

**KAYA****IDALANGIN**

PRAYER LEAFLET FOR VOCATIONS

SPECIAL CATECHETICAL ISSUE - 2020

# CATECHISM ON VOCATIONS

## PRESENTATION

“The general decline in vocations is certainly the most urgent among the problems which are currently afflicting the Church” (Paul VI, 15/3/1970).

“More than ever the world is now in need of priests and religious, of nuns and consecrated persons to meet the immense needs of people” (John Paul, 01/05/1979).

These statements of Paul VI and John Paul II do not need to be commented. Thus it is truly urgent to animate Christian people in the perspective of vocations! This booklet is meant as a modest aid that could complement the catechesis of High school students, or even of the last elementary classes. Obviously, the questions and answers are not for memorization. They aim at condensing the vocational message and are like a final synthesis of what will be presented to them in a livelier and wider way by parents and catechists.

The Pope’s invitation is useful for all: “I want to point out how crucial is the value of catechesis for the reawakening of vocations. If the ordinary pastoral

care expresses in the catechesis one of its highest forms and one of the most appropriate means, it follows that catechesis, aside from answering to general purpose of evangelization, may also be properly addressed to the specific purpose of vocations” (John Paul II, 18-5 - 1979).

In the document “Catechesi Tradendae” issued on October 16, 1979, the same Pope John Paul II states: “Catechesis prepares to the important Christian commitments of the adult life. Regarding, for example, vocations to priesthood and to religious life, it is certain that many of them have blossomed during a well-done catechesis offered in their years of childhood and adolescence” (No. 39).

The present catechism, compiled with the collaboration of Fr. Ernesto Menghini, Bro. Umberto Marcato, and Fr. Ciro Quaranta, RCJ, wants to be a little contribution to create a sense of vocation in the adolescents. We dedicate our work to the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and Queen of Apostles.

*Rome, December 8, 1979.  
Fr. Vittorio Lucchesi, RCJ*

# VOCATION

## **1. What is a “vocation”?**

VOCATION (from the Latin word "vocare", meaning "to call") is a call which God addresses to every man; he is called to life, to salvation, to holiness, to happiness (cf. 1Thess. 4:3), to service in the Church.

## **2. What does “vocation” signify for those, who through the use of right reason and faith, discover God’s plan on their life and strive to realize it?**

The vocation that is known and realized in life is like the sun that illumines and gives warmth to the whole of one's existence; it is light, warmth, life, joy... (cf. Mt. 2:10).

## **3. When did God start to call man?**

God started to call men when He created our first parents, Adam and Eve, and enriched them with the supernatural gift of sanctifying grace, which made them sharers of the divine nature (2 Pt. 1:4), thereby making them holy and happy children of God and heirs of Paradise.

## **4. What did God do to save humankind, which after the negative response to vocation on the part of our first parents, walked against its eternal destiny?**

He called Abraham to form His

people, Israel. With Abraham, God established a covenant, to which He remained faithful forever.

## **5. Where do we find the account of Abraham's vocation and story?**

The vocation and story of Abraham are recorded in the Scriptures. Many books of the Bible speak of Abraham, especially in Chapters 12-20 of Genesis.

## **6. What is the message which the vocation of Abraham reveals to us?**

It is the message of availability, which is the virtue by which man endeavors to know and fulfill the will of God in his own life.

## **7. Has Israel always been faithful to God's call?**

No. Israel, whose history is recorded in the 45 books of the Old Testament, frequently turned its back to God, because of idolatry and immorality.

## **8. What did God do in the fullness of time to save Israel and the whole of humanity?**

God the Father, in the fullness of time sent His only Son who through the action of the Holy Spirit took the nature of man in the purest womb of the Virgin Mary, and through His sacrifice on the cross, He gave all men the possibility to respond to their own vocation (Mt. 1:18-25; Jn. 3:16-17).

*"The problem of vocations, at the present moment, is the center of the most vivid preoccupations and solicitude of the Church." - Pope St. Paul VI*

## VOCATION IN THE CHURCH

### **9. What did Jesus fulfill on earth?**

Jesus fulfilled on earth the mission of instituting a new People of God, which is the Church, to call all men to eternal salvation. (Mt. 16:18).

