

## According to Pope Francis, every vocation is a “diamond in the rough,” and requests prayers for the formation of men and women religious, and seminarians

- In [The Pope Video](#) for May, **Pope Francis** lifts up his prayer “that men and women religious, and seminarians, grow in their own vocational journey through human, pastoral, spiritual and community formation, that leads them to be credible witnesses of the Gospel.”
- The Pope reminds us in his message entrusted to the [Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network](#) that beginning in the seminary or novitiate, their preparation must develop integrally in direct contact with the lives of other people.
- Lastly, Pope Francis recalls that formation does not end at a certain moment, but continues throughout life. In addition, it involves various aspects: the awareness of one's own limitations, prayer, dedication to bear witness to the Gospel, preparation for life in community, nearness to the lives of others.

(Vatican City, 30 April 2024) – In [The Pope Video](#) for this month, **Pope Francis** dedicates his prayer intention **for the formation of men and women religious, and seminarians**. In his video message, disseminated through the [Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network](#), and produced in collaboration with the [Archdiocese of Los Angeles](#) and with the support of [Hallow](#), he insists that “every vocation is a ‘diamond in the rough’ that needs to be polished, worked, shaped on every side.”

### Integral formation for all of life

In the Apostolic Constitution [Veritatis Gaudium](#), on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, the Pope emphasizes that the integral formation of priestly and religious vocations must include the human, spiritual, pastoral and communitarian dimensions. It must also take into account cultural and social diversity. In the same vein, Pope Francis picks this requirement up in the video, and insists that



formation should “lead them **to be credible witnesses of the Gospel.**” In this sense, formation is not only about acquiring knowledge, but is an experience of a profound encounter with Jesus.

### **Formation to community life**

Life in community is a central aspect of men and women religious, or priests. According to the Pope, this is one of the key points in the formation and preparation of anyone who responds to this vocation. Regarding this, he reflects that, although this experience can be “enriching,” at times, “it can be difficult.” He then comments that, “living together is not the same as living in community.”

Pope Francis shares that living and relating with others is not easy at times, but that community life is always a school of holiness where one grows in the different human virtues and learns to go beyond oneself.

### **Most important years**

It is precisely community life that plays a central role in the images of [The Pope Video](#) this month, which accompany Pope Francis’s words: from a basketball game to meals together, passing to moments together in prayer and study, and, of course, the Eucharist and service to the poorest. Every young seminarian, man or woman religious, strengthens their vocation in the sharing of experiences and in continual interaction with others. Their years in formation are very important in the preparation of the entire consecrated person. The scenes of life filmed in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles – who participated in the production of this video – portray its beauty, underlining several aspects of the Pope’s message: above all, the concept that formation is an ongoing journey, and that, as the Holy Father repeats, “A good priest, sister or nun, must above all else be a man, a woman who is formed, shaped by the Lord’s grace.”

### **The joy of the Gospel**

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles was instrumental in the production of this video, putting several professionals at the service of the [Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network](#), so as to prepare Pope Francis’s intention for May in the best way possible. “We are grateful to support Pope Francis in inviting people all over the world to pray for seminarians and women religious as they seek to discern God’s beautiful plan for their lives,” said **Archbishop José H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles**. “Our digital team set out to personify the joy radiating from young



men and women who dedicate their lives in service of God and His people,” said **Sarah Yaklic, Chief Digital Officer** for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. “We hope the joy of the Gospel seen in this month’s Pope Video will strengthen those in formation and encourage other young people to consider a religious vocation.”

### **A renewed commitment**

[The Pope Video](#) for this month received the support of Hallow, a prayer App developed in the United States. Its co-founder, **Alessandro DiSanto**, comments, “It is truly an honor and a blessing to be able to support the Holy Father and The Pope Video initiative. As an app focused on helping people around the world to find peace and purpose in their personal relationship with God, we are particularly excited to sponsor this video on the formation of men and women religious, as well as seminarians. We are incredibly indebted to these men and women who have heroically accepted their religious vocations, from the priests who reach the faithful with the sacraments to the religious women who serve our Church in so many sacrificial ways. Our sincere hope is that this video enkindles a renewed commitment to the support of those discerning or living out in a religious vocation, who in a unique way, serve as Christ's hands on earth.”

