

GIVEN Mentor Training – Session One Outline & Notes
The Paradigm of Personal Vocation & Its Vital Importance for Young Adults
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Need for Paradigm Shift

Despite the Second Vatican Council and clear teaching about personal vocation from every pope since Vatican II, there is an ongoing need for paradigm shift in the way Catholics think and speak about personal vocation.

Story from Stephen Covey on the power of paradigms.

“Vocation” is a loaded term in Catholic circles and has multiple layers of meaning, including:

- **Universal Vocation to Holiness** – all are called to holiness. The call to full life in Christ begins at a person’s creation and is elevated to a supernatural call through baptism.
- **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).
- **Profession** – people often refer to their field of work as a calling.

Clericalism and Undervaluing of Lay Vocation and Personal Vocation Remains a Problem

- A frequently given confirmation message in one US diocese
- Constant equivocation about the meaning of vocation with emphasis on priesthood and religious life

Let’s delve into a quick reading from Saint John Paul II on personal vocation (five minutes)

Selection from Apostolic Exhortation *Christifidelis Laici (On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful¹)* - His Holiness Saint John Paul II

58. “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.

¹ https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html

God calls me and sends me forth as a laborer in his vineyard. He calls me and sends me forth to work for the coming of his Kingdom in history. This personal vocation and mission defines the dignity and the responsibility of each member of the lay faithful and makes up the focal point of the whole work of formation, whose purpose is the joyous and grateful recognition of this dignity and the faithful and generous living-out of this responsibility.

In fact, from eternity God has thought of us and has loved us as unique individuals. Every one of us he called by name, as the Good Shepherd "calls his sheep by name" (Jn 10:3). However, only in the unfolding of the history of our lives and its events is the eternal plan of God revealed to each of us. Therefore, it is a gradual process; in a certain sense, one that happens day by day....

Therefore, in the life of each member of the lay faithful there are particularly significant and decisive moments for discerning God's call and embracing the mission entrusted by Him. Among these are the periods of adolescence and young adulthood. No one must forget that the Lord, as the master of the laborers in the vineyard, calls at every hour of life so as to make his holy will more precisely and explicitly known. Therefore, the fundamental and continuous attitude of the disciple should be one of vigilance and a conscious attentiveness to the voice of God....

This, then, is the marvelous yet demanding task awaiting all the lay faithful and all Christians at every moment: to grow always in the knowledge of the richness of Baptism and faith as well as to live it more fully....”

But what is ‘personal vocation?’

God the Father beholds each person always that he speaks into existence. He looks upon each and calls each by name – ALWAYS.

This vertical relationship with the Father is the heart of PERSONAL VOCATION: ***God’s constant call to each unique person to holiness & relationship with Him.***

Personal Vocation is about *being* (vertical); Mission is about *doing* (horizontal).

You are FIRST a Beloved Daughter; then, a sister, friend, spouse, etc.

In the tradition of the Church each one (whether baptized or not) has a guardian angel whose sole purpose is to guide a person to life in God. In Matthew 18:10 Jesus states, “See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.”

At baptism, each one is called to literally partake in the divine life of Jesus Christ and to be a priest, a prophet, and a king.

Key marks of personal vocation:

- 1) It includes and animates one's call to holiness and basic state in life and profession. All aspects of one's vocation are incorporated into personal vocation. Indeed, everything we do should be a living out of God's call in our life: work, friendships, leisure time, eating or drinking and so on
- 2) It is uniquely yours and nobody else's. God calls each by name and endows each with an unrepeatable design of gifts that he wants each to develop and offer to others. AND the freedom to co-create with him new acts of love each day.
- 3) It includes self-creative freedom. We image God through by being sources of action. God wants us to pray and seek his face AND orient ourselves toward the good. In some way our decisions become his will.
- 4) It is dynamic. Christ is here walking among us, calling us daily to follow Him in our own way. Thus, our personal vocations can change and develop.
- 5) 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 now. We are always called to bring our unique selves and way of loving to the sacrament of the present moment.

"The 'personal vocation' is, in fact, the secret of unity and integration at the heart of a whole life."

- Father Herbert Alphonso, S.J.

Break Out Sessions in groups of four (five minutes)

What good fruit do you anticipate from GIVEN mentors helping their mentees embrace the paradigm of personal vocation?

Take 5 minutes to address this question as a small group, then be prepared to share your insights with the rest of the group.