

Commitment and Ministry

LEARNING STRAND: HUMAN EXPERIENCE



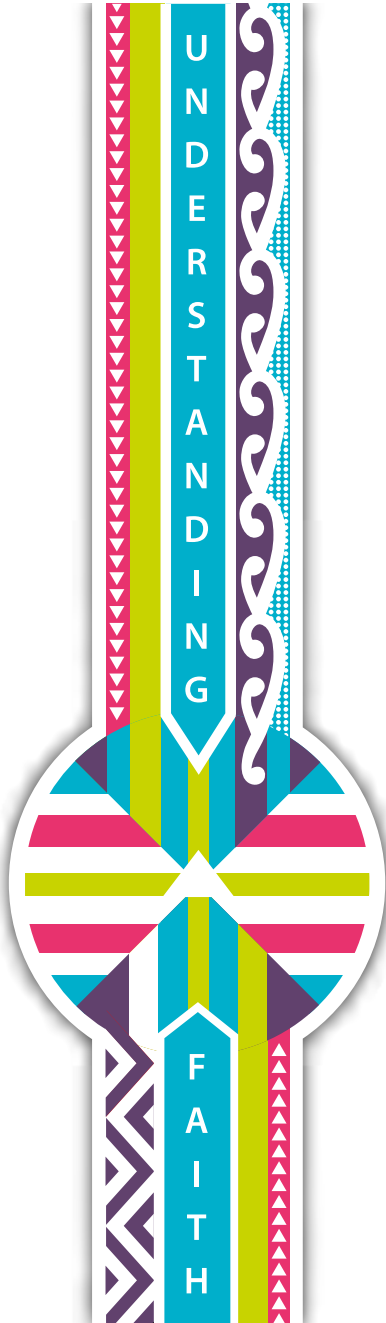
RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION
PROGRAMME

FOR CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

12H

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THE LOGO

The logo is an attempt to express Faith as an inward and outward journey.

This faith journey takes us into our own hearts, into the heart of the world and into the heart of Christ who is God's love revealed.

In Christ, God transforms our lives. We can respond to his love for us by reaching out and loving one another.

The circle represents our world. White, the colour of light, represents God. Red is for the suffering of Christ. Red also represents the Holy Spirit. Yellow represents the risen Christ.

The direction of the lines is inwards except for the cross, which stretches outwards.

Our lives are embedded in and dependent upon our environment (green and blue) and our cultures (patterns and textures).

Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, is represented by the blue and white pattern.

The blue also represents the Pacific...

Annette Hanrahan RSCJ

Commitment and Ministry



GETTY IMAGES

LEARNING STRAND: SACRAMENT AND WORSHIP

12H

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Māori terms are italicised in the text. The first time a Māori term appears in the text, its English meaning appears in brackets after it. A Māori glossary at the back of the book gives a more detailed explanation of these terms and provides a guide for their pronunciation.

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Part One:

The Universal Call to Holiness

Focus:

- **He tangata (human beings) are called to love and be loved.**
- **Through love of God and neighbour people grow in holiness – a deep sharing in the life of Te Atua (God).**
- **Christians are first invited to holiness at baptism where they receive the life and aroha (love) of Christ, becoming members of Christ's Church.**
- **Christians, both lay and ordained, serve God and others through the various ministries they carry out on behalf of the Church.**

Made for Love



Love is truly universal and the greatest of human qualities.

During the course of history, human beings of all backgrounds and cultures have come to value love highly, recognising that, at their deepest level, all people desire love, all people seek to experience love by giving and by receiving it.

Today's most popular movies, television programmes, songs, magazines and novels stress the importance of love in people's lives. It is often said that in order to find true love a man or woman must be prepared to cross a burning desert, climb the highest mountain, or sail the seven seas.

Love lies at the heart of Jesus' message. *Hehu Karaiti* (Jesus Christ), the Son of God, came into the world to show human beings how much they are loved by God and how they in turn can love others. Through his words and actions, his death and resurrection, Jesus emphasised that love – of God, of neighbour and of self – is the greatest of all the Christian virtues.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."
(Matthew 22:37-39)

True Love

Although love is important in all human societies, cultural and other differences make it difficult to give one simple definition that covers all aspects of love. Some say that true love can be found in the arms of a lover or through a relationship with a compatible partner. Others believe that lasting love comes from within oneself.

