

WHAT IS A VOCATION?



The Catholic Church teaches that every person has a call to holiness. It is extremely important that we recognize the need to seek, return to, and embrace a life directed toward holiness. The word vocation is derived from the Latin word "vocare" which means a calling or summoning. The dictionary defines vocation as a call from God to a distinctive state of life, in which a person can reach holiness. The Second Vatican Council made it plain that there is a "Universal call [vocation] to holiness in the Church" (*Pope Paul VI*).

According to *Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* "...everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification"" (*Pope Paul VI*). "In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbor. In this way, the holiness of the People of God will grow into an abundant harvest of good, as is admirably shown by the life of so many saints in Church history "(*Pope Paul VI*). The Church recognizes four vocations: married, religious, priestly, and committed single life.

Pope Francis in his message for the 51st World Day of Prayer for Vocations says, "A vocation is a fruit that ripens in a well cultivated field of mutual love that becomes mutual service, in the context of an authentic ecclesial life. No vocation is born of itself or lives for itself. A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people, in the experience of fraternal love. Did not Jesus say: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (*Jn 13:35*)?"

We can show fraternal love for our parishioners by teaching them about vocations through activities and prayer. In turn, we will have good soil, ready for sowing of the seeds of vocations.