### **10. What foundation did Jesus give to the church?**

Jesus laid the foundation of the Church on Simon, whom He named "Peter". His successor is the Pope, the Bishop of Rome. He constituted the College of the Apostles, and their successors, the Bishops, who are also united in the College of Bishops.

### **11. Who are called to assist the pope and the Bishops in the spread of the reign of God in the world?**

Every Christian is called to apostolate; as stated by the Vatican Council II; "the Christian vocation is in its nature also a call to apostolate."

*"If today I speak to you about the total consecration to God in the priesthood, religious and*

*missionary life, it is because Christ calls many of you to this extraordinary adventure. He needs you and he wants your faith, your love."*

- Pope St. John Paul II

### **12. Aside from the laity in the Church, is there a particular mission in collaborating with the Pope and the Bishops in spreading the reign of God?**

They are the ones called to the vocation of special consecration to God.

### **13. What are these vocations to the special consecration to God?**

There are four vocations to special consecration:

(1) The vocation to the ordained ministry, conferred through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. It can be further classified to episcopate, priesthood or diaconate.

(2) The vocation to various forms of religious life: contemplative or active, clerical or laical.

(3) The vocation to lay consecration, that is, to live the Evangelical Counsels in a Secular Institute.

(4) The vocation to be a missionary. A missionary can be a priest, religious or lay.

*"The true response to every priestly, religious and missionary vocation can only arise from a profound love for Christ. This strength of love which He himself gives to you as a gift, joined to the*

*gift of His call makes your response possible."*

- Pope St. John Paul II

## THE PRIESTS OF CHRIST

### **14. What is the most necessary among the vocations of special consecration?**

The vocation to the Priesthood is the most necessary. Among the ministries exercised by the Church, the function of the Priest is the most fundamental because only the Priest can consecrate the Eucharist, the fount and culmination of all the spiritual goods of the Church.

### **15. Who are the priests?**

Priests are men chosen by God ; (cf. Heb. 5:4) and marked with a special character which conforms them to Christ the Priest, in such a way that they act in His name and person, in cooperation with the Order of Bishops.

### **16. What sacrament can bestow priestly mission and powers?**

It is the Sacrament of Holy Orders which can be administered only by the Bishop. There are three:

- (1) to proclaim the Gospel,
- (2) to sanctify the people, specially through the offering of the Eucharist and the forgiveness

of sins (in confession), and (3) to form Church communities, and promote within it a growing unity and fidelity to the task of evangelization.

### **18. What are the main problems regarding priestly vocations?**

Mainly there are three:

- (1) the insufficient number of priests in proportion to the immense necessity of the Church and the whole world;
- (2) the disproportioned distribution of priests in the world;
- (3) the tendency of a great number of priests who engage themselves in non-priestly activities.

### **19. Other than the bishops and priests, who are those who carry out an ordained ministry in a Christian community?**

They are the deacons. Through the sacramental grace derived from the Holy Order, they serve as signs of the service in the Church, according to the image of Jesus, the servant of all.

### **20. What does "service" imply in the evangelical sense of the word?**

"Service" signifies the continuation of the salvific mission of Christ by placing their lives at the disposal of their brothers.

### **21. What are the works of the deacons?**

Their principal tasks are:

- (1) to solemnly administer the

Sacrament of Baptism;  
(2) to distribute the Eucharist;  
(3) to assist and solemnize marriages;  
(4) to announce the Word of God;  
(5) to help the poor.

*"The problem of priestly vocations means for the Church a real question of life and death."*

- Pope St. John Paul II

## CONSECRATED IN LOVE

### **22. What is the vocation to religious life?**

It is the call of God to a total consecration of themselves to Him through the practice of the Evangelical Counsels.

### **23. What are the evangelical counsels?**

They are the exhortations of Jesus to his disciples in order to invite them to follow and imitate Him more profoundly. The religious and the nuns promise to live the Evangelical Counsels of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience, as a way of giving themselves totally to God and His Kingdom.