The Christian understanding of love is revealed throughout the New Testament. In the First Letter of John we are told:

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. . . . God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.
(1 John 4:7-8;16)

The best-known explanation of the Christian vision of true love is found in Saint Paul's first letter to the Christian community in Corinth:

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.
(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

Elsewhere, Saint Paul explains that we develop our human potential and experience lasting happiness by receiving and giving love. In this way, we become filled with the fullness of God.

I pray that . . . [God] may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)

For Christians, love is the pathway to power and strength and understanding – all essential to living fully. Love gives people the energy and desire to develop their human potential and to experience deep happiness. It leads us to develop our talents, and to cope and grow through all the changes and stages of life.



Task One

Find examples from popular movies, television programmes, songs, magazines and other media of how love is often portrayed today. Critique each example in the light of the Christian understanding of love.

Something to Discuss

How does the Christian view of love compare with the popular view of it?

Made for Holiness

At the Second Vatican Council, the bishops of the Church spoke of holiness as an essential goal for all Christians:

... all the faithful are invited and obliged to try to achieve holiness and the perfection of their own state of life.

(Lumen Gentium – Light of the Nations 42)

Holiness – a deep sharing in the life of God – grows out of love. Holiness is present whenever people are open to receiving the love of God and, in turn, are willing to share God's love with others. Holiness is seen in its effects, the fruits of the Holy Spirit – "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

Christians are first invited to holiness at baptism, where they receive the life and love of Christ, becoming members of Christ's body – the Church. Through Eucharist and Confirmation Christians are nourished and strengthened in their faith.

During the life of a Christian, there are many opportunities to imitate Christ and to grow in love and holiness:

- By serving others, especially the poor and the suffering
- By forgiving others and asking forgiveness of them
- By practising love in all life's circumstances
- By seeking *tika* (justice) and peace
- By building up *whānau* (family) and community life
- Through personal and communal *karakia* (prayer)
- By living the Beatitudes (see Matthew 5:3-11)
- By listening to *Te Kupu a Te Ariki* (the Word of God) and reflecting on it
- By receiving the Eucharist and the other sacraments of the Church

Something to Think About

What signs of holiness do you recognise in people around you?

What steps do you take to grow in holiness?

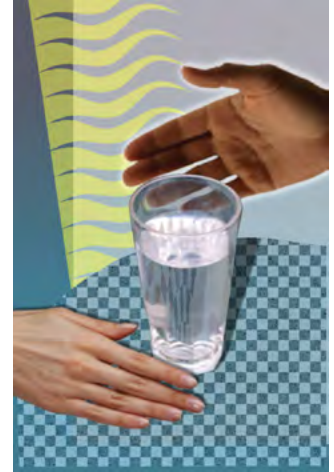
What things prevent you from growing in holiness?

Sharing in the Priesthood of Christ

The Church speaks of Jesus Christ as our High Priest, the innocent one who gave his life in love to God in order to free us from sin and death.

At baptism, a Christian becomes one of the People of God, part of the laity – from the Greek word *laos* which means "people". All who are baptised share in the priesthood of Christ, carrying out Christ's priestly work whenever they strengthen and serve others as he did or dedicate their lives to them in a spirit of love.

Although all Christians are called to follow Christ and grow in love and holiness by serving others, different members of the Church will do this in different ways. For example, some people are inspired to be leaders and teachers, while others have the talent for taking care of those who are sick or poor. Certain people have the patience to do the smallest tasks well; others have the perseverance to deal with great problems.



The Holy Spirit gives a variety of gifts to help people serve God and neighbour.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

Aided by *Te Wairua Tapu* (the Holy Spirit), all members of the Church are responsible for making Christ present to those with whom they live and work. If Christians don't show the face of Christ to the people they come into contact with, who else will?

Task Two

Read in your Bible 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

- a) What are some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that Saint Paul identifies there?**
- b) What do you think Saint Paul means when he says that "to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7)?**

The Role and Mission of Lay People in the Church

Since the Second Vatican Council, there has been a much greater emphasis on the role and mission of the laity in the Church – those baptised Christians who are not ordained and do not belong to religious orders or congregations. Lay men and women are asked not only to see themselves as "belonging" to the Church, but as "being" Church, in the sense in which Jesus spoke of the Good Samaritan as being neighbour.



