

## The Christian Vocation

**By our Baptism** each of us is called, chosen and sent to carry on the mission of Jesus, to use our gifts and talents in the service of God and of one another.



**Some are called to the vocation of marriage and family life.** The mutual love of husband and wife is the perfect image of Christ's love for his Church. It is in the home that the love of God is first experienced through the loving care of parents and relatives.

**Some are called to the single life** in loving service of the wider community and family.



**Some are called to the consecrated life,** living the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience through a life of contemplative prayer and in service to the needs of the world, especially of the poor.

**Some are called to the vocation of priesthood,** to serve the community of the parish through the Sacraments, through preaching the Word of God and through pastoral care.



## CHRISTIAN VOCATION

Who am I?

What is my life about?

Where am I going?



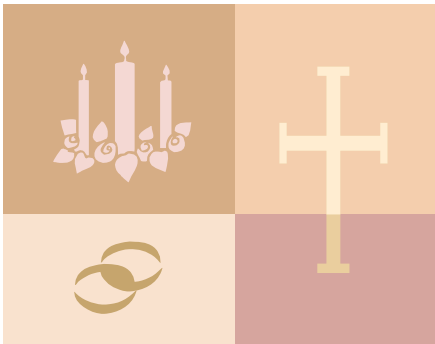
These are questions that we ask ourselves at different times in our lives, especially when we are making choices about the path we should follow in life.

People often think that “vocation” is a word that only applies to priests and nuns, or that it means following a particular trade or profession. Christians believe that God has made each of us uniquely different, with our own particular gifts and qualities. We are all called to follow Jesus Christ on our life journey and to use our gifts in the service of others. We are all called to love. This is our Christian vocation.

On these pages we look at the different choices that people may make to follow their Christian calling.

[Find out how to decide your vocation here](#)

## CALLED TO LOVE: CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE



A married person is called by God to vow faithful love to a husband or wife.

Married couples share a relationship of self-giving love.

They help one another to grow in human and Christian maturity.

They teach Christian faith and values to the children of the family.

Marriage is such a familiar concept that we don't always think of it as a vocation but it is in marriage and family life that we learn about relationships. We learn forgiveness, respect, kindness and tolerance. We learn how to love and be loved by others. In this way we can deepen our relationship with God.

### READ THE STORY OF A MARRIED COUPLE IN ARGYLL AND THE ISLES

*"When we were married we took our vows while holding together a crucifix. We adopted this old tradition because we recognised that as well as times of happiness and joy there would inevitably be time of suffering to face together in the future. We wanted to pledge that we would always try put Jesus in the centre of our family life and that we would continue to cling to him through good times and bad.*

*Nearly twelve years and six kids later we are still trying to do that, often failing but always trying. We do this on a daily basis through our commitment to family prayer times. Amidst the chaos, madness and exhaustion of family life, this routine has become our anchor. Every day before school, and almost always in a rush (why can't we just get out of bed 20 minutes earlier?!) we read a bible story together and say our morning prayers. In the evening just before kids' bedtime, often struggling to stay awake ourselves, we say our rosary.*

*This is a special grace-filled time for all of us. It is a joy just to be together – ourselves, Our Lady and Jesus. Not that we always feel like doing this. Often before prayer everything seems to conspire to make it very difficult, but always, by the end of our prayers, life feels better and more peaceful.*

*We can't claim our commitment to daily prayer has made us a family of saints - I know too often we fail. But we will keep trying. As married people we are, like everyone else called by God to become holy. For us holiness must mean becoming more fully the husband or wife, the father or mother that God created us to be. This is our vocation. It is amid the turmoil of daily life that God wants us to become saints. Thankfully for him, nothing is impossible! Through our family prayer we open our hearts to him. Then he can enter in and do the rest."*

## THE SINGLE LIFE

A single person is a man or woman who has come to understand that the single life is the best way for them to live out their Christian vocation and that this life choice gives them special opportunities to love God and serve others.

Single people have unique opportunities for personal and spiritual growth through prayer and service.

They live Christian values sharing Jesus' love with family members, co-workers and neighbours in a variety of ways.

Single people live the Christian vocation to serve in the local parish community and within the wider community wherever time and personal responsibilities allow.



## READ MATTHEW'S STORY

*"Rather than seeing single life as a transitory state, waiting for my "real" vocation as it were, I find that it can be a vocation in itself.*

*I can concentrate on my relationship with God, develop my prayer life and serve others without the constraints of family or religious life. I am free to go where God calls, when he calls and free to serve spontaneously.*

*It is vital to cultivate good friendships and to participate in the life of the church and community so as not to be lonely or self centred.*

*Ultimately, being a single Christian is exciting because unlike perhaps the other vocations, God could lead me to a different type of life in the future."*

[Find out more about the single life here](#)

## PRIESTHOOD

A priest is a man who is called to be an ordained minister of the Church.

He leads the Catholic community in worship and celebrates the Sacraments with them.

He proclaims and preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the faith of the Church.



He works with the bishop, priests, religious and people of the diocese to build up the Catholic community.

A priest may serve as a chaplain to a hospital, school, university or prison, or in the armed forces.

A priest develops his relationship with God through prayer and service.

Diocesan priests promise to live a life of celibacy.

Priests in religious orders vow poverty, chastity and obedience in a religious community.

