

SEEK THE LORD – APRIL 2025

For these past fifteen years it has been my great privilege to serve as the Archbishop of Cincinnati. With the acceptance of my resignation and the appointment of the next archbishop, an opportunity presents itself to reflect on these years of priestly ministry.

This is a bittersweet moment for me. On the one hand, I look forward to passing on the reins of ecclesiastical administration to my successor. On the other, I will miss the experiences of active ministry through which I had the opportunity to interact with so many of you. One never truly retires from being a priest, though, and I look forward to assisting as I am able with the celebration of the sacraments in service to the faithful of this archdiocese.

It is through the sacraments that Christ is made present to us. He nourishes us, forgives our sins, gives us the strength to fulfill our respective vocations, and protects us on our final journey back to the God who created us. It has been a special grace to witness the many ways in which Christ is at work in your lives and continually cares for His flock. Jesus promised to remain with us to the end of time. To the faithful of this archdiocese and beyond, He has kept that promise. I am grateful to have collaborated with many priests, deacons, religious women and men, and lay people to help build up the Kingdom in our local Church.

There have undoubtedly been challenges over the years. Even in these moments, however, when the Cross is more readily present to us, God's grace triumphs. As Saint Paul reminds us, "All things work for good for those who love God" (Romans 8:28).

Soon after arriving in the archdiocese, I invited us all to pray frequently for vocations. The Prayer for Vocations is not simply a means of asking God to send us more young people to serve the Church as priests or consecrated religious. Rather, it is a reminder that God has called each of us to some definite purpose in this life. He calls us to be sharers in His mission and He

equips us to do our unique part to contribute to the faith journey of the entire People of God.

There is much good happening across this archdiocese, and that is due to the faithfulness with which so many of you are striving to know and follow your vocation.

From the beginning of His ministry, Jesus called men and women to follow Him. He continues to call us today. Our response demands that we constantly seek the face of the Lord – to recognize His presence in our lives and enter into relationship with Him. This is essential to the life of a Christian, and because of that I chose those words, ***Seek the Face of the Lord***, as my episcopal motto. We constantly seek Him and, in knowing Him, we then bring others to experience His love for them. This is how I have approached my own vocation, and I hope that in some way God has worked through my priestly ministry to be present to you.

Know of my prayers for all of you, and please pray for me as I enter this new phase of my vocational journey with the Lord. Please pray as well for Archbishop-designate Casey, that the Lord may guide and strengthen him as he takes on the responsibility of being our archbishop and shepherd.