



“CALLING JOYFUL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH”

Today, one week after Sunday Mass-goers heard Christ Jesus Risen from the dead tell Saint Peter: “follow Me”, the Church celebrates **the World Day of Prayer for Vocations**. It is the hope of Saint Peter’s successor Pope Francis, that on this day “all the Baptized may experience the joy of belonging to the Church and rediscover that the Christian vocation, just like every particular vocation, is born from within the People of God, and is a gift of Divine Mercy.”



The joy of belonging to the Church is something that finds its *summit* and *source* of expression in the encounter with Christ Jesus Risen from the dead. This is the way it was for His disciples fearful and doubting in the Upper Room, labouring on the Sea of Tiberias, and downcast on the Road to Emmaus. And this is the way it is for us, His disciples who, two thousand years after His Passion, Death, and Resurrection, *come home* for Sunday Mass and recognize - in the midst of our post 9/11 fears, our post Sandy tears, and our pre-Election doubts - “it is the Lord” in the *breaking of the bread* and there-in experience the Joy of belonging to the Church!

In the midst of our Sunday-discovery, disciples of Christ can rediscover the universal call of Jesus to “follow Me”. *Follow Me* in your fidelity to your spouse. *Follow Me* in your obedience to your parents. *Follow Me* in your care for the least of My brethren: the elderly, the hungry, the naked, the thirsty, the homeless, the imprisoned, and the sick (please, if you haven’t yet answered the **2016 Catholic Ministries Appeal** use the form on the following page and make your pledge today). *Follow Me* in your service to others as Doctors and Nurses. *Follow Me* in your defense of the basic human rights to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

The Pope, in his Message for the **2016 World Day of Prayer for Vocations** reminds us that the Christian vocation to *follow Jesus* is a gift. That awareness is what traditionally leads followers of Christ to ask: *Lord, how can I put this gift at the service of not just those at home, work, school, or nation, but at the service of everyone?* It is at this time writes the Pope, “after we have reached a certain maturity (that Christ) bestows on us a specific vocation”; namely Priesthood or Religious Life!



If we are going to see today’s young Freeporters from Dodd Middle School and Freeport High School join the ranks of fellow Freeporters Sister Dorothy Lynch C.I.J., Monsignor Charles Swiger, Brother Pierre Toussaint, and Mr. Odalis Rodriguez in these “specific vocations”, then these young Freeporters must see old Freeporters who have reached a certain maturity, joyful in our membership and service to the Church.