



WHAT WAS I MADE FOR?

On the meaning of
Christian Vocation



"Why do I exist? Why am I in the world? What's worth living for? What use am I?". These questions become crucial when we face life's turning points and have to make important decisions: what subjects to pick for GCSE, which University to attend, whom to spend the rest of our life with or whether to marry or not... Ultimately, as Billie Eilish puts it in one of her songs, the question is: "what was I made for?".

Imagine entering a shop to buy a gift for a friend. The shop is filled with everything from books and clothes to food and peculiar objects whose purpose is unclear. Your eyes land on one colourful metallic object. Its shape intrigues you, but you have no idea what it's for. What do you do? Instead of guessing, the most sensible approach is to ask the shop owner: *"What is this for?"* The owner, tells you that he made it and explains, *"This is like a phone for communicating with friends. Let me show you how it works."* Now it makes sense—its purpose has been revealed.

The purpose of Vocation

The idea of Christian vocation fits nicely with this example. You haven't made yourself and if you want to know what were you made for, you should ask the One who made you. Just as you can understand the purpose of something only by relating it to something else (a phone makes sense because there are friends to call), so Christian vocation involves discovering your place among people within God's great plan for the world. Vocation is not a task given to you to make the world work to your advantage, but it is a way to serve the world and therefore fulfil yourself.

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons (J. H. Newman).

The discovery of Vocation

At this point the question is: how can I listen the voice of God, my maker, and find out my own vocation? God speaks in many ways, but three key elements stand out when making life's important decisions:

1) *Natural inclinations or talents.* Each of us is born with unique capacities, desires, and temperaments—precious gifts meant to serve a purpose. Ask yourself: *How can I use my gifts to serve the Kingdom of God?* Recognizing and embracing these talents is the first step toward understanding your role in the world.

2) *The inevitable circumstances.* Life's circumstances, even the challenging ones, are tools for discovering your purpose. Sometimes, our original plans are disrupted—perhaps through an accident or unforeseen event—but these moments can reveal unexpected paths. For instance, someone gifted in athletics may face an injury that prevents them from competing. Instead of resentment, they can embrace the situation as part of their journey toward God, trusting that their new path will bring deeper fulfilment.

3) *The need of the world and of the Christian community.* You have to look the world and ask: what does it need? What does the Church need? What does the Christian community need? Each of us has to look at what he or she perceives as more urgent, because there can be periods and situations in which the urgent need for total dedication to God is stronger, while in another moment it is more decisive that we be men and women in the midst of reality, in work, in families, who can testify from within the fabric of society where everyone lives what life is, what the meaning of living is. So in this way, too, we can discover what we are called to.

A path you don't walk alone

Two essential tools can help you deepen your relationship with God and discern your vocation

1) *The life of the Christian community*. Belonging to a Christian community helps you to hear the voice of God: the sacraments (Confession and Holy Communion) and the different activities the community offers you are the ordinary channel through which the grace of God flows.

2) *Prayer*. Praying helps you to have a profound and intimate dialogue with the One who made you and knows what you need.

To see vocation in this perspective helps you not to be anxious or afraid of getting it wrong. Anxiety and fear are born when we rely solely on ourselves, while if you keep a constant dialogue with the Lord, through your belonging to a Christian community and prayer, the certainty of being loved and valued will never abandon you. In the end there is only one big choice upon which all the other small choices depend and make sense. It is the choice of knowing, loving and serving the One who knows, loves and serves you.