

April 2026

PRAYING WITH *the Holy Father*

Monthly Resource

for small group gatherings or classroom use



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

UNITED STATES

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

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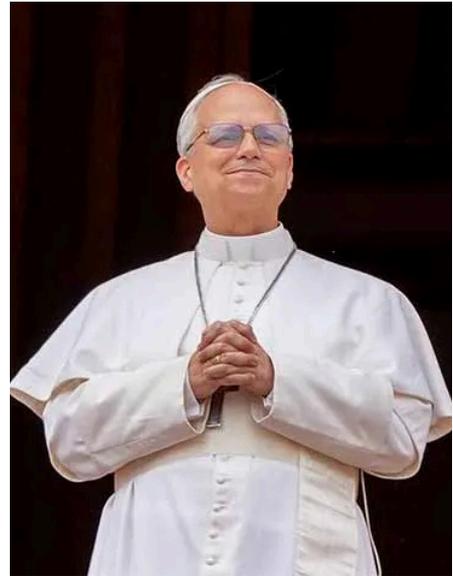
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April 2026

For Priests in crisis

Opening Prayer

- Begin with the Sign of the Cross
- Prayer: The Daily Offering



Good Father, I know you are with me. Here I am on this new day. Place my heart once more with the Heart of your Son Jesus, who gives himself for me and who comes to me in the Eucharist. May your Holy Spirit make me his friend and apostle, available for his mission of compassion.

I place in your hands my joys and hopes, my works and sufferings, everything that I am and have, in communion with my brothers and sisters of this Worldwide Prayer Network.

With Mary, I offer you my day for the mission of the Church and for the prayer intentions of the Pope and my Bishop for this month. Amen.

Introduce Intention

The Holy Father's April 2026 Intention

Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

The Pope Video

- If time allows, watch the Pope Video produced for this month.
- The video is available at <https://www.popesprayer.va/praywiththepope/>

Reflection

Reflection by Fr. Phil Hurley, SJ

Fr. Phil Hurley, SJ is the National Director of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network-USA

In my ministry with the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network USA office, I preach retreats occasionally for clergy and seminarians. I'm able to offer them reflections from the first part of the Spiritual Exercises where St. Ignatius of Loyola invites us to consider our sinfulness and need for a Savior: we are all "sinners, yet deeply loved."

I share in those retreats that at times some people don't think of priests in this way: as human beings like everyone else, with all of our weaknesses. In other words, people can tend to put us on pedestals. At other times, due to the clear wrongdoing of some clergy, people can tend to lump all priests into the category of ne'er-do-wells. But, I conclude, neither characterization is true or helpful. We should neither be put on pedestals just because we are priests, nor looked down upon just because we are priests. We also are sinners, yet deeply loved by the Lord.

This month Pope Leo wisely invites us to pray for priests in moments of vocational crisis. He knows very well, as a priest and a bishop, now the Bishop of Rome, that we as priests face challenging moments: spiritually, emotionally, physically, or some combination of these.

At times of difficulty in my own life and priesthood, I've been so grateful for the prayers of others, the support of good practices like speaking regularly with a spiritual director, and having friends in faith among both the clergy and the laity who support me and with whom I can talk honestly.

There are certainly tremendous blessings, even privileges, of being a priest. But it can also—at times—feel like a lonely and challenging vocation. Let's pray this month together with Pope Leo, for all priests who are struggling: that they might let themselves be drawn closer to Jesus who loves them unconditionally, and receive healing and strength to continue bringing the word of God and the sacraments to all the faithful. Who, together with them, are sinners—yet deeply loved.

Sacred Scripture

- Matthew 28: 19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
- Hebrews 7:17 “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”

Saint Connection

St. John Vianney (1786- 1859)- French Priest and Confessor

- At the age of 17, John Vianney felt the call to the priesthood. “If I am to be a priest,” he said, “I will win many souls for God.”
- He was always available to hear Confessions and offer forgiveness, spending up to sixteen hours a day in the confessional.
- In 1929, Pope Pius XI proclaimed him the “heavenly patron of all parish priests throughout the world.”
- Pope Benedict XVI inaugurated a “Year of Priests” on the 150th anniversary of his death, in order “to deepen the commitment of all priests to interior renewal for the sake of a stronger and more incisive witness to the Gospel in today’s world.”

Discussion Questions

- St. Ignatius teaches that we are “sinners, yet deeply loved.” How does this perspective challenge the way people sometimes view priests, either putting them on a pedestal or judging them harshly, and how might it help us relate to them more honestly as members of the Church?
- Pope Leo invites the Church to pray for priests during moments of vocational crisis. What kinds of struggles do you think priests experience in their vocation, and why is it important for the faithful to recognize this?
- What are some concrete ways we can pray for and support our priests in their vocation? How can the prayers and encouragement of the faithful make a difference in their lives?

Closing Prayer

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our priests.

Through them, we experience your presence in the sacraments.

Help our priests to be strong in their vocation.

Set their souls on fire with love for your people.

Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Inspire them with the vision of your Kingdom.

Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel.

Allow them to experience joy in their ministry.

Help them to become instruments of your divine grace.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest.

Amen.