

VOCATION

CLASS 1

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

Everyone coming into this world has a vocation. No one is unimportant to God or to the world. Each person has a mission, something God wants that person to do.



These are the things we will talk about in this first lesson:

- God's desire is to bring us to **salvation**.
- God **creates** each person for a specific vocation or mission.
- God calls people to life through one of several **vocations**.
- God has ways of **guiding** us to understand what He wants of us.
- **Every** vocation requires a chaste heart.

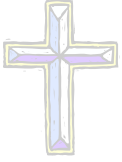
OUR LORD'S vocation

God made the world good. But we human beings sinned and all things went astray. The sin of our first parents, the original sin, was followed by countless sins of their descendants, the sins you and I commit.

Our sins are more serious than we imagine. They are deliberate offenses against God. To offend God deliberately is not a small or trivial matter. When we do something wrong, we may not realize how serious a thing we have done—but we have hurt God and wounded our friendship with Him.

When we choose to separate ourselves from God, we are choosing to separate ourselves from all the good things for which God made us. We can hardly realize how serious our offenses against God are. When we sin, we strike out against God Himself. *We are in trouble!* When we do **realize** what we have done, we hardly know what to do.

We were unable to make up for our sins, but God still loves us very much. To save from us the effects of our own sins, the Father invited His eternal Son to redeem us. The Son could make up for the sins committed. For He is the true Son of God. He is God just as the Father is God. He chose to take a human nature like ours, and live on earth to eventually suffer and die. Mary's child, Jesus, our Brother and our God, willingly died on the cross for our sins. Jesus made it possible for us to become friends with God once again. And so, we can become **God's friends** again, *if we choose to*.



Thus Jesus redeemed us, and called us again to life forever with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in heaven. Jesus' vocation was to be our redeemer.

Your vocation is IMPORTANT also

God creates no one thoughtlessly. He makes each person for a reason and gives each one a mission, a task in this world.

Our lives will be poor and wasted if we never come to realize our reason for living. We should live wisely to achieve what God intended.

Discussion: Thinking about vocation

- ➔ Have you ever thought about the fact that God made you for good reasons, that you have important things to do in this world?
- ➔ One of the many reasons abortion is so bad is this: God made all the tiny babies he created to accomplish good things for the world. But when people kill them even before they are born, they keep them from being able to do the important things God wished them to do for the world. Is it perhaps part of our vocation to help people realize the importance of every person in the world?
- ➔ Is vocation an important idea just for those who want to become priests and religious, or is the vocation of everyone in the world important?

God calls all people to a VOCATION

God calls many people to serve him in *marriage*. Others he calls to serve him in the *single* state. Some he calls to be become *priests*. Others he calls to be *religious*, either as priests, brothers, or sisters in the membership of a religious order.

God does not just call them in some vague way to marriage or to the religious life. He calls them in very special ways. He calls them to marry a **very special person** and to have the very children God wishes them to have. Through a family, parents and children grow in the happiness and love of God. God calls fathers and mothers to many special jobs in life, like being a salesman, a doctor, a policeman, fireman, teacher, astronaut, or any number of important professions.

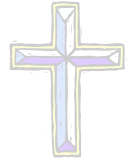
God cares about all the big things and all the details in everyone's life, no matter what kind of life they are called to.

He has plans for your life. And one of the most important things you need to do, if you wish to be **happy** and see your life accomplish good things, is to determine what it is that God wants you *to be* and *to do*.

How can we KNOW what God wants us to be?

God has ways of guiding us to understand what He wants of us. We say rightly that God “calls” us to something. He does not, of course, call us by telephone or by loud noises in the night. There are quiet ways in which He lets people know what would be a good and happy way to live.

He plants in our hearts an attraction for certain kind of good life. He arranges, in His divine care of the world, for us to run into certain people just the right times. Then we begin to like the idea of doing this or that with our lives. If we want to be friends of God, and care about what our life might become, we also **pray**. We ask God that when we choose what we will become and do in life, we may choose wisely, and come to the kind of life that He intended. In prayer, God speaks to us in the quiet of our hearts. We have to take time each day to listen to Him and to hear His voice, realizing that He gives us the grace we need in order to do His will.



Various Vocations

Vocation to MARRIAGE

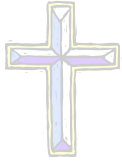
Most people are called to get married when they grow up, and to have families of their own. Even when we are young, we have some idea of how important a vocation that is! Every child knows how important his or her father and mother are.

It is not easy to be a good **parent!** Fathers and mothers must teach the whole world to their children. To be very good fathers and mothers, people must have many great traits.

Discussion question:

- ? Could you mention some of the important good traits parents need to have?