The primary role of lay people is to be deeply involved in the life of the world and the human community. They are asked to build up *Te Rangatiratanga* (the reign or kingdom of God) – in their families, work places, schools and local communities. By living *Te Rongopai* (the Gospel) in all areas of their personal and public life, lay men and women become signs of Christ's loving presence to others. As they work to renew and transform all levels of society – including its cultural, economic, political, and legal aspects – lay people help bring about God's plan.

Something to Discuss

Read the following short parables from Matthew's Gospel. How might the images of salt, light, the mustard seed and yeast that Jesus uses in them apply to the role / mission of lay men and women in the world?

You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.
(Matthew 5:13)

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.
(Matthew 13:31-32)

The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.
(Matthew 13:33)

Something to Read

In 1994, the bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand addressed a letter to young Catholic adults in this country. Here is part of the bishops' letter:

There can be no Church without you, just as there can be no New Zealand without you. We want you to know this, in case there is some doubt in your minds about just where you fit in, or whether you have a real part to play in our Catholic family.

Growing up in a society that throws away more than it keeps, you may feel uneasy about any sort of commitment.

Yet it is precisely here that we see your greatest strength.

YOU are the Catholics of the new generation, and you are in a unique position to understand, help and challenge the young people of New Zealand.

Each of you **CAN** do something;

- Counselling and helping young people in trouble
- Involving yourself in the labour union which represents your own particular work
- Deepening and personalising your faith through study and prayer beyond the security and discipline your school days may have offered
- Developing leadership skills in ways that will help you minister to your own age group
- Taking a greater part in the liturgical life of your local faith community by sharing your creative talents in music, composition, or by helping younger Catholics prepare for those sacraments you already celebrate
- Maintaining contact with school friends and taking an interest in the welfare of the younger set through association with past-students' groups, sports clubs, worker associations, social groups
- Making a commitment of one or two years in the voluntary service of the Church community, working either in your profession (e.g. teaching, nursing, building, social worker etc.) or in some other designated area of need
- Giving serious consideration to the total commitment of your life in the service of God's people as a priest or religious brother or sister.

Within your own town, parish, or work community there will be many situations calling for positive Christian leadership.

(from *To the Young Adults of the Catholic Church in New Zealand* – September, 1994)

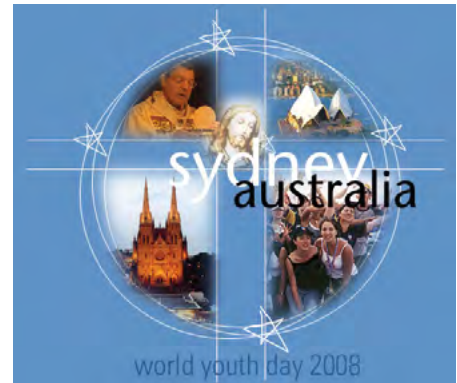
Task Three

In their letter the bishops challenge young New Zealand Catholics to take seriously their responsibility as lay people: **YOU are the Catholics of the new generation, and you are in a unique position to understand, help and challenge the young people of New Zealand.**

- What words in the bishops' statement do you most agree with?
- What words there challenge you the most?
- What suggestions made by the bishops do you think you may be able to take up in the coming years?
- What suggestions of your own would you like to add to the bishops' list?

Something to Do

Produce a poster, a powerpoint or some other form of presentation that combines text and visuals to communicate to young New Zealanders about any of the themes dealt with in the bishops' letter.



Ministries – Giving Service

The term “ministry” comes from a Latin word which means “to give service”. It is used in the Church to describe the different ways in which Catholics carry out particular tasks or functions on behalf of the Church.

All ministries within the Church are closely linked to the ministry of Jesus – their purpose is to build up the reign of God which Jesus first announced. When people perform their ministries on behalf of the Church, Christ works through them, reaching out and serving those in need. Just as Jesus made *Te Atua* visibly present to the men and women of his own time, the Church which he founded makes Jesus a living reality to the men and women of today.

