BLM 54A

Unit 4 Family Letter
We Follow Special Ways to Holiness

The Second Vatican Council emphatically reminded us that every member of the Church is called to holiness. Although we may walk different paths, our destination is the same. It is important that you have a true understanding of each path if you are to light the way for your child.

The Church Teaches

> [A]ll in the Church . . . are called to holiness . . . This holiness of the Church is constantly shown forth in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful and so it must be; it is expressed in many ways by the individuals who, each in his own state of life, tend to the perfection of love, thus helping others to grow in holiness; it appears in a manner peculiar to itself in the practice of the counsels . . .
>
> *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* #39

Reflecting on the Message

God Calls Us to Holiness

> You formed my inmost being;
> you knit me in my mother's womb.
> I praise you, so wonderfully you made me;
> wonderful are your works!
>
> *Psalm 139:13–14*

God, who has created each of us, knows how we are made and the gifts we possess. God knows how we can best find happiness and holiness and at the same time, actively lead others to holiness. Therefore, every person is called to undertake some life task for the glory of God and the service of others. This call to a definite way of life is commonly called a vocation. The vocations within the community of the Church are the priesthood, religious life, married life, and single life. Though engaged in a variety of works, the people following each of these vocations are one in their aim for holiness.

Religious Life Today

Religious life is a fuller expression of the baptismal consecration in which it is rooted. Men and women are moved by the spirit of love to respond to Christ's call to be like him. They give their entire lives to Christ through vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. These men and women commit themselves to the service of the Church in the apostolate entrusted to their specific community.

The vows of religious enable them to devote their lives to service in the Church. Having given up the goods of this world, religious are witnesses to eternity, where all will follow Christ in perfect love.

The Dedication of Single Life

Many people are single, by choice or by circumstance. Some suffer the loss of a spouse, while some are called by God to be single. Many single people today have the responsibility of raising children on their own. Such people face an extraordinary challenge alone and depend on the grace and love of God in order to raise their families. The reasons some people are called to the single life are as varied as the individuals who make up this vocation.

Some single people are not bound by the responsibilities of marriage or children. They can be freer to pursue a life of service to humankind. They can devote themselves to developing their talents, interests, and spirituality. Most important for us, they can be a guiding or supporting force behind many of today's organizations and movements that benefit the world and the Church.

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