

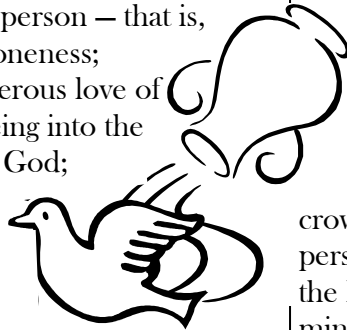
A Mission Church

Like It Or Not, God Gave All Of Us The Same Vocation! How we live it is our choice!

It came when you had no say in the matter. It came when your parents chose to have you baptized. It came because God had, and has a role for you and each of us to live in building up of God's kingdom.

A vocation is not something asked for, but rather acknowledged and accepted. Basically, it is the fundamental and innate call by God of every baptized person, the fullness of every human being, to love with the love of God. That means every human being must:

- 1) seek the fullness of their own person — that is, see the human and divine in oneness;
- 2) love others with the same generous love of God that calls each human being into the complete person intended by God;
- 3) See this complete person — self and others — as the image and likeness of God.



How does God wish me to live this call, to love, to become the complete person intended? How does He choose for me to do these, so as to assist others in their journeys to completeness?

When this love of God is trusted sufficiently, the person accepts the grace to live this life as a sign of that love. This love is shown in four beautiful ways:

- *Married Life*
- *Single Life*
- *Consecrated Religious Life*
- *Ordained Ministry*

And you thought only the ordained were called to a specific vocation. We are obliged to love one another into his or her particular vocation where the fullness of a person is truly found and celebrated, growing into the oneness of God, who is love.

FULFILLING THE MISSION OF CHRIST

What was the mission of Jesus? To bring all things into oneness with God. To do so, it was imperative that Jesus should accept the will of the Father, since it is through this will that the fullness of the person, the fullness of love could be recognized, and the fullness of the ability to love completely, was made possible (in oneness with God).

THE BAPTISMAL GIFT...LATER CONFIRMED

“God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.”

(from the Rite of Baptism)

As this is said, the priest or deacon anoints the crown of the head of the person being baptized. This person, now a member of God's holy people sharing the life of Christ, also comes to share in Christ's priestly ministry, his prophetic ministry, and his kingly office of governing and maintaining the kingdom of God on earth.

“Receive the Holy Spirit.” (Confirmation Rite)

In Confirmation, the gifts of the Spirit are made perfect so the one now accepting the call and mission of our Lord, can do so with greater assurance and will.

THE VOCATION OF THE LAITY

Except for those who answered God's call in Holy Orders or Consecrated Religious Life, the laity includes the whole of the Church, the Body of Christ, all who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ and integrated into the People of God, and are made sharers in their particular way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ, and have their own part to play in the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world. (CCC, 897)

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Two “vocations” are seen as coming from the laity, simply because the laity are where they can communicate the message of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God, in ways that may be impossible for those ordained or in consecrated religious life. Those in married life and those in single life are called to transfigure the world in their own time and space, through their lifestyle and their interactions with others with whom they share life – at work, in communities, in the home, through political activities and apostolic activities.

YES, YOUR MARRIAGE IS A VOCATION

The “Yes” of a man and a woman must be unconditional since it requires that the love of God be seen in them, as individuals growing in the perfection of love, and as a sign of unity in their love for each other and of God. It says “Yes” to the many struggles of loving freely, of forgiveness, of denying self for the sake of the other, and of the children they are blessed to receive as a gift from God.

Marriage is that visible witness that the love of God has joined a man and woman together, that they have accepted that love, rely on that love, and foster that love in their indissoluble commitment. The partners in a sacramental marriage differ from a societal marriage in that they are not simply committing to each other, but are committing to God a profound desire to love as God loves – forgiving, nurturing, caring, and enabling. Only then does their love for one another open to the person of each individual, and of God.

THE LOVING ACTS OF SINGLE LIFE

We too often think that someone remains single simply because they could not find a suitable spouse for marriage. Sorry!

The vocation of a single person remains the same as that which all the baptized share – the prophetic and priestly ministries of Jesus Christ, as well as the obligation to bring the sanctity of life – found in the kingdom of God – to the world.

Yes, a man or woman may see himself/herself coming to the completeness of personhood through the commitment of offering life in the world, that is, to teach, preach, and sanctify wherever life happens. This is unique in that a single person can often be a greater sign of the love of God for others, than what can occur in the married, religious or ordained life. The vocation to love remains the same, and is equal to, that of the married, religious, or ordained.

The single vocation allows for greater freedom to love outside the home than does the married vocation, and the same freedom than perhaps a person in a consecrated religious life whose first obligation is to the community. Nevertheless, it is a needed vocation in the announcing the kingdom of God. It is a charism, a gift.

RELIGIOUS LIFE, A PROFOUND LOVING

Consecrated Religious Life can take many forms. We often think of it as what we grew up with, whether it be a woman living as a Sister, or a man living as a Brother in a religious community with a specific job – older folks remember those of teaching. While this may be accurate, it is far from complete as many living consecrated religious lives do so “in the world.”

Others enter into communities set apart with a charism of prayer. These are cloistered communities.

But all members of any religious community take vows which join them evermore closely to Christ. Theirs is a “marriage” to Christ the groom. This is shown in their vows called the “Evangelical Counsels (Vows)” of chastity (celibacy), poverty, and obedience. In their own way, they are accepting the grace necessary to live a life that mirrors the love of God. A man or woman entering into such a commitment has discerned the will of God, and has come to trust that God has called them to this life which stands against the world, even as it is meant to sanctify the world into a loving relationship with its Maker.

THE ORDAINED

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time. Thus it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry and includes three degrees: episcopate (bishop), presbyterate (priest), and diaconate (deacon).

The ordination of a man is a “setting apart” and an investiture by Christ himself for his Church, conferring a sacred power meant to unveil, encourage, and strengthen the common priesthood of all the baptized. It is ministerial, entirely related to Christ for the sake of the Body, the People of God.

In what may be considered an extreme act of self-giving, it is rather, an extreme act of trust and love – love of/for God and others, and then of the self, a person loving in union with, and in the person of, Christ, the priest of the New Testament