

# Vocation: Call to serve with love

## In communion of service

Jesus is calling you and sending you forth to spread goodness in our world. His call is one of service, a summons to do good, perhaps as a physician, a mother, a teacher or a priest. Wherever you may be, you can hear his call and realize that he is sending you forth to carry out that mission. He himself told us, "I am sending you out" (Lk 10:3). It is part of our being friends with him. For this friendship to mature, however, it is up to you to let him send you forth on a mission in this world, and to carry it out confidently, generously, freely and fearlessly. If you stay trapped in your own comfort zone, you will never really find security; doubts and fears, sorrow and anxiety will always loom on the horizon. Those who do not carry out their mission on this earth will find not happiness, but disappointment. Never forget that Jesus is at your side at every step of the way. He will not cast you into the abyss, or leave you to your own devices. He will always be there to encourage and accompany you. He has promised, and he will do it: "For I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20).

Encyclical Letter *Dilexit Nos*, Pope Francis [215]

## How to Discern Your Vocation

All followers of the Catholic faith are called by God to serve Him in the world. This calling, known as a vocation — which comes from the Latin *vocare*, meaning "to call" or "to invoke" — begins with the Sacrament of Baptism, at which time the newly baptized neophytes are called to holiness. But Baptism is only the beginning: Discerning a religious calling is a deeply personal, often lifelong journey, one that offers many spiritual rewards and enables one to live in the fullness of God's light and love. ... Each Catholic has a unique vocation, which they must seek out in order to form a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ. ...

To that end, although Catholics may live out the principles of their vocation and serve God through the work that they do, they are not necessarily called to follow a specific career path. Instead, they work to discover God's will for them through a process known as vocational discernment.

## What Is Vocational Discernment?

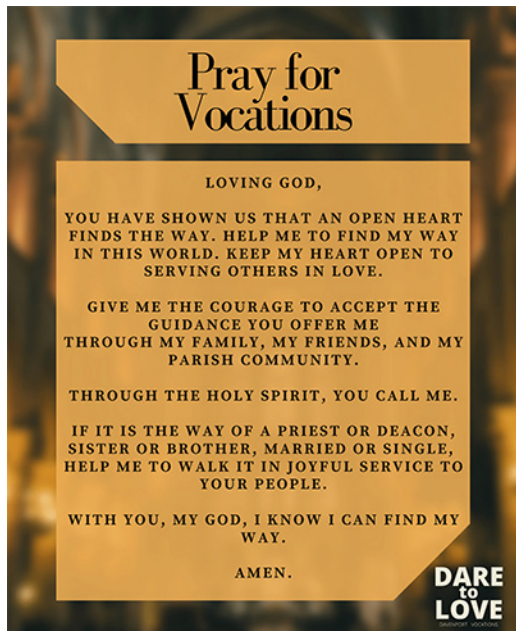
Like the root word of "vocation," the word "discernment" is derived from the Latin *discernere*, meaning "to perceive" or "to distinguish." Combined with what we know about *vocare*, we can therefore deduce that vocational discernment refers to the process of perceiving one's calling....

To put this into perspective, your vocation is the will of God acting through you. If you feel inclined to follow a particular path, that is because God has planted that seed within you. Even if you're drawn to a particular vocation based on your strengths and interests, those qualities are themselves gifts from God, making them quite literally "the deepest desires planted by God in a person's heart." Vocational discernment accounts for the totality of a person — how God has called and formed you — and puts your gifts into focus, eliminating unnecessary worldly distractions.

University of San Diego, <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/religious-vocational-discernment/>



# What can we do?



This prayer can be said as part of your daily prayer practice, with your family perhaps at meal time, or with any group you meet with during February

## January in Review



## Life is a Gift



**JANUARY 23, 2026  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

## Common Elements of Vocational Discernment

Although vocational discernment is a deeply personal journey — one that varies by individual — the process of discerning a Catholic vocation does feature a few common elements:

**Prayer:** God is not always obvious or immediate with His intentions. As the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's notes, earth-shattering messages are not typically God's preferred communication style — which is why vocational discernment requires prayerful reflection and contemplation. Most sources recommend setting aside time each day to sit quietly with God and listen for His calling; some also recommend journaling or reading the Scriptures to aid in the process.

**Guidance:** Although vocational discernment may be unique to each person, you need not go it alone. Meeting with a trusted spiritual guide on a regular basis can provide you with the spiritual guidance you need to make sense of God's plan for you.

**Exploration:** Other members of your parish can also be a valuable resource when discerning your vocation. Try connecting with those who are already living the life you feel called to in order to see how they find fulfillment in their vocation. You can also contact the Office of Consecrated Life within your diocese to learn what religious life opportunities may be available to you.

University of San Diego, <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/religious-vocational-discernment/>

**Promotion:** Join the St. Mary's Vocation Committee (information will be coming soon).

## Resources

Diocese of Davenport: <https://davenportdiocese.org/vocations>

USCCB: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/clergy-consecrated-life-vocations/vocations#tab-helpful-websites-for-both-men-and-women>