

Does Everyone Have a Vocation?

Everyone has a vocation, a calling from God. We usually begin by thinking of a calling as something *we do*, but both Judaism and Christianity are unambiguously clear: Just by *being*, beginning at the very moment God called you into existence at conception in your mother's womb, your vocation was born. It is good *simply that you exist*. This majestic truth means that human dignity is infinite and does not rest on human achievement or approval conferred by others. Dignity is an inalienable gift conferred immediately by God.

St. Augustine captured this stunning truth with elegant simplicity, writing in God's voice: *Amo, volo ut sis*, "I love you: I want you to be." It is not difficult to imagine the radical implications of this truth as a force for shaping the mission of an entire civilization. St. John Paul II revered this mission, affirming over and over again that our common human calling is to build a "culture of life and a civilization of love" wherein the weakest, most defenseless and voiceless members of society are fiercely protected with the passion of God Himself.

Built on this firm foundation, the idea of our vocation opens out into a whole way of life. The gift of existence we have received from God is to be fully developed, bearing abundant fruit, redounding to the glory of God and the benefit of all. Created as we are in God's "image and likeness," this means the fulfillment of our core mission depends on *imitating God* by living lives dedicated to godly deeds of love, justice, mercy, truth, humility, compassion, sacrificial generosity—acting as prisms that make visible the living colors of invisible Divine Light. Colors we see most brightly shining in Jesus Christ.

But as a sinful people, our calling also includes the invitation to say "yes" to Jesus' own mission to save us from our sins, from all that leads us away from living as God's image and toward death. Jesus, God-with-us, came into the world to invite us to say "yes" by joining God's revolution. By cooperating with God's rescue plan for the whole human race, Jesus came to heal us from our spiritual sickness and make us able again to love with God's own love and so become saints who help heal our disfigured world by being living signs of God's beauty.

As we grow and mature in wisdom, age, and grace, developing an intimate friendship with God in prayer, we begin to discern the many creative and (sometimes) heroic ways God wishes us—*uniquely!*—to carry out His plan in our daily lives, bearing God's creating and redeeming presence into the world of family and work, church and society, politics and culture.

Every moment of every day is pregnant with a calling, an opportunity to birth God's presence in a world desperately in need of His life-giving Presence.

May we have the courage and trust to say "yes" every day, trusting that "all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

Amen.



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