Surely parents have to love each other, and love their children. They have to know how to love unselfishly. They have to be faithful to fulfilling the needs of their **children** even when they do not feel like it. They have to work. They need to be friends of God, to help their children know the Lord well, too. We could all make a long list of the things our parents have done for us.



While being a parent is so important a vocation, they still have other things to do to fill their place in the world completely. They have other special jobs of many kinds. They are citizens and have duties in their neighborhood, city, and parish. Life is very good but also a challenge. In getting ready to live our vocations, we have much to learn and do!

Some people, from ordinary homes and parishes, are called to have *religious vocations*.

Vocation to be a PRIEST

Do you know the priests in your parish? Usually parish priests are diocesan priests. Their main task is to take care of their parish and all the people there. These men celebrate Mass for their people. They care for the Eucharist, baptize babies, and forgive the sins of all who come to Christ in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. They teach the ways of Christ to everyone. They preach the **Word of God** by word and example. Only a man, chosen by God, may be ordained a priest.

Priests help us all remain friends of Christ. Their task is also to do everything that helps people work together in making faith grow in their lives, and to help us all remain friends of Christ.

RELIGIOUS brother or sister

Another religious vocation is to become a religious brother or sister. Since we all grow up in homes, the vocation of a religious is one that may seem strange at first. Religious and priests do not get married. Instead of marrying they experience a "call" to give their lives to Christ. They **commit** themselves to a life of *celibacy* for the sake of God and His kingdom.

Religious generally make leading people to Christ the center and focus of their activity. They give up the happiness that comes from having one's own spouse and children for another kind of happiness. Their calling is to help all kinds of people to live their lives more easily as friends of the Lord. They gladly do all of this for "the sake of the Kingdom."

They help people in the world to focus on what is the most important reality of life: our relationship with God.

People respond to a religious vocation usually in this way. First God puts in their hearts a longing to do the sorts of things religious do. They want to become teachers or pastoral ministers or care for the poor and the suffering. Then God leads them gradually to know people who do things like that. This makes them begin to realize how **good** such a life can be. They see how much good they could do for so many people, and they see how happy it would make them feel to have lives that are close to Christ by doing these things.

SINGLE vocation

It is also God who calls some people to a vocation as single people in the world.



There are many things that lead people to this vocation. Sometimes they realize that there is someone in the family, or among their friends who needs special help and **care**. They are willing to give a large portion of their life to take care of this person.

Some people begin doing important things in the world — as doctors, teachers, or scientists — and find that they have come to such an intense concern for what they are doing that they feel it would be better to give that job all of their attention. There are many reasons why some people, who are not attracted to religious life, wish to lead lives of great faith and generosity in a single state.

But these, and all people who care about planning their lives wisely, would be smart if at times they talked with good and thoughtful people about what they plan to do with their lives. Sometimes it is wise to **talk** with a parent or grandparent, with a teacher you know well, a priest or religious you admire, about what you think you would like to do with you life. This is one of the most important decisions you will ever make.

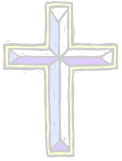
Their task would not be to tell you to become what they would like you to be. That would not be right! Their job would be to help you sift through your own thoughts and hopes, and help you see more clearly what you want — and what God is gently and quietly telling you to be. The point is: Your life will work best if you choose to become the person God intended you to be.

These decisions are not easy. We need the grace of God and the support of others to help us.

Vocation and chaste HEARTS

Every vocation requires a chaste heart. God calls all people to have a strong and honest love, and to live in ways that are generous and good. We never accomplish much that is good for ourselves, or for the world, without generous self-control. People who always do “whatever they feel like,” even if this hurts others, do indeed hurt others very much. So they end up leading pretty sad lives.

Obviously, married people must have chaste hearts. They will be tempted at times to be unfaithful to each other. But without self-control the home may break up and children may not have the security of loving parents. Sexual love always requires **maturity** and self-discipline. If people are controlled by sexuality, rather than in control of their own feelings, they will not be able to make their lives strong and useful.



In turn, many people are called to single lives in the world, or to religious life, or priesthood. They cannot lead these lives well and accomplish the satisfying and happy things these lives accomplish without strong self-control, discipline, and the generosity that honest love means.

This is why we need to learn the right ways to think about our sexuality from Christ. He made you the boy or girl you are. For your life to be happy, and to accomplish the important things to which God calls you, you need to choose the self-discipline of pure and good hearts. Christ is always present to help you.

TYING things together

Remember what we studied in this lesson:

1. It is God's will to save each of us.
2. Each person is called to a vocation by God.
3. There are several different paths to choose in living our vocation.
4. God leads us to choose a vocation in life.
5. A chaste heart is the core of each vocation.