

## Why Do We Do That: Vocations

God calls each and every one of us to a vocation. That's what the word "vocation" means – it comes from the Latin *vocare*, meaning "to call." So, what is God calling you to? It is very important to prayerfully discern what God is calling us to do. Most of us are called to the Married life, some are called to the single life, and, of course, God calls many to the priesthood or religious life.

With each vocation, each state in life, there comes certain privileges, duties and responsibilities. Tonight we will discuss some of the finer points of why we do the things we do in Vocations.

### *The Priesthood and Religious Vocations*

#### **Why do we have an all male Priesthood?**

CCC1577: "Only a baptized man validly receives sacred ordination." (can. 1024). The Lord Jesus chose men to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry. (*Mk 3:14-19; Lk 6:12-16; 1 Tim 3:1-13; 2 Tim 1:6; Titus 1:5-9*). The college of bishops, with whom the priests are united in the priesthood, makes the college of the twelve an ever-present and ever-active reality until Christ's return. The Church recognizes herself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible. (*JPII Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*)

We all know that Christ handpicked the twelve Apostles, and those twelve were all men. Many opponents of the all-male Priesthood will say that Christ was just following the "norm" of the day and that women were not treated fairly in Biblical times. However, Christ was not one to just go with the flow. Remember, His teachings ultimately led to His death. If Jesus would have wanted women Apostles, He would have chosen some.

#### **Why can't we have married Priests?**

CCC1579: All the ordained ministers of the Latin Church, with the exception of permanent deacons, are normally chosen from among men of faith who live a celibate life and who intend to remain *celibate* "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven." (*Mt 19:12*) Called to consecrate themselves with undivided heart to the Lord and to "the affairs of the Lord," (*1 Cor 7:32*) they give themselves entirely to God and to men. Celibacy is a sign of this new life to the service of which the Church's minister is consecrated; accepted with a joyous heart celibacy radiantly proclaims the Reign of God.

The priesthood isn't an 8 to 5 job Monday through Friday. It is your being. Just as I don't stop being a husband or a father when I leave the house, a Priest is "on duty" 24/7. This kind of commitment would make it very difficult for a man if he did have a family. With my family obligations, it's tough for me to be able to come to Youth Group twice a month. To be a priest and to have a family would be very difficult. Again, it is important to remember the words of St. Paul here: "An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided." (*1 Cor. 7:32-33*).

It must be mentioned that this is a *discipline* of the Latin Church (aka – Roman Catholic Church), it is not Doctrine. There *are* some married priests today, for instance, a married Anglican minister who converts to Catholicism could possibly receive full orders from the Bishop and remain married. If, however, his wife died he would not be able to remarry.

## *The Vocation of Marriage*

### **Why does the Church say it's a sin to have sex before marriage?**

Our sexuality is a gift from God and it is not something to be ashamed of. Like all things that God made, our sexuality is good; however as a consequence of sin, sometimes we misuse that which God created good and make it bad. Sex outside of marriage is an example of this, and it is condemned in Scripture (*1 Cor. 6:9-10*).

Many justify premarital sex by saying they're "in love." Love is not just the sharing of mutual pleasure. Authentic love images God's love for us. So the question isn't if you love them, it's "is this act an act of love, or pleasure?"

When God created our sexuality, he meant for it to be used only within a marriage (*Gen. 2:24*). Marriage is a Sacrament – an outward sign instituted by Christ to give Grace. When a husband and wife pronounce their vows, they are saying, "I give myself to you freely, totally, faithfully and fruitfully." Sex puts the seal on the covenant between man and wife that they make on their wedding day, and each time after that, whenever a husband and wife join in the marital embrace, they are renewing their wedding vows and receiving Grace of the Sacrament. Yes, you heard that right - husband and wife receive GRACE each time they join in the marital embrace! If you are having sex and there were never any vows spoken, you are using your bodies to tell a lie.