### **24. What is the deepest significance of the presence of the religious in the world?**

With their presence, they:

- manifest the heavenly reality which is yet to come, even though they are still on this world;
- proclaim before men the superiority of the Reign of God to all other gods;
- witness in themselves the forms of life embraced by Jesus when He came to the world to fulfill the will of the Father.

### **25. Why is there so great a variety of religious institutes in the church?**

Such variety reveals the power of the Holy Spirit who is continually at work in the Church. His distribution of different gifts in varying times and epochs for the building, the renewal of the Church is the origin of the marvelous variety of religious communities.

### **26. What are the activities carried out by the religious in the world?**

- the contemplatives live in "cloisters" to glorify God in silence, prayer and work. They present an example of a prayer and a service which is the fount of grace for all.
- the religious of apostolic life give their life for the brothers in the most different services according to the needs of the Church: schools, missions, hospitals, parishes, care for the poor, works and institutions for orphans, handicapped etc...

*"A country's greatest punishment is to be deprived of good priests; this is the greatest misfortune for any nation, for any city. On the*



other hand, God's greatest gift to a people is to send good laborers for the salvation of souls. To ask for laborers for the Church means firstly to ask for priests after His own heart; then for religious and lay men zealous and full of the Spirit of God, who will de-dicate themselves to the salvation of souls by every means possible".

- St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia

## IN THE WORLD AND FOR THE WORLD

### **27. Can the lay persons practice the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience?**

Even the lay people, as such, can live the Evangelical Counsels:

- in private form, with the approval of their confessor;
- in an organized form in the Secular Institutes.

### **28. What are the secular institutes?**

They are new forms of consecrated life which the Church has recently approved. The members of these institutes, responding to a specific call of Christ:

- give themselves entirely to God and their brethren, embracing celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom and imitating Christ poor and obedient;
- live in the world in the situations of life just like any other man... family,

work, profession, etc.;

- collaborate with the Church by offering their complete availability to every activity of evangelization and service to men.

### **29. How many members of the secular institutes are there in the world?**

After only thirty five years of their existence in the Church, the number of members of the Secular Institutes is 50,000 (both male and female), spread in every part of the world, engaged in the witness of Christian life, missions as well as in social and charitable services....

### **30. What verses in the Gospel inspired them to a life of lay consecration?**

The words of Jesus: "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt. 5:48) "You are the salt and the light of the world... let your light shine before all men, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:14-16). And also the parable in the Gospel about the yeast, to which the consecrated in the world are likened, the makes the whole mass of dough rise. (Mt 13:33).

### **31. What are the main tasks of those who are called to be a consecrated lay?**

"The proper field of their evangelizing activity is the vast

and complicated world of politics, social realities, economics, culture, science and arts, international relations and social communications." (Pope St. Paul VI) "You are the forefronts of the Church in the world. You express the will of the Church to be in the world in order to transform and sanctify it from within, just like the yeast." (Pope St. Paul VI)

## GO TO ALL THE WORLD

### **32. Who must announce the Gospel?**

According to the Vatican Council II, all the faithful, by virtue of their baptism, have the strict obligation to collaborate in the expansion of the Kingdom of God.

### **33. What do we mean by "missionary vocation" in the strict sense of the word?**

Although the involvement in the propagation of faith is a task for the Disciples of Christ according to their own possibilities, the Holy Spirit calls some people (priests, religious, or lay) to go even to distant lands to preach the Gospel to the peoples and to those who have not yet known Christ.

### **34. In what way can the missionary vocation be realized?**

- some are called and sent by the Holy Spirit, not alone, but through the Missionary institutes. They unite themselves in stable forms of life which is engaged in the service of the Gospel among men.
- others (priests, deacons, lay people, men or women, married or not) go abroad with the consent of their local Church for a missionary service to Churches which invited them.

### **35. Can the faithful promote and support the missionary action of the Church?**

Everyone can contribute by:

- their prayer and sacrifice;
- their example and witness of life;
- their courageous proclamation of the Gospel;
- their financial offering or by other means for the needs of their poorer brethren.

