

## **The Vow of Service: Honoring Those Who Sacrifice**

Among the vows that sanctify a soul's journey, the vow of service shines with a unique radiance. Service is love made visible, sacrifice embodied, and selflessness placed at the center of daily living. When we vow to serve, we vow to place our gifts, our energy, and our time into the hands of others—not for glory, not for gain, but because it is the very heartbeat of compassion.

We see this vow alive in the men and women who wear uniforms: our military service members, police officers, and veterans. Their sacrifice is not theoretical; it is written into their very bodies, their families, and their stories. They place themselves in harm's way to protect freedoms, safeguard communities, and uphold peace. We cannot speak of service without bowing our heads in gratitude for their devotion.

But service is not bound only to one field. It flows through the quiet work of those who join the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, and countless volunteer organizations. They build bridges, feed the hungry, teach children, protect the environment, and nurture hope in places the world has forgotten. Their vow of service is less about recognition, more about responsibility.

The vow of service is a vow of humility. It calls us to see beyond ourselves, to honor the dignity of every human being, and to labor for the good of the whole. Those who embody this vow, whether on the battlefield, in a classroom, or in a village far from home, remind us of Christ's teaching: "Greater love has no one than this, that they lay down their life for their friends."

Yet service does not always demand laying down life—it also asks us to lay down ego, pride, and indifference. To listen where others turn away. To step forward where others step back. To give when it costs us something. That is the spirit of the vow.

Today, we honor all who have taken this vow in practice—our soldiers, veterans, first responders, and volunteers across the globe. Their lives remind us that service is not only noble, but sacred. Their sacrifices make our communities safer, freer, and more compassionate.

May we, too, walk in this vow in our own ways. Whether through great deeds or small kindnesses, let us remember: service is the path to greatness in God's kingdom.