### **Why is the Church opposed to Artificial Birth Control?**

The Church is opposed to artificial birth control because it takes the meaning of sex out of sex. Sex isn't just about receiving pleasure, it's also about procreation. When a husband and wife are open to conception during the marital embrace, they represent the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the love between God the Father and Jesus. If a husband and wife are open to life during the marital embrace, they are cooperating with God to be co-creators of life. It's no surprise that God chose to make the sexual union the most pleasurable experience imaginable considering it holds the power and possibility of creating a new life! To purposefully frustrate conception by artificial means such as the birth control pill or a condom is saying that you want only the pleasure of the act without having to deal with the potential consequences of a fruitful union. That is lust, not love. Jesus loved us so much that He gave His life for us. St. Paul tells husbands to "love your wives as Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it" (*Eph. 5:25*). Love gives all and holds nothing back. Contraception says "I love you, but not all of you. I don't love your fertility." To go one step further, contraception is a sacrilege to the Sacrament of Matrimony, just as if you purposefully omit a mortal sin in confession.

If a husband and wife wish to avoid pregnancy for valid reasons, the Church allows the use of Natural Family Planning (NFP), which means that during the wife's fertile time of her monthly cycle, they abstain from sex. NFP is just as, if not more, effective than artificial birth control.

### **Why does the Church say homosexuality is a sin?**

The first thing to realize is that if you are not married, God commands you to a life of celibacy regardless of who you are attracted to. The Church does not condemn homosexuals, it condemns the homosexual act. The fact that homosexuality is a sin is listed in numerous passages of Scripture (*Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10*). Remember that God created our sexuality to be both unitive and procreative. It is biologically impossible for a homosexual union to be procreative, therefore the act is performed only for pleasure. Undoubtedly, this is probably one of the most difficult crosses for one to bear in this life; however, realize that with God all things are possible and that He will not burden you with temptations that you cannot bear. (*1 Cor. 10:13*).

### **Why is the Church opposed to Gay Marriage?**

Marriage is a Sacrament that God created for a man and a woman (*Gen. 2:24*). Again, during their vows the husband and wife are saying that “I give myself to you freely, totally, faithfully and fruitfully,” and to prove it, on their honeymoon they consummate the marriage – make it valid – by joining in the marital embrace that they enter freely (nobody forced them to be there), totally (their whole being – body and soul...including their fertility), faithfully (just the two of them), and fruitfully (they’re open to life if God blesses them with it). Homosexuals cannot make such a vow because the homosexual act is both sinful, and non-fruitful; therefore it is only performed for pleasure. That is not marital love.

### **Why does the Church say Divorce is wrong, but they’ll give someone an Annulment? Isn’t that the same thing?**

Christ Himself condemns divorce (*Matt. 5:31-32; Matt. 19:3-9; Mk. 10:2-12*) saying it is unlawful except in cases of infidelity. However, even in cases of infidelity, spouses are not allowed to remarry. This is because we can only have one spouse (two become one flesh). Nothing can dissolve the marital bond except death.

If a Catholic marriage has ended in civil divorce and either party wishes to remarry, they must find out if their marriage was valid ***at the time that they exchanged their vows*** or if there were any obstacles impeding the sacrament. This is done through a marriage tribunal and it is a very lengthy and detailed process. They interview friends and family and ask very personal questions about the marriage. At the end of the process they will declare whether or not the marriage was valid. If it was invalid, you get a Decree of Nullity, which many simply call an “annulment.”

### **Why is the Church so strictly against Abortion?**

The whole abortion issue hinges on one question: “is a child in the womb a human being, or is it just a clump of cells?” The Church says that from the moment of conception, that is a new life and, more importantly, a new soul, and that child is worthy of the same protection that we all enjoy outside of the womb. The Church’s teaching on this is rooted firmly in Scripture. Jeremiah was destined for the office of Prophet before his birth (*Jer. 1:5*), John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit while he was in the womb and the great works that he would accomplish was told to Zechariah by the Archangel Gabriel (*Luke 1:15*), St. Paul was set apart and called by God while he was in his mother’s womb (*Gal. 1:15-16*). Another beautiful scripture says that “Just as you know not how the breath of life fashions the human frame in the mother's womb, so you know not the work of God which he is accomplishing in the universe” (*Ecclesiastes 11:5*).

