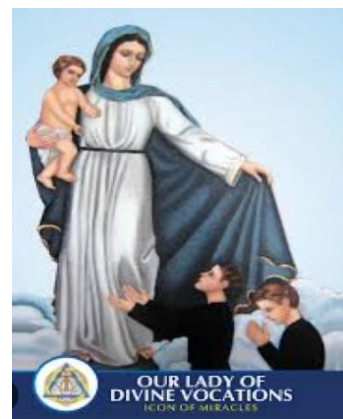


## **Vocationist Marian Year 2025–2026: A Year of Grace and Devotion**

The year from May 11, 2025, to May 11, 2026, has been declared a Marian Year by the Vocationist Fathers to mark the centenary of the apparition of Our Lady to St. Justin Russolillo. This celebration mirrors Pope Pius XII's 1953 Marian Year proclamation, aimed at deepening faith and devotion to the Virgin Mary.



Fr. Justin's life, as Rev. Fr. Louis Caputo SDV noted, began, unfolded, and ended under the maternal guidance of Mary. His birth on January 18, 1891, was preceded by a vision granted to Fr. Salvatore Di Fusco, a priest in Pianura who was gravely ill. The Blessed Virgin appeared to him, saying, "Have no fear; you shall recover because today in Pianura a child is being born... he shall be glory for the Catholic Church." Following his recovery, Fr. Salvatore recognized the newborn Justin as the prophesied child and commemorated January 18 as the beginning of Fr. Justin's mission.

Fr. Justin taught that true union with God necessitates union with Mary. He believed that Mary, as the one closest to Jesus, leads souls toward divine union. Quoting him: "As the Son of God is inseparable from Mary, the chosen ones also must be united to Mary." He called this relationship the "union with the Virgin Mary," based on the model of the Trinity's connection with Mary and its power to bring us closer to God.

On May 11, 1926, Fr. Justin had a profound spiritual experience that led him to believe the Blessed Trinity had assigned Mary as the "immediate Superior" of the Vocationist community. Since then, May 11 is celebrated as the feast of Our Lady of Divine Vocations, and every Vocationist house includes a room dedicated to Mary—an intimate space for prayer and spiritual conversation.

Fr. Justin emphasized Mary's role in guiding vocations, calling her "Our Lady of Divine Vocations" and "Our Lady of Perpetual Visitation." As the Mediatrix of all graces, she inspires young people to follow Christ's call. On their first profession, Vocationists take Mary's name

as their middle name, and their founder signed himself "Fr. J.M. of the Blessed Trinity"—short for Justin Maria. They also wear a Rosary with the Miraculous Medal as a sign of their consecration to Mary.

The Marian Year is both a remembrance and a renewal—a call to deepen Marian devotion and continue the legacy of St. Justin Russolillo through a life rooted in Mary and dedicated to divine vocations.

Let us pray with St Justin Russolillo:

"O Mary, I would like to unite myself entirely to you with all the relationships with which is connected every work, every Saint, every Angel, every grace, and St Joseph, in order to unite myself to the Divine Relationships that exist between You and the Divine Persons."  
(Spirit of Prayer, p.144)