

# FISHERS OF MEN IN THE SEA OF CHARITY

Mk 1,16-18



First World Day of Prayer for  
**Camillian Vocations**

Thematic in-depth analysis



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As he passed by the Sea of Galilee,  
he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their  
nets into the sea; they were fishermen.

Jesus said to them, “Come after me,  
and I will make you fishers of men.”

Then they abandoned their nets and followed him.

*Mk 1,16-18*



## INTRODUCTION

Let us begin this extraordinary “vocational” journey as members of the Camillian charismatic family united worldwide in prayer for Camillian vocations. The World Day of Prayer for Camillian Vocations reminds us that this is the commitment of every community and, in particular, every member of the Camillian charismatic family. The Risen Lord calls us from within the pages of many relationships and situations, even challenging ones, appealing to our capacity to love and serve life, to collaborate with Him in “making history,” as indicated by Pope Francis in paragraph 116 of the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*.

June 29, which for the Camillian family commemorates the canonization of St. Camillus (June 29, 1746), seeks to unite the great Camillian charismatic family worldwide in a single pulse of prayer. We ask the Lord for the necessary “fishers of men” to serve “our lords and masters,” the sick; to thank Him for the gift of the Camillian vocation; and to seek strength and courage to continue “fishing” in the great sea of charity. To ensure that this World Day of Prayer for Camillian Vocations has the resonance it deserves, we have invited the entire Camillian charismatic family to be a single “net” of prayer to the Lord for the gift of the Camillian vocation.

## **Prayer, Discernment, and Perseverance in Prayer for Vocations**

Prayer is the only condition the Lord places for there to be enough workers for His harvest (Mt 9:37-38). How much we need holy priests and consecrated persons faithful to Jesus today! How much strength we have when we pray, especially when we pray together with others for the realization of God's plans for those souls He wishes to call, for He always seeks our collaboration for His plans of salvation. What should we ask the Lord for in our prayer for vocations? Discernment and perseverance.

A vocation is a gift from God to each of us to reach happiness and fulfilment: the path of discernment is a journey that, step by step, allows those who decide to respond to this gift to make fundamental choices, in dialogue with the Lord and listening to the voice of the Spirit. In summary, the path of discernment represents the point of contact between prayer and action, between spirituality and life. This requires a deep listening to the Word of God, which guides an equally attentive examination of oneself in the realization of one's vocation. In each of our hearts, but especially in the hearts of young people, resides the profound desire to draw closer to the Lord. The path of discernment is especially aimed at those faithful who, in their youth, hear God's voice, which through a desire, sometimes a feeling of restlessness, invites them to follow Him more closely.

Perseverance in prayer signifies faithfulness. Praying with perseverance means praying beyond

the limit, praying even when it seems no longer worthwhile. There are two reasons we stop praying: when we lose the sense of God or when we lose the sense of our need. St. Paul's command in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, "pray without ceasing," can be confusing. Obviously, it cannot mean we must keep our heads bowed and eyes closed all day. St. Paul refers not to unending talking but to an attitude of awareness of God and surrender to Him. Often, perseverance is abandoned because we live in a world dominated by the temporary, where everything is about grab and drop.

The persistence of the woman in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 18:1-8) reveals an important element of prayer: her perseverance, her not giving up. Prayer requires time: praying is giving time to the Lord. Now, prayer must come to cover all time, it is called to become daily, almost like the breath of faith. Echoing St. Paul's exhortation to "pray unceasingly" (1 Thes 5:17), Jesus proposes this parable to indicate the necessity to "pray always" and adds: "without becoming weary" (Lk 18:1). Luke's emphasis on perseverance is also connected to the situation of the Christian community to which the third gospel is addressed: a community where the phenomenon of the relaxation of faith and spiritual life is present. Abandoning prayer is the prelude to abandoning faith, while persistent prayer strengthens faith through daily relationship with the Lord. The effort to persevere in prayer is the effort to give time to prayer, and time is the essence of life. Praying is giving life to the Lord.

Therefore, let our prayer rise to Heaven: from the lay Camillian family, from parish communities,

from religious communities, from hospital wards, from the streets of our home care, from the young people we meet, so that Camillian vocations may grow and strengthen, according to the heart of Christ, according to the spirit of Saint Camillus de Lellis.

*(By the Central Secretariat for Formation)*







## “FISHERS OF MEN” IN THE SEA OF CHARITY

The theme of this first World Day of Prayer for Camillian Vocations is “**Fishers of Men in the Sea of Charity.**” This theme references the Gospel of Mark (Mk 1:16-18), where the calling of the first disciples is recounted:

As He was passing along the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw Simon and Andrew, Simon’s brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “*Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.*” Immediately, they left their nets and followed Him.