There are three different types of ministry within the Church:



1. Ministries undertaken by those who are baptised

These ministries are undertaken without a formal commission from the Church and include the work of nurses, teachers, social workers, and other caring professions. They also include all those who serve in their local parish or carry out work in a spirit of Christian dedication.

2. Instituted ministries

These are the ministries officially recognised as forms of service within the Church, such as those of lector (reader), acolyte (altar server), catechist (teacher of the faith), and extra-ordinary minister of Holy Communion.

3. Ordained ministries

These ministries are only performed by those who have received the sacrament of Holy Orders – deacons, priests and bishops. Those who are ordained serve the Christian community in the name and in the person of Christ.

A Widening Range of Ministries

Since 1965, when the Second Vatican Council ended, lay Catholics, in increasing numbers, have taken responsibility for a widening range of ministries in their parishes and dioceses. Many of these ministries were previously regarded as the responsibility of the ordained or of religious. New roles within the Church for lay men and women include preparing children for receiving their First Holy Communion, serving as school, hospital, prison, or university chaplains, and assisting at the celebration of the Eucharist as an extra-ordinary minister of Holy Communion.

All Christian ministries require commitment from those who carry them out. Faith in God keeps commitment alive and enables a person to respond to any challenges or difficulties that they might face in their ministry.

Some Christian Ministries Carried Out by Lay People

Ministries	Descriptions
Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion	These assist the priest in the distribution of Holy Communion during Mass as well as take Holy Communion to the homes of the sick and to others unable to attend Mass.
Lectors / Readers	These read the scripture readings that come before the Gospel at Mass. On Sundays there are two readings but during the week there is usually only one.
Ministers of Music	These build up the worshipping community by leading the singing and providing instrumental accompaniment. They assist in the choosing and teaching of new songs.
Acolytes / Altar Servers	These assist at Mass by carrying out a variety of tasks including lighting the altar candles, carrying the cross in procession, holding the book for the priest to read from, and ringing the bells at the appropriate times.
Members of the Parish / Pastoral Council	These are elected or appointed to serve on a council that advises the priest about various aspects of parish life including finances and the needs of the people.
Members of Parish Committees and Groups	These work together to co-ordinate different aspects of parish life such as liturgy, social action, and hospitality.
Ushers and Collectors	These greet people as they enter the church, show them to their seats, and pass around the baskets or plates in which people place their offering of money.
Ministers of Hospitality	These welcome new members to the church and arrange refreshments after Mass.
Catechists	These instruct members of the parish, including children and young people, in their faith, helping them to mature in it.
Youth Ministers	These organise social gatherings and times of spiritual reflection for teenagers and young adults.
Ministers of Care	These visit the sick and the housebound.
Chaplains	These provide spiritual care and guidance in schools, prisons, hospitals, and other institutions.
Teachers in Catholic Schools	These educate young people to develop attitudes and values in line with the Gospel and to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith.

Task Four

Read about the various ministries which are identified and described on the table above:

- a) Which of these ministries do you recognise from your parish and / or school?
- b) Are there any ministries that you are familiar with that are not mentioned?

Something to Think About

What general qualities do people need to have if they are to perform their Christian ministries well?

Something to Do

Interview a lay person who carries out a specific ministry within the Church. In your questions focus not only on what the minister does, but also on how they see themselves as building up the reign of God.

Part Two:

Vocation – An Invitation to Holiness

Focus:

- **Through baptism, all Christians are called to holiness and fullness of life.**
- **The way in which individual Christians live out this call to holiness is unique to each person.**
- **The Church has traditionally recognised and honoured certain pathways to holiness which it calls “vocations” – the single life, marriage, Holy Orders and religious life.**
- **The Church recognises two sacraments of vocation which require a total and exclusive commitment – Matrimony and Holy Orders.**

Choose Life

The idea that individuals, groups of people, and even whole nations are “called” by *Te Atua* to holiness is a strong theme in Scripture.

Throughout the Old Testament, prophets, such as Moses, remind the Israelites – God’s Chosen People – that God desires them to always “choose life”.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him...

(Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

Through baptism Christians are invited to become more like *Hehu Karaiti* – to share his life and love, to grow in knowledge and *aroha* of God, and to use their gifts and talents in the service of others. This “invitation” to holiness has traditionally been described as a vocation – from the Latin *vocatio* which means “a calling”.

