



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

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Part 14: How to discover your vocation

God has a plan for our happiness and for how we are to transform the world into the Kingdom of God, as a single person or married, as a religious or a priest.

But how do we know? It would be exceptional to hear the voice of God from a burning bush, telling us to what to be, or what to do, or where to go.

Instead, God's call to a state of life has to be discerned, which means to detect, or to perceive, or to learn God's plan. We have to ask if God is calling me to the priesthood, for example?

Whatever the particular vocation we are wondering about, discernment involves knowing something about that state of life, as well as knowing something about God and ourselves.

Regarding God, it's more important to know God than to know about God, so we can recognize that the voice of God is calling, not my own vanity, or my parents, or something else. To know God by means of prayer and reading Scripture.

And regarding ourselves, it's important to know whether we have what it takes to live without marriage, or alone, or in community, and if we don't have what it takes, whether or not we can acquire what a particular vocation calls for.

There are some common indicators of the state of life God has planned for us:

- When others suggest that we might think about this or that state of life;
- When we are attracted to the example a person gives of living a certain state of life;
- When we are pulled a certain way, especially when praying about a vocation;
- When the vocation I'm thinking of isn't something I would have thought of on my own.

Here is a prayer, asking God for help in knowing your vocation:

"Loving Father, I know you have a plan for my happiness, calling me to heaven, to be holy, to take part in the mission of the Church, and to live in a certain vocation, as a single person or married, a religious or a priest in the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

"I need your help to know what vocation *you* have planned for me, and then to imitate my Lord Jesus in saying "yes" to your will, and then to live my vocation fully, faithfully, and with joy.

"With the help of the Holy Spirit I will try to live a transformed life, including daily prayer and Sunday Mass, learning and teaching Christ, service to the poor, and fulfilling the daily duties of my way of life.

"And because your gifts, O God, are not only mine or just for me, I want to give myself, what I have, and what I can do to build up your Kingdom of justice and mercy, and to help others to know, love and serve you, so that we can all be happy with you here and in the hereafter. Nothing less. Please, God. Amen."

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque