

NOVEMBER 24 BISHOP IVAN CAMILLERI

The readings we have just heard in today's Mass offer a profound lens through which we reflect on the Church's prayer for vocation. Both passages celebrate quiet faithfulness and generous self-giving—qualities that are at the very heart of every priestly, religious, and lay vocation.

In the book of Daniel, we meet four young Israelites—Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—taken from their homeland and placed in the service of the Babylonian king. They are bright, capable, and chosen for special training. Yet amid this new and foreign culture, Daniel resolved not to defile himself. His decision not to eat the royal food is not merely about diet, but it is an act of fidelity. Surrounded by temptation and compromise, Daniel remains rooted in his identity as one of God's chosen ones.

Daniel's witness is a powerful image of vocation. Each calling, whether to priesthood, consecrated life, marriage, or lay service, begins with a similar interior decision: to remain faithful to God's call amid the competing voices of the world. Daniel's quiet courage reminds us that fidelity to one's vocation often begins in the hidden decisions of the heart—in the daily "yes" to God's will. The Lord in turn blesses Daniel and his companions with wisdom, insight, and strength—gifts that God also bestows on those who generously embrace their calling.

Fidelity to God does not diminish our capacity to contribute to the world. Rather, it purifies and strengthens it. For the Serra Club, whose mission is to foster and support vocations, Daniel's faithfulness offers a model for accompaniment. Serrans are called

to be encouragers of fidelity—to recognize, nurture, and sustain the seeds of vocation in others, especially among the young. Their commitment to prayer and support helps many discern the path God has chosen for them.

The Gospel complements this notion beautifully. Jesus observes the rich making large offerings, and then notices a poor widow who drops two small coins. He declares, "This poor widow has put in more than all the others. She, out of her poverty, has put in all she had to live on." Her act of generosity flows from complete trust in God. This widow's offering mirrors the spirit of true vocation. A priest, a sister, a lay disciple who gives his or her life to God does so not out of surplus, but out of love, trusting that the Lord will provide.

True vocational generosity, like the widow's gift, is not about how much one gives, but how completely one offers himself. The Serra Club's work of promoting vocations then is a work of nurturing both fidelity and generosity. By praying for vocations, supporting seminarians and religious, and encouraging families to be vocations-friendly, Serrans help others to offer their two coins—to give their lives wholly to God's service.

May the Lord who blessed Daniel's fidelity and the widow's trust bless the mission of those who seek their true vocation. And may many hearts respond generously to the Lord's call, saying with Mary, "Let it be done to me according to Your word."