

## Words of Pope John Paul II

*Then there exists a very special service which is that rendered by the ministerial priesthood, a sublime mission that assures the continuity among men of the redeeming work of Christ. The Church needs men who guarantee their own brothers a lifelong service exceedingly high and exalting: that is, being stewards and administrators of God's mysteries, living instruments of forgiveness and grace, ministers of the Word that saves.*

**-- To the young people of Friscotti, Italy (August 9, 1980)**

*Priestly vocations are the proof and, at the same time, the condition of the vitality of the Church, in the first place because this vitality finds its incessant source in the Eucharist, as the center and the summit of all evangelization and of full sacramental life. Hence springs the indispensable need of the presence of the ordained minister, who is able, precisely, to celebrate the Eucharist.*

*Who would administer, in particular, the sacrament of penance if there were no priests? And this sacrament is the means established by Christ for the renewal of the soul and for its active integration in the vital context of the community.*

**--To the Participants of the International Congress for  
Vocations in Rome (May 10, 1981)**

*The Church finds Christ's "Follow Me" at the beginning of every call to service in the ministerial priesthood, which simultaneously – in the Catholic Church of the Latin rite – is linked to the conscious and free choice of celibacy . . . If such a call comes into your heart, do not silence it! Let it develop into the maturity of a vocation. Respond to it through prayer and fidelity to the commandments! For "the harvest is plentiful" and there is an enormous need for many to be reached by Christ's call, "Follow me." There is an enormous need for priests according to the heart of God – and the Church in the world of today has an enormous need of the witness of a life given without reserve to God: the witness of that nuptial love of Christ himself which, in a particular way, will make the Kingdom of God present among people and bring it near to the world.*

**-- Apostolic Letter Pope John Paul II to the Youth of  
the World, International Youth Year (March 31, 1985)**

*In a special way I commend to you young men the closing words of this evening's Gospel: "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (John 15:16). Yes, the gift of a vocation to the priesthood is not something you seek for yourselves. It has nothing to do with status or privilege as the world understands these things. Your great privilege will be to lay down your lives with Christ the eternal priest if you are truly called to this vocation. May God help each of you to discern His will so that you too may "Go out to bear fruit, fruit that will last."*

**-- To priests, religious, and seminarians in Malawi (May 4, 1989)**

*The first disciples, and in a special way the Twelve, were invited to become friends of Jesus. But the condition for being admitted to this privileged relationship was their radical commitment. Today, too, the only possible response to Christ's call remains that of the apostles: "They left everything and followed Him" (Luke 5:11).*

**-- To seminarians and novices in Budapest (August 19, 1991)**

*Every vocation to the priestly ministry is an extraordinary gift of God's love . . .*

**-- Chrism Mass Homily (April 17, 2003)**

*To preside at the Lord's Supper is, therefore, an urgent invitation to offer oneself in gift, so that the attitude of the Suffering Servant and Lord may continue and grow in the Church. Dear young men, nurture your attraction to those values and radical choices which will transform your lives into service of others, in the footsteps of Jesus, the Lamb of God. ...Do not be afraid to accept this call. You will surely encounter difficulties and sacrifices, but you will be happy to serve, you will be witnesses of that joy that the world cannot give. You will be living flames of an infinite and eternal love. You will know the spiritual riches of the priesthood, divine gift and mystery.*

**-- World Youth Day, 2003**