*"The quality and number of missionary vocations are the signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit, because it is the Spirit which bestows the charisms as he wills, for the benefit of souls: For this supreme good, he inspires in the heart of individuals the vocation to, missionary life."*

- Pope St. John Paul II

*"Do not be afraid to call. Descend upon the midst of our youth. Go*

to meet them and call them personally. The hearts of many youth and no longer youth are predisposed to listen to you. Many of them search for a goal for their life; they are also in quest for a mission which is worth consecrating. Christ has tuned them in His and your appeal. We must call. The rest will be done by the Lord who grants his particular gifts to everyone according to the grace which they have received."

- Pope St. John Paul II

## A SERIOUS AND URGENT PROBLEM

### **36. Are the qualified workers in the Kingdom of God sufficient?**

Jesus said: The Harvest is great but the laborers are few. Pope St. Paul VI affirmed that "among the problems which afflict the Church today, the general decrease of vocations is certainly the most urgent."

### **37. Can there be a lack of vocations in the Church?**

Vocations cannot be lacking because Jesus who loves the Church and knows all its needs continues to call many in the arduous and happy path of, the priestly and consecrated life.

Vocations can die through our fault if we do not apply all the possible means at our disposal in order to promote and support it.

### **38. Who are responsible for the promotion of vocations?**

Vatican II affirms that: "the duty of fostering vocations pertains to the whole Christian community, which should exercise it above all by a fully Christian life" (OT 2).

### **39. Is the Christian community the main contributor to the solution to the problem of vocations?**

"The principal contributors to this are the FAMILIES which if animated by the spirit of faith, love and prayer, become a kind of an "initial seminary"; and the PARISHES in whose rich life the young people take part" (OT 2).

### **40. Besides the families and parishes, who else must promote vocations?**

"TEACHERS and all those who are in any way in charge with the training of children and youth, especially Catholic associations, should carefully guide the young people entrusted to them so that these will recognize divine vocation and generously follow it." (OT 2).

### **41. To whom is a special role in the pastoral of vocations entrusted?**

To Priests: "All priests specially are to manifest their apostolic



zeal of fostering vocation as much as possible and they must attract the hearts of the youth to the priesthood by their life lived in a humble, hardworking and happy spirit, as well as by mutual priestly charity and fraternal cooperation". (OT 2).

**42. On what means must the cooperation of the Christian community be based in order to promote vocations?**

The principal means are:

- their fervent prayer;
- the catechesis which increases the esteem and respect of the vocation to priesthood by bringing to light its necessity, nature and value;
- the witness of vocation lived with joy and total commitment; and
- the financial help, fruit of sacrifices, for the benefit of the seminary or activities for vocations.

## LET US SAVE VOCATIONS

**43. Is it easy or difficult to follow one's vocation?**

It is difficult because of the existence on earth of the "mystery of evil", but it is possible with the help which God gives to those who ask it with humility and perseverance.

**44. What is the most important virtue for a person who is called to the priesthood or religious life?**

It is the virtue of availability which demands the detachment from richness, pleasure and egoism.

**45. What are the most important means in order to acquire and preserve the virtue of availability?**

They are:

- trustful prayer;
- meditation on the Word of God;
- frequent communion;
- devotion to the Most Holy Virgin Mary;
- spiritual direction;
- the practice of voluntary mortification.

**46. Does he who renounce richness, family and liberty for the sake of Christ and his brethren renounce happiness altogether?**

No. Jesus states: "Anyone who abandoned homes or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or son or field for the sake of my name will receive them a hundred times and will inherit eternal life." (Mt 19:29)

**47. Is vocation a privilege?**

YES, but a privilege of serving others, to "be similar to Christ who said: The Son of man did not come to the world to be served but to serve and give His life for the ransom of many" (Mt 20:28).

## PRAY THEREFORE THE LORD OF THE HARVEST

### **48. What are the necessary qualities required for the vocation to the priesthood and special consecration?**

The qualities required mainly are:

- FITNESS on the physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual level;
- RIGHT INTENTION, that is, the sincere desire for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

### **49. Where do the future priests and religious prepare themselves?**

In the seminary, which is an educational community where the aspirants to the priesthood and religious life verify their vocation in prayer, in study and discipline.