Christians believe that God has a special dream or wish for every person – to love and serve God by loving and serving our neighbours. This call to follow Jesus is unique to each individual.

People begin to respond to God’s dream for them by following Jesus as well as they can in the circumstances in which they find themselves. But God’s dream ultimately leads Christians to a particular state in life, one where they will be most happy, where they can put their God-given talents and interests to the greatest use for the Church and the world. In this way they are able to grow closest to God.

Task Five

Use some or all of the words in the box to help you write your own explanation of the Christian understanding of “vocation”:

holiness	call
unique	God
invitation	respond
dream	happiness

Something to Think About

Why do you think the following scripture passage is often used by the Church when reflecting on the theme of Christian vocation?

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake – for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat, mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

(Mark 1:16-20)



Traditional Christian Vocations

The Church has traditionally recognised and honoured the following states or forms of life as being special callings from God:

- The *single* vocation
- The vocation of *marriage*
- The vocation to the diocesan *priesthood* or to the *diaconate*
- The vocation to the *religious life* – as a sister, brother, or priest



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The Vocation to the Single Life

Christians called to the single life seek holiness in serving God and others by living an unmarried, celibate life-style alone or with other committed single people.

The Vocation to Married Life

Christians called to the married life seek to live in an exclusive, committed, loving relationship between a man and woman that lasts until death. The marriage relationship exists for the mutual enrichment of the couple and is open to new life in children. The marriage between a man and a woman symbolises Christ's loving, committed and life-giving union with the Church.

The Vocation to the Ordained Ministry

Those called to the ordained ministry act in the name and with the authority of Christ in the service of the People of God. There are three distinct groupings of ordained ministers within the Church – bishops, priests and deacons.

A bishop, assisted by priests and deacons, has the responsibility of caring for the local Church or diocese which he heads. As a successor of the apostles, a bishop works in union with the Pope and his fellow bishops throughout the world.

Diocesan priests are co-workers with the bishops. They are consecrated to preach the Gospel and to preside in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. Most diocesan priests care for the faithful in parishes.

Deacons, working under the authority of the bishop, serve the Church as Ministers of the Word, and by providing pastoral care and charity to those in need.

In the Roman Catholic Church, men called to the priesthood and those chosen to be bishops are required to remain unmarried and celibate. Married men are able to serve as deacons.

The Vocation to Religious Life

Those men and women called to religious life remain unmarried, consecrating themselves to God and living together according to a common rule of life. There are a great many religious orders or congregations, each emphasising a particular charism or way of serving God and neighbour.

Monks and nuns who are members of *contemplative* religious congregations devote themselves to deepening their relationship with Christ primarily through prayer. Although, they usually live in enclosed convents or monasteries that separate them physically from main-stream society, contemplative monks and nuns serve the Church and the world through their prayer and spiritual witness.

Sisters, brothers and priests who are members of *active* or *apostolic* religious congregations live in or are linked to a particular community, devoting themselves to deepening their relationship with Christ through regular prayer and by serving others through various activities such as teaching, caring for the poor and the sick, and promoting social justice.

Crossword Activity

Use the information from this section of the topic to complete the crossword on Christian vocations which your teacher will give you.

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Sacraments of Vocation

Two vocations, marriage and the ordained ministries, are essential to the life and mission of the Church. Special and total commitment is required of those who enter Christian marriage or who are called to be deacons, priests or bishops.

The Sacrament of Christian Marriage (also called Matrimony) enables the faithful love of a man and woman to grow and mature in the best possible circumstances for bringing new human life into the world and for raising children to be loving, creative and responsible adults. Christian marriage and family life provide the ideal conditions for introducing new members into the Church where they can come to know and love God. Christian marriage exists not only for the well-being of couples and their children but also for the good of the Church and society.

Those ordained as deacons, priests or bishops serve the Christian community by preaching the Word of God and administering the life-giving sacraments, especially the Eucharist, which are at the heart of the Church's identity. The Sacrament of Holy Orders, which is a sign of Christ's active presence in the world, enables those who are ordained to grow in *whakapono* (faith), *tūmanako* (hope) and *aroha*. Catholics believe that without the ordained ministries, the Church established by Jesus Christ would be lacking in holiness and unable to carry out its mission effectively.



