

Catholics mark Pope's 60 years of priesthood with 60 hours of prayer

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Catholics around the world are celebrating Pope Benedict XVI's 60th anniversary of priestly ordination with 60 hours of Eucharistic adoration and prayer for vocations.

“This is an exceptional opportunity to give thanks for our Holy Father, to pray for all of our priests, and to ask the Lord for more vocations to the priesthood,” said Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, chairman for the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations.

He said Pope Benedict has been “an outstanding model of priestly ministry and service to the Church.”

The Pope is celebrating his anniversary on June 29, but prayer in most dioceses will likely extend to July 1, the World Day of Prayer for Priests.

Dioceses are not obligated to participate, though many have shared their commemoration plans with the U.S. bishops' committee.

The Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. will have 92 parishes participating in “hundreds” of combined hours of prayer for vocations and for the Pope.

Staff at the Jeanne Jugan Residence in Pawtucket, Rhode Island have already spent over 71 hours this month praying for vocations.

A parish in Dallas, Texas has already completed over 60 hours of adoration in honor of the Pope, saying they send all prayers and good wishes to the Pope “on this occasion of great joy and happiness for the Church.”

Catholics in the Archdiocese of Denver are adoring the Eucharist and praying for vocations for 60 hours between June 27 and July 1 in the chapel of St. John Vianney Seminary.

Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, commended the call to prayer in a letter to bishops, saying prayer for vocations is “a worthy intention.”

“An increase in number and sanctity of the priests in service to our dioceses is a sign of health and vitality in the Church,” he said.

Archbishop Dolan added that prayer for vocations, in light of the Pope's anniversary, shows gratitude for the Pope's example and service.

Pope Benedict was ordained in 1951 in Munich, and spent several years of his life teaching theology and dogma at the university level. In 1977, he was named Archbishop of Munich and subsequently became a cardinal. He was elected Pope in 2005.

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