This day of prayer is an opportunity for the Camillian charismatic family to come together in prayer, striving to be “*fishers of men*” in the sea of charity.

Becoming “*fishers of men*” is a challenging concept because people are not fish to be caught, and no one likes to feel captured. In today’s terms, it might evoke the idea of “*head hunters*” in the business world, which involves the trade of people. However, this is not the case here: those called to “*fish for men*” do so not for themselves but for Jesus Christ, who does not entrap but liberates. The one who fishes is entirely secondary, and no one can claim ownership of the “*fish*”, which, as St. Paul would say, belong “neither to Paul nor to Cephas but to Christ.”

This fishing is done through the preaching of the Gospel of charity, which must first produce the conversion to the Gospel of charity.

Each of us is called to proclaim the Gospel of charity through our own “**yes**”. Vocation coincides with mission, which has the precise aim of proclamation. No one is called to be merely qualified or to join a certain class, perhaps that of consecrated life, but to proclaim the Gospel. “*Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel*”, said St. Paul, who felt indebted to the Gospel towards everyone.

Magdeleine Delbrel, after years of collaboration as a social worker with communists in the challenging social and human realities of the Paris suburbs, realized that alongside work and collaboration, the proclamation of the Gospel was indispensable so that no one would mistakenly think there was no difference between Christians and communists: it is the Gospel that makes the difference. Every called person must feel sent to proclaim that Jesus Christ is the only saviour of the world.

Becoming fishers of men means cultivating within us a new generative energy: it means helping people to be reborn, to regain the desire to live, to feel loved, desired, sought after, and welcomed again. The Church must live out this profound identity: like a birthing room that allows the most tired and disappointed people to rediscover the joy of being children and brothers, immersed in a flow of authentic love.

Following Christ, for us, the Camillian charismatic family, as the first apostles, fishermen from Capernaum did, means having the opportunity to create a different “*net*”: the net of charity.





## HINTS ON “VOCATION”

The word “*vocation*” often has an uncertain meaning, encompassing an experience that is sometimes feared and sometimes rejected.

There is often confusion or prejudice surrounding the topic of vocation, particularly the vocation to religious consecration, which prevents serious consideration and a serene approach. It is not uncommon to see it as a straitjacket imposed from above by a domineering God who has already decided everything for our lives; or as a sort of job, a “*sacred*” profession in which one is enlisted; or as a safe and protected place for “*weak and fragile*” people incapable of surviving independently in the world.

Sometimes, misunderstandings are unfortunately caused by the mediocre, if not outright poor, testimony of the religious themselves, by communicating a way of being that is sad, withered, and stiff, not illuminated by the joy, faith, and freedom of the Risen Jesus among us.

Our vocational call is always a challenge and a continuous, demanding, and passionate alignment with the Gospel and following Jesus daily, despite all the personal baggage of limits and sins that accompany us. However, this also suggests that vocation is not something we can attribute to ourselves, nor does it arise from acquired merits. It always and only springs from the Grace of the Lord: it is a gift, a gaze from Above to be welcomed and cultivated, and to which we respond with our personal resources.

The awareness of our poverty is the foundation of every authentic vocational discernment: only in this way does the Lord stand out and emerge at the centre of our lives as the “more to strive for, the love to welcome and share, beyond all our individualism and self-sufficiency.

Our Camillian vocation clearly refers to charity: “*to serve the sick even at the risk of one’s own life*”. Evangelical charity is, first and foremost, the desire to preserve what belongs to God: life, concretized through the tenderness of love and maternal care directed toward the person affected by fragility.







## YOUNG “FISHERMEN” IN THE SEA OF CHARITY

**T**he The World Day of Prayer for Camillian Vocations urges us to venture into the vast sea of youth, inviting them to the calling of caring for and serving the sick. Various approaches to youth ministry exist, each with its own methodologies, dynamics, itineraries, and goals.

However, the quality of youth ministry is measured not by the number of projects and itineraries, regardless of how interesting or ingenious they are, but by the ability to help young people mature in their faith, leading to a motivated and responsible adult faith. The sick are not just a part of our vocation; they are a central aspect of our daily life in society and in the Church.

There is a necessary step to achieve this maturity: feeling called by God from always and forever, striving towards a beautiful life project. Vocation, as God’s call and human response, is full of significance for daily existence, for a trusting openness to the future, and for the ability to integrate the inevitable setbacks, adversities, and pains that aggressively lie in wait on life’s path.