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Task Six

Give reasons why marriage and the ordained ministries are regarded as essential to the life and mission of the Church.

Responding to a Vocation

Christians who take their faith seriously try to follow the example of Jesus by living lives of selfless love, service and forgiveness. At certain times in their lives they will wrestle with questions of vocation such as:

- What is God's dream for me?
- What state of life is God calling me to?
- What way of life will make me deeply happy?
- What occupation best matches my gifts and talents?
- How can I best serve others?

People come to know and appreciate the vocation to which God is calling them through prayer and reflection, and by speaking with others about their hopes and wishes, their gifts and talents.

By responding to God's particular call to them Christians experience what Jesus has promised:

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly"
(John 10:10).

While commitment is an essential quality for all Christians, this is especially true of those who are called to Christian marriage, to the priesthood and to religious life.

Something to Discuss

When people respond positively to God's call they open themselves to receive the fullness of life that Jesus promises. What signs of this would you expect to see in such persons?

Before a person can know what God is calling them to be they must know God. In order to know God they must spend time with God. This is prayer.

To Know and to Follow God's Call

God, I know you love me and are calling me to choose life.

Help me to listen to your call in all the ways you speak to me: through prayer and the scriptures, through the Church and the world, through those who love and care for me, and through my own hopes and desires.

Guide me to search openly and learn about life's choices, that I may respond faithfully to your call and choose a vocation and career in which I can love wholeheartedly and serve others with the gifts you have given me.

God, today I thank you for your love and for all your gift of life holds for me.

Amen.

My Vocation...

- touches my whole person – it is not something that I can put on or take off
- is central to who I am – a “project of life” that involves my values and convictions
- is a response to my belief that I am being called by God to fullness of life
- engages my freedom as a whole person
- has a demand quality about it – my choice of any lifestyle brings consequences: some doors open to me, but others shut
- is different from my career, my job or my ministry
- liberates the human personality



The Fear Factor

Sometimes people sense a particular calling or vocation but for various reasons, do not respond to it. Often fear stops a person from answering God’s call:

- Fear of failure
- Fear of the extraordinary – a person doesn’t want to be considered different
- Fear of acting on a dream
- Fear of rejection – the person is afraid of what others will say

*Fan into flame
the gift that
God has given
you.
(2 Timothy 1:6)*

The Golden Eagle

A man found an eagle’s egg and placed it under a brooding hen. The eaglet hatched with the chickens and grew to be like them. He clucked and cackled; scratched the earth for worms; flapped his wings and managed to fly a few feet in the air.

Years passed. One day, the eagle, now grown old, saw a magnificent bird above him in the sky. It glided in graceful majesty against the powerful wind, with scarcely a movement of its golden wings.

Spellbound, the eagle asked, “Who’s that?”

“That’s king of the birds, the eagle,” said his neighbour. “He belongs to the sky. We belong to the earth – we’re chickens.”

So the eagle lived and died a chicken, for that’s what he thought he was.



Words from Pope Benedict

If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation.

(from Pope Benedict XVI’s homily at his Mass of Inauguration, 24 April 2005)

Task Seven

Read the story of “The Golden Eagle”¹. Comment on the insights it gives into:

- What happens when people risk responding to God’s call to them.
- What happens when people neglect to respond to God’s particular call.

Something to Think About

Why may Pope Benedict’s words be appropriate for people trying to discover their calling or vocation in life?

¹ From *The Song of the Bird* by Anthony de Mello SJ.

Part Three:

The Vocation to the Single Life

Focus:

- **For a variety of reasons, many people remain single throughout adulthood or for significant periods of their lives.**
- **Many people deliberately choose the single lifestyle because of the freedom and opportunities it offers them; others remain single because of the circumstances in which they find themselves.**
- **The single life is a true Christian vocation whenever the person concerned accepts the single state as a means of deepening their commitment to Te Atua and neighbour.**

Free and Single



The word *single* is usually applied to those people who have never married, but it also refers to the widowed, the divorced, and the separated.

Some people remain single throughout their lives. Others are single for certain periods, choosing to postpone marriage for personal reasons, or because they cannot find a suitable

partner. Others choose a celibate life as priests or members of religious orders.