David sums it all up in Psalm 139:13-16

“You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works! My very self you knew; my bones were not hidden from you, When I was being made in secret, fashioned as in the depths of the earth. Your eyes foresaw my actions; in your book all are written down; my days were shaped, before one came to be.”

## Scriptural References

### **All Male Priesthood**

Mark 3:14-19 – “He appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach and to have authority to drive out demons: (he appointed the twelve:) Simon, whom he named Peter; James, son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, whom he named Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder; Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus; Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him.”

Luke 6:12-16 – “In those days he departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called a Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.”

1 Timothy 3:2-13 – “Therefore, a bishop must be irreproachable, married only once, temperate, self-controlled, decent, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not aggressive, but gentle, not contentious, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children under control with perfect dignity; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of the church of God? He should not be a recent convert, so that he may not become conceited and thus incur the devil's punishment. He must also have a good reputation among outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, the devil's trap. Similarly, deacons must be dignified, not deceitful, not addicted to drink, not greedy for sordid gain, holding fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. Moreover, they should be tested first; then, if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. Women, similarly, should be dignified, not slanderers, but temperate and faithful in everything. Deacons may be married only once and must manage their children and their households well. Thus those who serve well as deacons gain good standing and much confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1:5-9 – “For this reason I left you in Crete so that you might set right what remains to be done and appoint presbyters in every town, as I directed you, on condition that a man be blameless, married only once, with believing children who are not accused of licentiousness or rebellious. For a bishop as God's steward must be blameless, not arrogant, not irritable, not a drunkard, not aggressive, not greedy for sordid gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, temperate, just, holy, and self-controlled, holding fast to the true message as taught so that he will be able both to exhort with sound doctrine and to refute opponents.”

### **Celibate Priesthood**

Matt. 19:12 – “Some are incapable of marriage because they were born so; some, because they were made so by others; some, because they have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it.”

1 Cor. 7:32-34 – “I should like you to be free of anxieties. An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided.”

### **Sex before marriage?**

1 Cor. 6:9-10 – “Do you not know that the unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor sodomites nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

Genesis 2:24 – “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.”

### **Homosexuality sinful?**

Leviticus 18:22 – “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; such a thing is an abomination.”

Romans 1:26-27 – “Therefore, God handed them over to degrading passions. Their females exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the males likewise gave up natural relations with females and burned with lust for one another. Males did shameful things with males and thus received in their own persons the due penalty for their perversity.”

1 Cor. 6:9-10 – “Do you not know that the unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor sodomites nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

1 Cor. 10:13 – “No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it.”

### **Jesus' words on Divorce**

*Matt. 5:31-32 – “It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.' But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”*

*Matt. 19:3-9 – “Some Pharisees approached him, and tested him, saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause whatever?" He said in reply, "Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate." They said to him, "Then why did Moses command that the man give the woman a bill of divorce and dismiss (her)?" He said to them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) and marries another commits adultery.”*

*Mark 10:2-12 – “The Pharisees approached and asked, "Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?" They were testing him. He said to them in reply, "What did Moses command you?" They replied, "Moses permitted him to write a bill of divorce and dismiss her." But Jesus told them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother (and be joined to his wife), and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate." In the house the disciples again questioned him about this. He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”*

### **Sanctity of Life**

*Jer. 1:5 – “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you.”*

*Luke 1:13-17 – “But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of (the) Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord.”*

*Gal. 1:15-16 – “But when (God), who from my mother's womb had set me apart and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him to the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult flesh and blood...”*