

✠ Wilton Cardinal Gregory,  
*Archbishop of Washington*

Pope Saint Gregory knew just where to find potential missionaries to send on a faith adventure to England. He called upon the monks at the monastery on the Caelian hill – one of the famous Seven Hills of Rome – to become his messengers in order to bring the Christian faith to Great Britain. At the time, the monastery was in an upscale Roman neighborhood. Where do we go today to find such missionary servants? As vocation personnel, that must be an abiding concern and question of yours.

Your efforts must take you to those places where today's potential clerical and religious candidates might be found. Nowadays these locations are often on college campuses, in young adult entertainment venues, and perhaps even at sporting events. There you will find young people who are filled with the same greatness of heart and spirit of adventure that permeated the souls of Augustine and his 40 companions who then bravely set out to bring Christ to the people of the British territory.

As vocation personnel, you must look for those same spiritual and human qualities that Gregory sought in those intrepid monks that he would invite and then

commission to leave the relative comfort of their monastery in Rome and eventually travel to England. Gregory invited candidates to the missionary adventure, which still is the very energy of the Church's permanent task of evangelization, and so must you seek contemporary young people because it is the core task of all vocation personnel.

On this feast of Saint Gregory the Great, you should consider how Gregory's missionary spirit launched the conversion of an entire nation. He sought adventurous candidates to promote the gospel of Christ – candidates who were not afraid of the promise or the challenges of tomorrow because they grasped the heritage of faith

that made them bold. Those are the same types of candidates that you must seek and that Christ's Church still urgently needs. Those Benedictine monks could not have envisioned what their missionary journey of faith would demand of them. They were, however, dauntless in their enthusiasm for the tasks that were ahead of them.

Those same qualities of adventure, openness to the future, confidence in God's grace are what we seek in today's potential clerical and religious candidates. We do not need timid or hesitant candidates but bold believers who dare to trust in God's grace and not simply depend on their own strengths or smugness –

candidates who are open to a future that they trust God will offer and direct.

In the name of the bishops and provincials who assigned you the task of vocation service, I thank you for your creativity and energy in finding ministers for the Church's tomorrow.