

LIFE AS A VOCATION

PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES

- To recognize our vocation and our relationship with God
- To affirm the presence of God while realizing that vocation
- To embrace and respond to that vocation

INTRODUCTION

On May 6, 2001, the fourth Sunday of Easter, Pope John Paul II gave a message for the 38th World Day of Prayer for Vocations. His message was entitled “Life as a Vocation” which he considers to be undeniably important to the Christian life.

THE ESSENCE OF THE MESSAGE

In this address, the Pope presented an inspiring message for the entire church, and a very prophetic message for Serrans. His message began by connecting our vocation to our relationship with God through which we are invited to converse with God.

How do you connect your life of service to your relationship with God?

In essence, vocation lies in our communion with God as revealed in the Genesis story of creation. From this communal harmony, we experience the potential to grow into the person that God created us to be. Vocation in this creation context is about the promise of “placing the universe in the operative hands of humanity” through the covenant relationship with God.

To consider the significance of placing the universe in the hands of humanity, a vocation encourages all of us to seek inner freedom based on a desire for the future. From this simple and profound truth, the Pope challenges us to “re-evangelize life.” Since we are not alone in fashioning our lives, we are called to discover the presence of God in our individual stories realizing that our vocation is the experience of God being with us.

The challenge of these words is shrouded in our culture, which often pushes God to the sidelines, thus presenting God as a luxury commodity in a busy world, or viewed in suspicion because of the counter-cultural values of the Christian gospel. Regardless of how God

is perceived, we are to move beyond this perception and encounter the real God who assists us in finding, within the Christian community, our own personal vocation and respond to it with generosity.

When and where might our culture push God to the sidelines?

When and where as individuals might we push God to the sidelines?

The Pope's message closes with a comprehensive and inclusive statement that all men and women need to realize by our baptisms that we are called to be witnesses to the vocation of the ordained, religious and lay apostolate. These life choices challenge people to walk with faith and respond to God with a generous and unconditional "yes" that places their entire existence at the service of the gospel.

How do you witness the call to holiness through Baptism?

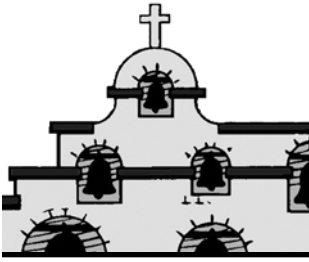
In conclusion, Pope John Paul II reminds us that we are all laborers in the harvest who have responded to the vocations that God has given us. We pray with the Holy Father "that all men and women open their heart to the seed of God's call, let no one by reason of our negligence, ignore or lose this gift, but may everyone walk with wholehearted generosity, towards the realization of your [God's] love. Amen."

THE RESPONSE OF SERRANS

Having expressed our vocation by being part of Serra International, we participate in God's creation through activities that support and pray for church vocations to the priesthood and religious life. As Serrans, we should find the Pope's message affirming in that it articulates our experience of vocation to a state of life, ministry in the church, and participation in Serra International. It is also challenging as we encounter vocations that are being redefined by the changing needs of our church.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How have your definitions of vocation changed over the years?
- What aspects of vocation are you most interested?
- How can Serra be more of a vocational organization?



MISSION AND MINISTRY OF A SERRAN

THEME

Involvement in Serra International challenges its members to live up to their baptismal call as Christians. In essence, the mission and ministry of Serra International is the collection of its members' personal mission to live a Christian Catholic life. The process of matching an individual's personal mission with the mission of Serra International harnesses the motivation that makes Serra International a vehicle for fellowship, learning about the Catholic faith, vocations, and outreach.

PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES

- To recognize the call to holiness
- To affirm baptism and confirmation as a call to service
- To embrace the challenge to grow in faith as a Serran

SCRIPTURE

“Let what you heard from the beginning remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he made us: eternal life ... As for you, the anointing that you received from him remains in you, so that you do not need anyone to teach you, But his anointing teaches you about everything and is true and not false; just as it taught you, remain in him” (1 John 2: 24-27).

DOCUMENTARY TRADITIONS

“...The specific role of the catechesis of adults consists in an initial deepening of the faith received at baptism, in an elementary, complete and systematic way (CT 21), with a view to helping individuals all life long grow to the full maturity of Christ (cf. Ephesians 4: 13)” Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community, #32).

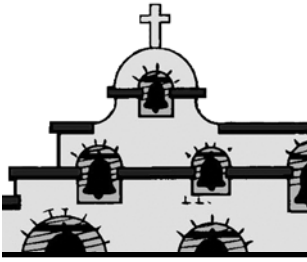
Who is my religious hero or heroine? What were this person's admirable -ualities?

How has this person shaped my sense of Christian service to the world?

“Since, like all the faithful, lay Christians are entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of their baptism and confirmation, they have the right and duty, individually or grouped in associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all men throughout the earth. This duty is more pressing when it is only through them that men can hear the Gospel and know Christ” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #900).

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- When you hear the words “Serra International,” what comes to your mind?
- When you think of serving as a Serran, how does it make you feel?
- How does participation in Serra meetings contribute to your faith?



MISSION AND MINISTRY OF SERRA INTERNATIONAL

THEME

Serra International is an organization whereby its members continue to study and learn their Christian heritage, the Catholic faith, and how to contribute to the daily activities of the world. By sharing a deep faith and wanting to incorporate the teachings of Christ into their daily lives, members set out to be true spiritual leaders who transform their communities.

PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES

- To reflect on the nature of the apostolate
- To experience faith in motion
- To integrate Scripture and documentary traditions with Serra's mission

SCRIPTURE

“They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers... All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved” (Acts 2: 42-47).

DOCUMENTARY TRADITION

“Those who sincerely accepted the Good News, through the power of his acceptance and of shared faith, therefore gather in Jesus' name in order to seek together the Kingdom, build it up and live it. They make up a community, which in its turn evangelizes. The command to the Twelve to go out and proclaim the Good News is also valid for all Christians, though in a different way” (On Evangelization in the Modern World, #13).

What does it mean to bear witness to the Resurrected God?

“The laity derive the right and duty with respect to the apostolate from their union with Christ their Head. Incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are assigned to the

Apostolate by the Lord. They are consecrated into the royal Priesthood and a holy people in order that they offer the spiritual sacrifices through everything they do, and may witness to Christ throughout the world” (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, #3).

What is necessary for the faith development of an adult community?

“It is incumbent on those who exercise authority to strengthen the values that inspire the confidence of the members of the group and encourage them to put themselves at the service of others. Participation begins with education and culture. ‘One is entitled to think that the future of humanity is in the hands of those who are capable of providing the generations to come with reasons for life and optimism’” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1917).

What are the different groups that I belong to, and what do they believe?

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What is unique about Serra International that distinguishes it from other organizations?
- How does Serra International foster the spiritual life of its members?
- What contribution does Serra International make to its members, church, and society?