### READ FATHER JOHN'S STORY

*Sometimes, I feel that being a priest is primarily about service and sacrifice: serving God by serving my parishioners, whether they be children in school; parishioners in church: old folk needing God's healing sacraments; parishioners needing to discuss life's problems or challenges in the light of the gospel or the teaching of the church.*

*That's the kind of service that gets me up at 3am to answer the phone for a sick call or relinquishes the pursuit of what the world calls success in terms of career or money. It's the kind of service that chooses to be without the love of wife and children for the sake of God's Kingdom. It is the service of God that, far from putting the priest on a pedestal these days, often puts me in the firing line of those (inside and outside the church) who would criticise and scorn me before they would support me.*

*But at other times, thanks be to God, it is the privilege and honour of the priestly ministry that comes to the fore. Knowing well my sinfulness and inadequacy, God himself has ordained little-old-me to be His priest and has sent me to serve His people in the here-and-now of my parish. God has called me and consecrated me to spend privileged time with His wonderful people especially at important times in their lives.*

*That gives me a tremendous challenge, but also renews my confidence that it is his Word that I preach and His sacraments I celebrate. He has chosen to act through me and I do it all for His people. It is when I am at prayer that I am reminded of this most deeply.*

*So, when folk ask me about why I became a priest (or – at this time when priesthood is often so undervalued - why I stay a priest), I don't tend to answer by using words such as "sacrifice", "giving-up" or "self-abnegation". Rather, I tell them I became a priest in the pursuit of happiness, where happiness equals the not-without-hardships, real-life and on-going discovery that where I am, who I am, is God's will for me. My prayer for Vocations is that our parishes will be positive nurturing ground for the priests of the future and that the priests we have in the present will be happy.*

***To those for whom it is ordained, I recommend it: Happy Priesthood!***

**Have you thought about it?**

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[Find out more about being a priest in Scotland](#)

## CONSECRATED LIFE

The Consecrated Life describes the various ways people can dedicate themselves to a life of prayer and service. This way of life involves making special vows. People living the Consecrated Life include Nuns, Monks, Sisters, Brothers and Priests in religious communities. The most common form of consecrated life involves belonging to a Religious Order or Congregation, each of which has a special spirit or charism.



Religious Sisters, Brothers and Priests are called to share in the life and mission of their Congregation or Order.

They make vows of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience:

Chastity, living celibately, means choosing a way of loving which allows them to be available to serve many people.

Poverty means living simply and sharing their talents, time and resources with the community and with the people they serve.

Obedience means responding to God's call to respond to the needs of the world through dialogue with the community.

Religious most often serve in fields such as education, health care, parish ministry, social work and adult formation. Some live as contemplatives in enclosed orders.

They may be sent by their community to serve wherever there is a need, especially among those who are most disadvantaged.

### READ SR. MARIE'S STORY

*When I was a baby my parents took me to church to be baptised. In this way I became a member of the Christian Community and was given my Christian name. My basic vocation is to be a Christian and like all followers of Christ I am called to live by the Gospel and the command that Jesus gave to all of us the night before he died: - "Love one another as I have loved you."*

*As a religious sister, to help me to live out this commandment I have taken the vows of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience.*

*The vow of Chastity, far from being a negative ruling in my life, is, I think, a spring board in my life. It is a gift founded on God's love for me. Because I am not committed to a husband and family of my own, I am free to love and be loved by others in a way that reaches beyond the limits of family, tribe and nation. Belonging to a Religious Congregation is a gift in itself and I am supported by the love and friendship of many Sisters.*



*As a Parish Sister, I find myself blessed by my Parish Community. It is a great joy to be with families, and to be enriched by them as I share their joys and sorrows. Most of all I feel very privileged to be with the children as I help to prepare them for the Sacraments.*

*The spirituality of my Congregation is about proclaiming the goodness of God. The vow of Poverty invites me to live simply. In practical terms it challenges me to be open, and to share all that I have and am with others.*

*Before I became a Sister, I thought that the Vow of Obedience meant that I would have to do without question, whatever my Superiors asked me to do. This in reality is not so. The spirit of the vow of Obedience is that I am to be open and that I listen to the Lord who continually calls me in so many different ways. Usually in making any important decision I will talk it out with those in authority to discern what the Lord is really asking of me.*

*Inscribed on the reverse side of the cross that I wear are the words "How good God is!" For me, Religious Life is an ongoing and deepening experience of just how good God really is!*

### **[Find out more about religious life](#)**

## **LAY COMMUNITIES**

One of the most powerful developments since the Second Vatican Council has been the growth of new Christian communities, predominantly of lay people and families. Whether they meet for prayer daily or monthly, whether they live together or spread out around the world these communities witness through their life and work to the love of God and to the joy of being a Christian.

Some are affiliated to religious orders, others trace their roots to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal or were founded by a charismatic Catholic lay person.

The variety of movements and communities is a sign of the diversity of gifts poured out on the church by the Holy Spirit. In our diocese we have our own lay community at [Craig Lodge](#).

## **READ MARY ANN'S STORY**

*"I am a Mum of 5 and grandmother to 16. I would find it hard to live my faith without the support and encouragement of community life. The greatest blessing is to have a daily disciplined prayer life with others and time for daily adoration of the Eucharist. It is a constant joy to me to see young people grow in their knowledge and love of the Church and with that passion to evangelise. Supporting young families growing up in an environment of faith is an incredible blessing and fills me with joy and great hope each day."*