
If you want to continue to explore what God is doing in your life, then you should:

Pray – Listening to God is at the heart of vocation.

Talk – to your parish priest who may then put you in touch with others who can help. The Church will journey with you, and with you try to discern God's will for you.

Reflect – on what have been the signposts, hints, 'coincidences', words of encouragement that have led you to explore priestly ministry.

Spirituality – Try to have a rhythm or pattern to your prayer. Sustain and deepen your relationship with God.

Mission & evangelism – Think about whether you have a passion to make God's love real for others.

Relationships – Consider the questions: Do you know yourself? Who do you say that you are?

Is God calling you to be a priest?

**Then I heard
the voice of
the Lord saying,
'Whom shall I send,
and who will go
for us?'**

**And I said,
'Here am I;
send me!'**

Isaiah 6: 8, NRSV

Christian Life

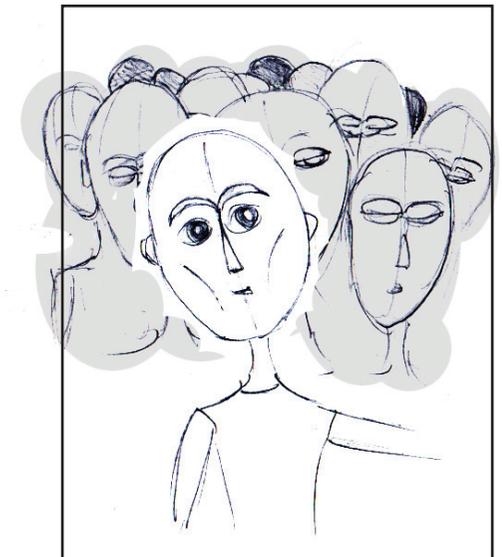
Is God Calling You To Be a Priest?

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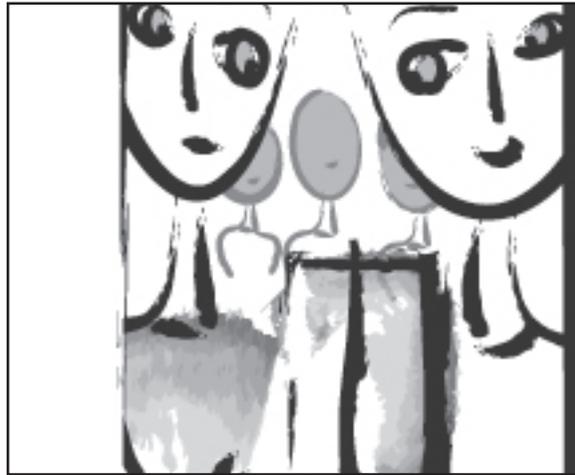


Made in the image of God, we have the capacity to respond to the call to love and serve, and we can endure hardship and sacrifice if we believe that the cause is worthwhile. Priestly ministry is challenging and at times is emotionally and spiritually demanding, for, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it: When Christ calls us he bids us come and die.

Discipleship involves putting God first and before our own ambitions – even (it may seem) before our desire for human happiness and fulfilment. Archbishop Rowan Williams said for each of us vocation is ‘what is left when we have stopped playing games’. In other words we can be very adept at avoiding the truth, and we can use all kinds of distractions and ploys in order to avoid hearing God’s call. Yet God desires us to be a joyful people and it is in responding to his call that we find we are truly happy and fulfilled.

Because it is a way of life rather than a career, priesthood engages our whole being. Of course there are particular tasks – ‘to tell the story of God’s love . . . to baptize new disciples . . . to unfold the Scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season . . . to preside at the Lord’s table and lead his people in worship . . . to minister to the

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sick and prepare the dying for their death’ (Church of England Ordinal 2006). Priests must also make sure that the Church never loses sight of the needs of the poor and vulnerable in society, and are deeply engaged in the life of the community or institution they are called to serve. To be a priest is to embrace a way of life, a total immersion, a deeper consecration in the service of the Lord. A priest is a ‘walking sacrament’ (Austin Farrar), who makes others aware of God’s love and presence in the world through her or his faithful presence and prayer.

Who is called?

Men and women who offer themselves for ordination come in every shape and size, from a wide variety of backgrounds, with academic degrees and without any formal qualifications at all. This is why it is not possible to say precisely how long the exploration and testing of anyone’s call is going to take.

One might say there are three ‘calls’:

- **First**, to be myself, the unique human person God is fashioning.
- **Second**, to follow Jesus Christ and serve him in my daily life.
- **Third**, to respond to the particular vocation to which I am called – marriage, or teaching, or a life of deeper prayer, or caring for people in the community; there is an endless variety of vocations.

Whilst the vast majority of Christians fulfil their vocation through their jobs, their relationships, their roles in church, and their work in their communities, some people become aware of a particular call. This can happen suddenly or as a sense of unease or questioning over a period of time.

