

## What do we mean by Vocation?

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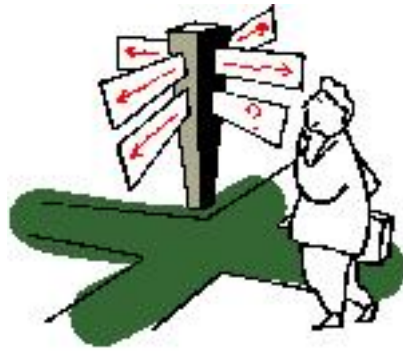


While the common understanding of this term involves men and women making a choice to become diocesan priests or members of religious communities the meaning in a Christian context is much wider and deeper. The word vocation means calling and the reality is that all of us have received a call.

We have been called by God to be all that God wishes us to be. For some people that may mean becoming a priest or a religious. For others it means being married or being involved in serving the wider community. The reality is that the notion of vocation raises a whole host of issues tied up with our sense of identity. The responsibility entrusted to all of us at our baptism is to live a God centred life. With confidence that God wants what is best for us we are invited to become aware of who we are, our gifts and talents to see how they may be used and developed in the building up of Gods kingdom.

We are entrusted with free will so it is important to recognise that our lives are not predestined, what we will become depends upon the choices we make. If we chose not to follow a particular path at some point in our history it does not mean our vocational relationship with God has ended. Our God is a God of possibilities. Within the context of the choices we have made their arise new possibilities, new ways of giving expression to our faith.

The task before those working in Vocation Ministry is to make people aware of their responsibility to reflect upon this aspect of their identity and encourage others to do the same. Examples of the type of questions all believers need to be challenged to reflect upon might be:



- Why am I here?
- Am I using the gifts and talents I have received?
- How might I use my gift/talents for the benefit of others?
- What are the things in life that make me truly happy?
- What are the choices that I've made that I've regretted?
- What does it mean to put God at the centre of my life?

It's important to recognise that the answers one gives to these types of questions need to be tested within the context of the wider community, friends and family. If the Church can create a culture or environment in which all Catholics are encouraged to explore these types of questions we should be confident that some men and women will find themselves presenting themselves to fulfil the leadership needs of the Church.

In today's materialistic society these are not the easiest types of questions to get people to explore.

The task that we all have been entrusted with is that of creating a culture in our parishes that challenge everyone to begin to take seriously our vocation. It's important to see that the context within which these questions are asked carries with it an assumption that people and creation are fundamentally good. From the beginning of the Bible when God looked at what he had created and saw that it was good, to the incarnation in which God became a human being to bring us the Good News that God loves and values us.

Vocation Ministry means helping people feel valued by God that they will take seriously the search to find how they might fulfil their fullest potential as human beings.

It means challenging people to reflect on important issues. It means helping people to pray and understand what it means to listen to God.

So what can you do?

Reflect on this article with your family and friends.

What do you agree with?

What bits are you unclear about?

Talk with people about the questions raised in the article

Identify what other questions people might raise.

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