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## Called and Consecrated - God's Property?

[Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio](#)



When I was growing up, we were urged to pray for vocations. That meant to pray for more priests and nuns. After all, they were the ones especially called by God. The rest of us had to figure out for ourselves what to do with our lives, what school to go to, who to marry, what job to get.



This was a misunderstanding that the Second Vatican Council was determined to clear up. It emphasized what this Sunday's second reading from St. Paul makes clear – that **all** Christians have a vocation (Lumen Gentium, chapter 5). The very first call we have is not so much to **do** something, but to **be** something. Each one of us is called to be holy. And holiness is not to be identified with any particular state in life. Whether we are students, full-time moms, nurses or bishops, our daily activities furnish us with plenty of opportunities to grow in faith, hope and love. It is the perfection of these three virtues that make for true sanctity. Of course, there are many students, moms, nurses and bishops who fail to become saints. Obviously then, the activities are not enough in themselves to make people holy. People have to make a conscious decision not just once but each and every day to surrender themselves, their wills and their lives to God and allow Him, the potter, to use their everyday activities to shape them as if they were clay in His skilled hands.

When we are baptized, we receive that call to holiness. From that moment, our life is no longer our own. "It is no longer I who live," says Saint Paul, "but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave his life for me (Gal 2:19b-20)." Like Samuel (1 Sam 3), we are dedicated wholly to God, set apart to glorify Him in every aspect of our being, including our bodies. His Spirit lives within



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us and so we become God's dwelling place and acquire a new dignity. The biblical insistence on sexual purity comes from no prudish disdain of sexuality but rather from the simple fact that we must treat our bodies with the reverence due to God's temple (*1 Cor 6:13C-20*). We have no right to allow the temple of the Lord to be used by ourselves and others as no more than a means for a cheap thrill.

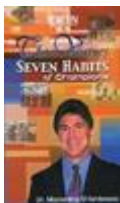


There is something else that we all called to be—evangelizers. In baptism and confirmation, we are anointed, as was Jesus in his baptism, to be prophets who announce the Good News of the Gospel. The call to bring others to Jesus is not restricted to missionaries or those with an outgoing personality. The Second Vatican Council is unequivocal about it—both in deed and word, we are each called to be a witness to the fact that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, the one who fulfills all the hopes and aspirations of every person on the face of the planet (see its Decrees on the Apostolate of the Laity and Missionary Activity).

So should we stop praying for more priests and nuns? No way! Religious are a powerful sign to the world that holiness has to be everyone's #1 priority. And priests and bishops have a special call to share in the ministry of the apostles in order to equip us all for our apostolic task.

So we need to pray for those who have answered the call to holy orders and religious life and pray for many more to answer the call. But praying for vocations means more than this. Imagine if the billion or so Christians in the world took seriously *their own* vocation to be saints and witnesses. I think we'd see some changes!

*This was originally published in Our Sunday Visitor as a reflection upon the readings for the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, liturgical cycle A (Isaiah 49, 3-6, Ps 40, 1 Cor 1:1-3, Jn 1:29-34). It is reproduced here with the permission of the author.*



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