Everyone, but especially the young, has not only the right but also the challenging duty to discover and follow their vocation in life. Vocation, as a call and response, is a refined interplay between God’s freedom and human freedom. Thus, the vocational journey of discovery, acceptance, and following is an

interweaving of signs, indications, and proposals, requiring mediation and assistance to read, decode, and walk in God's footsteps, through the charism of St. Camillus.





## SENIOR “FISHERMEN” IN THE SEA OF CHARITY

**T**he World Day of Prayer for Camillian Vocations is not merely about gathering in prayer for the Lord to send numerous and holy vocations to our Camillian family. Each religious, in today’s “*overly busy, overly occupied, overly distracted*” society, can “*sing*” the signs of God, witnessing the beauty of their Camillian vocation to young people who live in fear and anxiety about the future. They can teach young people, who are often too self-absorbed, that there is more joy in giving than in receiving. “*How I wish for a Church that challenges the culture of waste with the overflowing joy of a new embrace between young and old!*” (Pope Francis, General Audience, 11 March 2015).

The vocation of the elderly is to offer encouragement to young people seeking the meaning of faith and life. It provides “*a great injection of wisdom for the entire human society*”. The Lord calls every person to follow Him at every age of life, and even old age contains grace and a mission, a true vocation from the Lord.

Elderly religious are called not only to thank the Lord for the blessings received but also to intercede for the hopes of the new generations and to give dignity to the memory and sacrifices of past generations. They have a significant mission: to remind ambitious young people that a life without love is barren; to tell fearful young people that the anxiety about the future can be overcome; to teach self-absorbed young

people that there is more joy in giving than in receiving.

Elderly religious form the “*permanent choir*” of a great spiritual sanctuary, where supplication and praise sustain the religious community working and struggling in the field of life, consoling the sick who defend the gift of life. Their prayer continually purifies the hearts of their confreres, young people, health-care workers, and communities. Praise and supplication to God prevent the hardening of hearts in resentment and selfishness. How sad it is when an elderly person loses the sense of their testimony, despises the young, and fails to communicate life’s wisdom! Conversely, how beautiful is the encouragement an elder can give to a young person searching for the meaning of faith and life, and to a confrere living out active ministry in the field of charity! This is the vocation of our elderly religious. Their words hold something special for both the young and their confreres.







## CONCLUSION

### HOLY “FISHERMEN”

#### IN THE SEA OF CHARITY

This day is a fitting time to pray for our own perfection and for the call to holiness. *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect”* (Mt 5:48): this is the universal invitation Jesus extends to each of us, manifesting in various forms and ways according to God’s multifaceted creativity, as St. Camillus de Lellis reminds us. Discovering one’s vocation, in any state of life, is thus essential to fully realize what God calls us to be.

Our lives, as men and women who have chosen charity as the distinctive *“hue”* of our existence, are a continuous journey towards perfection. St. Camillus, with his journey from *“wandering man”* to *“founder of a new school of charity”*, continues to offer us this testimony. Only when we embrace life as a vocation do we embark on the path to holiness. This is what differentiates a wanderer from a pilgrim: the wanderer is not expected by anyone, while the pilgrim is awaited and called, recognizing and piecing together, through places and witnesses, the voice and word that calls them to live their life fully.

The vocational story of St. Camillus speaks of going forth, of stepping out, even without knowing precisely where one must go, but trusting that the path will open with each step taken.

Starting a journey only when the destination is precisely decided risks keeping one seated for life or,

alternatively, being so certain of the destination that one ends up seeking not God's will but merely personal will. We are called to be "*holy fishermen*" in the sea of charity.





# LOGO

## WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR CAMILLIAN VOCATIONS



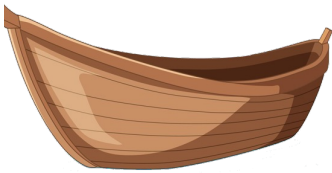
Passing along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, Simon's brother, as they were casting their nets into the sea; they were indeed fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Come after me, I will make you fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

MARK 1:16-18

## DESCRIPTION

The designed logo references the calling of the apostles Simon and Andrew as narrated in the Gospel of Mark 1:14-20 and the prayer through the call of young Samuel: “The lamp of God had not yet gone out” (cf. 1 Sam 3:1-21). Vocation is the response to Christ’s strong and persuasive call to “put out into deep water.”