### **The mission with other envoys**

**Father Frédéric Fornos S.J.**, International Director of the [Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network](#), analyzing the content of the Pope’s message, reflects: “It is positive that Pope Francis reminds us once more, and in the light of *Veritatis Gaudium*, of the importance of the integral formation for young people who undertake a journey in religious life or as seminarians. Such formation must embrace every dimension of human life: affective, spiritual, pastoral, and communitarian. In an ecclesial context marked by the abuse of power and conscience, and sexual abuse, which have structural and ideological roots, it is crucial that formation promote an openness to the human and affective dimension, facilitating self-awareness; that it foster an authentic experience with Christ in such a way that the witness of life can communicate the Good News to others; that it foster living together in community, so as to learn to accept and value differences and how to work in teams; that it include the intercultural and interreligious context; and that it assure a quality academic formation, with the goal of serving the mission of Christ better. The need for integral formation is imperative. The acquisition of knowledge is not enough. In addition, such integral formation prepares young people not only to face today's challenges, but to act as bridges of dialogue in a world characterized by plurality and diversity. The



ability to establish constructive dialogue and to remain open to the other is essential for the Church's mission of presenting a compassionate, understanding, and close presence to all people.”

***The Pope Video*** is possible thanks to the generous contributions of many people. You can donate by following [this link](#).

Where can the video be seen?

- [Official website of The Pope Video](#)
- [YouTube channel of The Pope Video](#)
- [Facebook page of The Pope Video](#)
- [The Pope Video on Twitter/X](#)
- [The Pope Video on Instagram](#)
- [The Pope on Twitter/X Verified @Pontifex](#)
- [The Pope on Instagram Verified @Franciscus](#)

#### **About The Pope Video**

[The Pope Video](#) is an official global initiative with the purpose of disseminating the Holy Father's monthly prayer intentions. It is carried out by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer). **Since 2016, The Pope Video has had more than 222 million views across all the Vatican's social networks, and is translated into more than 23 languages, receiving press coverage in 114 countries.** The videos are produced and created by The Pope Video Prayer Network team, coordinated by Andrea Sarubbi, and distributed by La Machi Communication for Good Causes. The project is sponsored by [Vatican Media](#). More information: [The Pope Video](#)

#### **About the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network**

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network is a Vatican foundation, with the mission of mobilizing Catholics through prayer and action in response to the challenges facing humanity and the mission of the Church. These challenges are presented in the form of prayer intentions entrusted by the Pope to the entire Church. The foundation's mission is inscribed in the dynamic of the Heart of Jesus, a mission of compassion for the world. Founded in 1844 as the Apostleship of Prayer, it is present in 89 countries, and is made up of more than 22 million Catholics. It includes a youth branch, the Eucharistic Youth Movement (EYM). In December 2020, the Pope constituted this pontifical work as a Vatican Foundation and approved its new statutes. Its international director is Fr. Frédéric Fornos, SJ. For more information, visit: <https://www.popesprayer.va>

#### **About the Archdiocese of Los Angeles**

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles is a community serving more than 4.3 million Catholics, residing in 120 different cities. In its 288 parishes and 30 missions and chapels, it supports people of various backgrounds and cultures with Mass celebrated in 42 different languages. Through its 265 schools it seeks to form a new generation of Catholics, infused with the joy of the Gospel. Under the pastoral leadership of Archbishop José H. Gomez, LA Catholics collaborate to live and proclaim the good news — committed to building a community of faith and love and eliminating the many faces of poverty — spiritual, economic, and moral - and uphold the dignity of human life. Read more: [www.lacatholics.org](http://www.lacatholics.org)

#### **About Hallow**

Hallow helps people deepen their relationship with God through audio-guided prayers, sleep meditations, Bible readings, meditations, and music. The app has more than 10,000 sessions including a Daily Rosary, Daily Gospel, Daily Saint, Pope's Monthly Prayer Intention, Novenas, Examens, Father Mike Schmitz's Bible in a Year, The Chosen's Jonathan Roumie's audio Bible, Bishop Barron's Sunday Sermons, peaceful Christian music, Gregorian chant, and so much more. Launched in December 2018, Hallow is currently available in 8 languages and is now the #1 Catholic app in the world. It has been downloaded over 15 million times and used to pray over 450 million times across 150-plus countries. For more information about the app, visit [Hallow.com](http://Hallow.com). If you are a consecrated religious, please reach out to [religious@hallow.app](mailto:religious@hallow.app) for assistance in activating your free lifetime account.



**THE POPE VIDEO**  
Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network



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**HALLOW**

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