

**Personal Vocation, Church Renewal & Effective Mentorship**

**GIVEN Mentor Training; Session #1**

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*“The fundamental objective of the formation of the lay faithful is an ever-clearer discovery*

*of one’s vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it so as to fulfill one’s mission.”*

- Pope Saint John Paul II *- The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People*, #58

**Learning Objective:**

* Describe “personal vocation” and the need to embrace it as a paradigm for effective mentorship.

**What is Personal Vocation?**



“Vocation” has multiple layers of meaning, including:

1. **Universal Vocation to Holiness –** all called via creation; made holy and supernaturally called through baptism.
2. **State of Life Vocation** – the basic way a person gives him or herself in relationship to others in the Body of Christ, which often involves vows (e.g. priests, religious, married).
3. **Profession** – people often refer to their field of work as a calling.

‘Personal vocation’ includes and integrates the universal call to holiness, ‘state in life’ and other aspects of ‘vocation.’ It holds the fullest meaning of vocation but is also specific to each person.

It is the unique, and unrepeatable calling God gives to each person for their own authentic fulfillment and for service to God and neighbor. It is His constant call to each one by name.

**Key marks of personal vocation:**

1. It is about self AND community, about authentic personal fulfillment AND contribution to the Body of Christ. It is about helping each member of the Body of Christ live his/her part in the Body as fully as possible.
2. It includes and animates one’s call to holiness and basic state in life. All aspects of one’s vocation are incorporated into personal vocation.
3. It is yours and nobody else’s. God calls each by name and endows each with an unrepeatable design of gifts.
4. It is now. Certain periods of life involve major vocational pivot points – e.g. the choice of marriage or profession. But one’s personal vocation is always a present reality.

*“The ‘personal vocation’ is, in fact, the secret of unity and integration at the heart of a whole life.”*

- Father Herbert Alphonso, S.J.

**Personal Vocation Tends to Be Neglected. Why?**

* Catholic habit of thinking of vocation in terms of State of Life (i.e. “Big V Vocation”)
* Shortage of priests, monks, and nuns
* Firestorm of cultural issues
* Lingering clericalism

**Sad Effects from the Neglect of Personal Vocation**

* Anemic missionary activity & failure to sanctify the world
* Disengaged youth who believe that their “vocation” is years out still to be discerned
* Single people believing they don’t have a vocation
* Perpetuation of what is called the “vocations crisis” (i.e. lack of priests and religious)
* De-personalization of priests and religious leading to burn out, depression, stress, etc.

**Good Fruit When Personal Vocation is Taught & Cultivated**

* Authentic renewal
* Engaged youth (lessons from the study, “Going, Going, Gone” by C.A.R.A.; research on loneliness from Springtide Research Institute; Tim Clydesdale’s book: *The Purposeful Graduate: Why Colleges Must Talk to Students about Vocation*)
* Less depression and anxiety in our youth.
* Increased responses to ALL state in life vocations, including more priests & religious
* Integral formation. Key! Grace builds on nature.