

Saint Raymond Church RCIA

Sacraments of Vocation: Marriage and Holy Orders

Before watching the video...

1. Have you ever had a sense that God was “calling” you to something?
2. Why do you think God cares about marriage and family life?

Outline of the Teaching

1. What does “vocation” mean (from the Latin “vocare”)?
 - a. “to call” – as in to be called by God
 - b. The first call from God is a call into relationship with the Father through Jesus Christ. It is a call to walk with God (which is what we call holiness)
 - c. Within the call to holiness, God “gets specific” and invited each person to live in a specific way: as a single person, as a married person (married to a specific person), as a religious brother or sister or in Holy Orders (Deacon, Priest, Bishop)
 - i. Yes – YOU have a call from God
 - ii. Does God “change His mind” or “change the plan”?
 - d. Vocations involve the call from God and the **free choice** made by the person called (God proposes, He never imposes)

Recall our “working definition” for a sacrament: (1) An Outward Sign (2) Instituted by Christ, to (3) Give Grace

2. Understanding Marriage
 - a. Outward Sign
 - i. One Man and One Woman – the Judeo Christian maintains that God established marriage for the union of one man and one woman (this God does not intend for this union between two men or two women, nor between one man and several women). Why not? Marriage is a symbol of God’s relationship with the human person – an exclusive bond that is life giving (fruitful) through the exchange of love (in word and in action)
 - ii. Exchange of Vows – Couples make vows (promises to God and each other). The vows are that they will be faithful (not “special friends” on the side), their love will be fruitful (open to the gift of children through sexual love) and permanent (lasting until one person dies)
 - b. Instituted by Christ: while some speak of Jesus’ presence at Cana, in truth it is his teaching that renounces divorce. The Jewish people were allowed to divorce (because of hard hearts) but this was not the way God intended (also key since marriage is a sign of Christ’s bond with the Church). The Church understands the need for couples to divorce, especially in the case of abuse or neglect. A person cannot remarry unless the first marriage is “annulled”

- c. To Give Grace
 - i. The presence of God is radiated from one spouse to the other (their sharing of love becomes a “sacramental” moment)
 - ii. The presence of God is further affirmed through the gift of children and whenever the married couple manifests love in our world.

3. Understanding Holy Orders

- a. Outward Sign
 - i. A Man: the Church does not have the authority to ordain women to Holy Orders because the “maleness” of Christ was not accidental, but part of his ontology (his very person). This truth does not negate the dignity of women, but reveals that while we are equal, we are not the same. Each is called to service in the Church, but in different ways. Why do others Christians have female pastors? They do not have a sacramentally based ordination, but an “election” from the community. In addition, they do not maintain the foundation of “tradition” as the Catholic Church does (we accept what was handed on by Jesus and the apostles)
 - ii. Laying on of Hands by the Bishop: the laying on of hands at ordination (entrance into Orders) was taken from the Jewish tradition as sign of transfer of power from one man to another through the Gift of the Holy Spirit. The “power” is not to act over or above another, but to be in service to the other in imitation of Jesus, the Good Shepherd
- b. Instituted by Christ at the Last Supper as well as throughout his own ministry to the apostles. Through Holy Orders his ministry continues to the Church today.
- c. To Give Grace – the grace of Holy Orders is that the Church is today served by the ministry of Christ’s Priesthood – the one who gave of his life for all of humanity
- d. Three “orders” in this sacrament
 - i. Bishop – the “overseer” of the community; the Shepherd who guides us to the Kingdom of Heaven in Jesus’ name
 - ii. Priest – assist the Bishop in teaching, sanctifying and governing the local Church
 - iii. Deacon – assists the Bishop in care of the poor and in service at the altar

4. The Single ‘Vocation’ – some are invited by God to remain single for a great many reasons (and some find themselves single for a great many reasons, including after a period of time in religious life or marriage). The call remains the same – gift of self in service to others within the community of the Church. We live for others (within our larger family, within the community)

Questions to Discuss with your Faith Partner...

1. Wow, this is a lot! Take a minute and think about what you heard...what draws your attention the most?
2. Obviously the Church understands marriage in a way different than many in the world today. Do you understand and appreciate the Church teaching? Why is it important in our world (even when many of us are unable to live up to its expectations)?
3. The priesthood of the Catholic Church is often misunderstood (especially after the recent decade of the sexual abuse scandals). In your journey, what have you learned about the Catholic Priesthood that you will share with friends and family?
4. What questions remain about “vocation”

Announcements...

- Think about joining us on Wednesday Nights for DISCIPLESHIP as we seek to “integrate” you more and more into the life of the Parish.
- Please begin prayerfully discerning the choice you have to make about beginning to prepare for the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. With your faith partner discuss: Are you ready? Do you have sufficient knowledge of the Catholic Church? What is the desire in your heart? *Your faith partner will discuss your answers with Father Chris as we prepare to make decisions about who will receive which sacraments when...trust in the Lord who knows what is best for us all!*
- Please plan to be with us for a LONGER PERIOD on Palm Sunday, March 29th (perhaps from after Mass until 3pm) for a time of retreat and prayer...as well as celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation (your “first confession”).