

VOCATION: DISCERNING GOD'S CALL TO LIVE AS A WITNESS



From the Catechism...

1877 "The vocation of humanity is to show forth the image of God and to be transformed into the image of the Father's only Son. This vocation takes a personal form since each of us is called to enter into the divine beatitude; it also concerns the human community as a whole.

934 "Among the Christian faithful by divine institution there exist in the Church sacred ministers, who are also called clerics in law, and other Christian faithful who are also called laity." In both groups there are those Christian faithful who, professing the evangelical counsels, are consecrated to God and so serve the Church's saving mission."

1269 "Having become a member of the Church, the person baptized belongs no longer to himself, but to him who died and rose for us. From now on, he is called to be subject to others, to serve them in the communion of the Church, and to "obey and submit" to the Church's leaders, holding them in respect and affection. Just as Baptism is the source of responsibilities and duties, the baptized person also enjoys rights within the Church: to receive the sacraments, to be nourished with the Word of God and to be sustained by the other spiritual helps of the Church."

From the Bible...

Romans 12:1-2 "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Steps to Discerning a Vocation

Discerning a vocation is as much about learning to hear and follow God in the moment as it is about answering the big questions like, "Should I get married or join a religious order?" So the simplicity of these steps should not surprise you.

They are:

1. **Pray.** God is your heavenly Father who desires your complete fulfillment. He wants to give you the direction you seek. But seek Him first and the answers will come.
2. **Live fully the vocation you have now.** This is following and letting the Holy Spirit transform you into Christ. Pursue holiness and love!
3. **Remain completely open to God's will.** There are not only things that can block us, but also easily distract us from what's truly important. Remember, in the end God most needs us to say "yes" to Him over and over.
4. **Do not be afraid.** If God is calling you to it, He will see you through it. Trust in Jesus!
5. **Explore your options.** God will guide us but we have to make an effort.
6. **Talk to your diocesan vocation director.** If you feel like God might be calling you to the religious life, they can really help you discern.
7. **Go on a vocations retreat.** If you can't, say special prayers for your vocation.

Remember, a vocation is a call. It is God that calls you to it. Always trust, pray, and obey and God will give you the desires of your heart.

Prayer to Discover and Follow My Vocation

My Lord and my God, you are Love itself, and the source of all love and goodness. Out of love you created me to know you, love you, and serve you in a unique way, as no one else can. I believe that you have a plan for my life, that you have a task in your Kingdom reserved just for me. Your plan and your task are far better than any other I might choose: they will glorify you, fulfill the desires of my heart, and save those souls who are depending on my generous response.

Lord, grant me the light I need to see the next step in that plan; grant me the generosity I need to set aside my own plans in favor of yours; and grant me the strength I need to put my hands to your plough and never turn back. You know me better than I know myself, so you know that I am sinful and weak. All the more reason that I need your grace to uphold the good desires of my heart, O Lord!

Show me your will for me, O gentle and eternal God, and help me to say with Mary, "I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word," and to say with Jesus, "Let not my will be done, but yours." Amen.