



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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Understanding the vocation to dedicated single life

One of the four mission priorities for the Archdiocese of Dubuque is to promote vocations in general, and priesthood in particular.

Vocations in general refers to the fact that all of us have a vocation or calling from God to heaven, holiness, mission, and a state in life.

A state in life, refers to a stable, permanent way of living: as a religious or a priest in the Archdiocese of Dubuque, as husband and wife or a single person.

The call to a state in life is important, because we can't answer God's call to heaven, holiness, and mission until we know, embrace, and live our state in life.

And that's because our state in life conditions our answer to God's call to heaven, holiness, and mission.

For example, our call to holiness involves our imitation of Christ, especially his practice of poverty, chastity, and obedience. This will be different for every state in life – a married person will imitate Jesus' obedience differently than say a priest.

Being single as a stable, permanent way of living might need a little explanation.

This doesn't refer to someone who presently isn't married but would if he could, will if she can, and so goes on dates if asked, or uses online dating sites.

Nor does it refer to someone who isn't now married and doesn't ever want to be, who wants to be free from obligations and responsibilities, but who might still date.

And it does not refer to people who choose to live as hermits or consecrated virgins; these are vocations to religious life.

Rather, the single life as a stable, permanent way of living is qualified by the word dedicated. This means that the person chooses to remain single for life, and gives the gift of self in service of a person or a cause.

St. Catherine of Siena is an example. As a young person she had dedicated herself to Jesus, and so refused her parents attempts for her to marry.

And she was not a religious sister because she had dedicated herself to being a peacemaker between the Church and secular rulers, involving extensive travelling.

If you are still undecided about your state in life, let me recommend a prayer practice: every day pray the Glory Be, the Our Father, and the Hail Mary:

The Glory Be to be reminded that you don't live for the glory of me, but for the glory of God and others.

The Our Father to know God's plan for your life, and that God's will be done in your life, on earth, as it is in heaven.

And the Hail Mary for the courage, like Mary showed, to say "yes" to God's plan.

And if you say "yes" then you will find the greatest happiness this side of heaven and be poised to do the greatest good for the sake of others. Who wouldn't want that?

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