This is a speaking logo, encapsulating the meaning and scope of vocation while highlighting aspects of the Camillian charism and Order.



### THE BOAT

The boat symbolizes the Church: every vocation is born in the Church and recognized and nurtured by it. Additionally, it represents

our lives, which advance slowly, always restless in search of a happy harbor, ready to face the risks and opportunities of the sea, but also eager to receive a turn from the helmsman (Christ) that finally leads us on the right course (cf. Message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations - May 3, 2020).



### THE SEA

The sea signifies humanity: future Camillian religious are chosen and called from among people and are sent back to serve them. It also

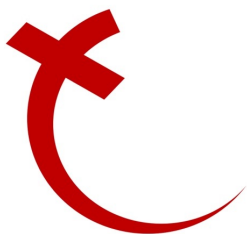


represents the daily reality of our lives and personal history.



### **THE RAYS OF LIGHT**

The rays of light symbolize the breath of the Holy Spirit, which constantly acts within the Church, nourishing and renewing it. The Holy Spirit is the true protagonist of every vocational journey, the primary initiator of every search and trust in the Lord. It is the Holy Spirit who illuminates our daily lives and our humanity (the sea), guiding, protecting, and accompanying our story.



### **THE RED CROSS**

The mast of the boat forms a red cross: every vocation is a participation in the Paschal mystery according to one's charism, for us, the Camillian charism. The common vocation of all disciples is a call to holiness and the mission to evangelize the world, which for us Camillian religious translates into the dedication of life "even at the risk of one's life for our sick brothers and sisters." Moreover, the red cross encompasses the entire logo, referring to the famous expression of St. Camillus de Lellis: "to have a hundred arms to serve all the poor and sick of the world" and to Christ's total gift for our salvation and joy.



### THE GREEN

The green base of the logo represents the hope that sustains every called person in responding to the promise of a happy, authentic, true, and beautiful life. Hope is the essence of the Christian vocation. It symbolizes strength, not weakness: strength in answering the Lord's call; strength to face the season of illness; and strength to remain faithful to the calling within the great Camillian family.



### THE LAMP

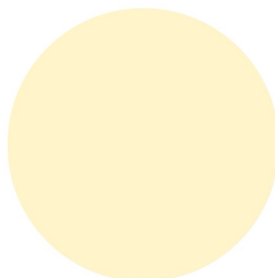
The lamp has a dual reference: to prayer and to the mission of being custodians of God's work, which the consecrated person is called to testify. The lamp of prayer refers to the calling of young Samuel: "The lamp of God had not yet gone out" (cf. 1 Sam 3:1-21): God is eternally present in the lives of His children. Additionally, the Christian vocation is to be a lit lamp, giving light to the world, the light we received through baptism, which we are called to share with others. Vocations are born in prayer and sustained by prayer, and only in prayer can they persevere and bear fruit.



### THE FLAME

The flame signifies God's presence and action in every person's life, recalling the episode where God speaks to Moses through the burning bush (cf. Ex 3:2). The flame also symbolizes God's presence in the Church, in the Order, and

in each believer's life. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night" (Ex 13:21-22). The flame, rendered in five colors (Red - America, Yellow - Asia, Green - Africa, Blue - Oceania, and White - Europe), reflects the universality of the Camillian Order present on all five continents. The Order is called to keep the flame of prayer for vocations alive, hence the establishment of the World Day of Prayer for Camillian Vocations on June 29 each year. Every Camillian is committed to praying for vocations and accompanying them with prayer, entrusting them to God the Father. It is beautiful to be united in prayer for Camillian vocations on this day.



#### **THE YELLOW BACKGROUND**

The yellow background refers to the Paschal mystery and the Eucharist. The Risen Christ appears to the apostles after the resurrection, leading them from sadness to joy, from unbelief to faith, from the impossibility of death to all the possibilities of life. Jesus draws them into His Passover: they experience a conversion, a new beginning! Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the Risen One joins us on our human journeys, walking with us amidst our sadness and difficulties. With the sign of the Eucharist, He repeats: "I am with you always!" (Mt 28:20). Like the apostles on the lake, He comes to us and calls us where we are, in our daily lives, without judgment but telling us where to cast our nets so that our lives may be fruitful. Like Mary, He calls us by name to remind us of our identity as beloved children of the Father. Thus,

like them, our lives can be resurrected. Like Peter, we can leap into the water and respond to His call, which is, in fact, a question: “Do you love me?” Vocation is a loving response to a greater love that calls us.

Logo designed and created by  
Fr. Walter Vinci, MI









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