

Life As A Vocation

(Read the Opening Prayer and Scripture out loud.)

Opening Prayer

O Lord, we give ourselves to your trusting care and wisdom for our lives. Reveal to us your meaningful purpose in whatever way we serve you. Work in us and through us so that your kingdom may be realized in all that we do. Amen.

Scripture

“Once again he went out along the sea. All the crowd came to him and he taught them. As he passed by, he saw Levi, son of Alphaeus, sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.” *(Mark 2:13-14)*

(Take time for silent reflection, then read the Introduction out loud.)

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. This program summarizes that speech and invites us to integrate its message into our lives and daily work.

(Introduce a speaker or the facilitator can read the following paragraphs with pauses in between.)

Reflection

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. 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 often subdued by our culture, which often pushes God to the sidelines, presenting God as a luxury commodity in a busy world, or viewed with suspicion because of the historic failures of organized religion. Regardless of how God is perceived, we can move beyond our perception and encounter the loving God who assists us in finding our own personal vocation and respond to it with generosity.

The Pope’s message closes with a comprehensive and inclusive statement that all men and women need to realize by their baptisms that they are called to be witnesses to the vocation of the ordained, religious and lay apostolates. 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.

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 toward the realization of [God’s] love. Amen.”

(The facilitator can read the Discussion Questions out loud for general or small group discussion.)

Discussion Questions

1. How has your definition of vocation changed over the years?
2. What aspects of vocation are you most interested in?
3. How can Serra be more of a vocational organization?

Closing Reflection

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 can find the Pope’s message affirming, because it expresses vocation as a state of life, ministry in the church, and participation in Serra International. It is also challenging to encounter and consider new vocations that are being redefined by the changing needs of our church.