
Pastoral Letter for Good Shepherd Sunday

April 7th, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the Lord Jesus.

For many years, the faithful of our archdiocese have prayed earnestly for vocations to the priesthood. We have asked the Lord of the harvest to send shepherds to serve His people with faith, humility, and love. I am deeply grateful to share that God is answering our prayers in a remarkable way.

In 2023, we ordained two priests, a great blessing for our Church. Yet at that time, we had no seminarians in formation to follow them. It was a moment that invited trust and a renewed commitment to go deeper in prayer. That same year in the fall, one young man entered seminary. In 2024, two more followed. In 2025, three additional men answered the call to begin their formation.

Today, six seminarians are preparing for the priesthood and next year, we expect up to twelve. These vocations are a gift from God and a powerful sign of hope for our Church. They remind us that Christ continues to call men to become shepherds after His own heart, men who will lead a Church that goes out in mission to proclaim the Gospel to the next generation.

Each of these men has answered the call of the Good Shepherd with courage and faith. They have said “yes” to a journey that asks them to go deep, in prayer, in formation, and in configuration to Christ, so that one day they may stand at the altar, celebrate the sacraments, and accompany God’s people in moments of joy and sorrow.

Yet priestly formation is never a journey walked alone.

As a Church, we are called to go together. We share responsibility for forming these men well — spiritually, humanly, intellectually, and pastorally — so that they may serve with wisdom, compassion, and missionary zeal.

God's generosity in calling these men to discern the priesthood now invites a generous response on our part.

The upcoming Good Shepherd Sunday special collection (April 25-26) will launch the **Vocations Appeal**, a diocesan initiative dedicated to supporting the ongoing formation of our seminarians. **With a goal of raising \$500,000 this year**, the Appeal will help sustain the significant investment required for seminary formation and ensure that those whom God calls are well prepared for faithful and fruitful priestly ministry.

As we approach Good Shepherd Sunday, **please consider supporting our future priests with faith, generosity, and thanksgiving.** Your gift is more than financial assistance. It is an investment in the life and mission of the Church, now and for years to come.

Be assured of my gratitude and my prayers for you and your loved ones.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marcel Damphousse". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

✠ Most Reverend Marcel Damphousse
Archbishop of Ottawa-Cornwall