us so that He may enter into a relationship with us. He is always calling us away from sin, and sometimes He calls us to a particular vocation. But in order to answer it, we must hear the call. And, my friends, we will only hear our Lord’s call if we are people of prayer.
- Prayer is not only the way that we speak to God, but it is also the way that we hear Him. The act of prayer includes not only speaking to God in order to praise Him, thank Him, adore Him, and to make our needs known to Him. It also includes being silent before Him and listening for His voice.
- And this requires dedication, perseverance, patience, and the willingness to close oneself off from the noise and distraction of the world.
- So many people in today’s world see prayer as a waste of time or feel like they don’t have time for it. And even those who are committed to praying sometimes see it as drudgery – almost like a disagreeable chore to be accomplished.
- But people who feel this way are people who have never experienced the sheer joy of prayer!
- In truth, my friends, while persevering in a life of prayer is not easy, it is only in prayer that we find the grace we need to endure the sufferings of life. It is only in prayer that we find lasting peace and consolation. It is through prayer that we grow in true holiness.
- Most importantly, it is in prayer, my friends, that we unite ourselves to God, communicate with Him, and hear His call for our life.
- As we continue with the Mass, which is the greatest prayer of all, let us all recommit ourselves to living a life of prayer. In saying this, I am not saying that we all must spend hours every day praying. The amount of time we spend in prayer is less important than the love with which we enter into prayer.
- If you’re new to prayer, then start modestly with perhaps 10 or 15 minutes a day. What’s important is that we make the effort to quiet ourselves so that we can hear our Lord calling to us. What’s important is that we have a desire to know our Lord.
- Many of us have particular prayers and devotions we are fond of, which is a good way to pray. Others of us enjoy the Holy Rosary, which is also a wonderful way to pray. Just sitting quietly before the Blessed Sacrament is another great way to pray.
- Again, it’s not so much the method that matters, but rather the desire to unite oneself to the Lord. What matters is that we be willing to persevere, even when it seems like we’re getting nothing out of our prayers.
- My dear friends, take courage and get up! Jesus is calling you! Indeed, He is calling all of us to pray so that He may give us His peace, His consolation, and His mercy.
- Therefore, let us dedicate ourselves to a life of prayer so that we may hear His call and follow Him.