### **50. What must the faithful do for the seminary?**

They ought to be aware of it and support it spiritually and financially because it serves the good of the whole Church.

*"I turn to Christ so that He may call many youth and say to them: "Come and follow me." And I ask the youth not to oppose it, not to say NO. To all of you, I ask to pray and collaborate for vocations."*

- Pope St. John Paul II

### **51. Among the means of our disposal, to promote vocations, what can we consider as the most important?**

It is the prayer which Christ himself indicated when He said: "The harvest is great but the laborers are few... Pray therefore the Lord of the Harvest to send workers into His harvest" (Mt 9:38, Lk 10:2).

### **52. Who must pray for vocations?**

The whole Church and each baptized person.

### **53. In what particular occasion is the whole Church invited to address this prayer to the Lord?**

In the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, instituted by Pope Paul VI in 1964. It is held every year on the fourth Sunday of Easter.

### **54. What are the communitarian practices of piety which are particularly recommended to promote vocations?**

- To Christian families who pray together (domestic church), at least the prayer of a portion of the rosary everyday is greatly recommended.

- To the parishes: a weekly hour of adoration and monthly offering of

Mass for vocations.

- But all liturgical celebrations animated with fervor and lived with participation by the assembly offer an opportunity to include the intention of an increase of vocations to special consecration and their perseverance explicitly and frequently during the prayers of the faithful.

### **55. What must we ask from the Lord of the harvest when praying for vocations?**

We must ask:

- for everyone of us: to discover and realize our vocation;
- for many of young people: the ardent desire to become priests, religious, missionaries, dispensers of truth;
- for families: the joyful and thankful acceptance of vocation of at least one of their children;
- for seminarians and aspirants to religious life: the joy of following Christ more closely;
- for priests, deacons, religious, nuns, missionaries, lay apostles in secular institutes: enthusiasm for their own vocation until the end of their life.

### **56. Does prayer exempt us from active collaboration in the work for vocations?**

No. Rather, a well-understood and lived prayer makes us more ready to respond "yes" to the call of God and to collaborate actively for the realization of the

vocation of our brothers in faith.

*It is the obligation of the Christian people to ask God through the intercession of Mary, that He may send workers into His harvest, making many youth hear His voice stimulating their conscience to supernatural values and making them understand and appreciate the gift of such call in all its beauty.*

- Pope St. John Paul II

## SHALL I GO TOO?

### **57. What must a youth do when faced by his future?**

He must search to discover and live the vocation by which God calls him to fulfill a mission in this world.

### **58. At what age does God call to the priesthood or religious life?**

God calls persons whenever He wants, at any age. Ordinarily, he makes his voice felt at the stage of adolescence and in the youthful age because it is the time when one decides what he shall be tomorrow.

### **59. According to Christ, what is the most meaningful life?**

The life which is given to others.

Jesus said: "He who saves his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for my sake shall save it." (Lk 9:24) and also: "No greater love is there than this, to give his life for his friends." (Jn 15:13).

### **60. Are extraordinary signs necessary to know the plan of God?**

No. The will of God manifests itself ordinarily in natural attitudes, inclinations, interior inspirations; so also through the stimuli coming from parents, situations, events, etc.

### **61. In practice, who ought to help the youth discover his own vocation?**

They are the parents, educators, and above all, the priests through the spiritual direction which ought to be frequented by the youth with docility, sincerity and perseverance.

### **62. Can the family hinder their children follow the vocation to the priesthood and religious life?**

No. The parents can enlighten their children on the choice of their life, but they cannot impede them to follow the vocation which

is legitimately certain.

### **63. What must a boy or a girl do to discover his vocation?**

They must:

- pray that the Lord may indicate to them the way to follow;
- preserve the full readiness to give free, generous and joyous response to Christ who calls;
- confide themselves to the spiritual guidance of a priest.

*"The remedy is linked with prayer; and it is the supreme and infallible remedy, for the Lord himself has pointed it out. If He asks us to pray for this purpose, it means that He will hear our petition; otherwise He would not have given such a command."*

- St. Hannibal Di Francia

**SEND O LORD  
HOLY APOSTLES  
INTO YOUR CHURCH!**



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