After leaving secondary school, most young New Zealanders stay single in order to complete their education and professional training. This can be a valuable time for them socially, providing opportunities to meet new friends and become better acquainted with old ones. It is also a time when many young people are free to travel, make their own decisions and pursue their own interests. Single life enables young people to discover more about themselves and others.

Many people opt positively for the single life because the life-style suits them. Either long term or for a certain period in their lives, they see themselves as making a significant contribution to their family or society as single people.

Choosing to Remain Single

There are other reasons why people choose to remain single:

- Sometimes adult sons or daughters stay at home to care for aging or frail parents
- Often men and women postpone the responsibilities of marriage in order to dedicate themselves to study or to the demands of a career
- Some people's psychological makeup does not draw them to marriage
- Others are not motivated to marry because they are not strongly attracted to anyone as a prospective life partner



While loneliness is a common human condition, those who live on their own, especially if they have limited contact with others, are more vulnerable to this emotion. Men and women whose husbands or wives have died may become imprisoned in their own grief unless they are emotionally supported by family, Church and friends. Divorced people, solo parents and the unhappily single can feel socially isolated.

In such circumstances being single may lead to bitterness, insecurity and sadness. Because society, in all sorts of ways, puts pressure on people who are without a partner to find one, those who are unwillingly single may become anxious and resentful.

Something to Discuss

Work in a pair or small group:

- Identify as many reasons as you can why people choose to remain single.**
- List advantages and disadvantages of the single lifestyle.**

The Christian View of the Single Life

For Catholics, the single life can be a special and fulfilling vocation. Single people, like all baptised Christians, are called to love *Te Atua* and neighbour. Through prayer and in the service of others, single people are able to grow in holiness. They may also be called to be prophetic voices in the Church and in the world, challenging people to be faithful to God's ways and speaking out in the face of injustice.

While the single life-style may, at times, like other vocations, lead to feelings of insecurity, Christians who are single are invited to develop an intimate relationship with God and more loving friendships with others. The single life is a true vocation, whenever the person concerned accepts the single state as a means of deepening their commitment to the service of God and to the people whom they meet in life.

Task Eight

When is the single life a true Christian vocation?

Something to Think About

Identify someone you know who is living the single life in a truly Christian way. What about that person's life shows that they are taking their vocation seriously?

Something to Read

Read each of the following case studies before attempting the task that follows.



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Single People – Case Studies

Iosefo

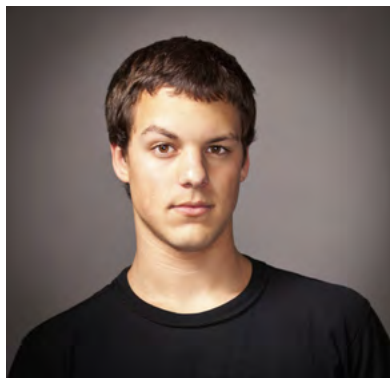
I'm an engineer, thirty-three years old, male and single. People where I work say to me: "Come on, it's time you settled down and got married. You'll have a lonely old age if you don't have any family."

I could reply, "You must be joking! Give up my kind of life, on my big salary, to share my nice flat with a wife and children? And in-laws? Nothing doing! In any case marriage doesn't remove loneliness."

But generally I say, "I'm too busy, what with work and travelling around. I've got all I want right now, and a great future ahead of me."

Anna

My parents always expected me to look after them as they grew older, especially after Dad had a stroke. After all, I'm the eldest girl. I never was able to fulfil my ambition of becoming a vet because my younger brothers and sister had to be educated. I have to stay at home at nights except for the odd occasion when a neighbour comes in and I can go to a movie. I don't really mind; Mum and Dad have always been good to me and I feel I owe it to them. But I would like the chance to meet people my own age and have some fun. Meeting a special man would probably create a dreadful dilemma for me because I just can't abandon my elderly parents. I'm glad I haven't had to face that situation.



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Jamie

I didn't do very well at school except at sports. I think I've spent longer on the dole than I have in all my jobs put together. And now I haven't had any job at all for the last five years. My father keeps saying that I have to find a job so that I can save up to get married and have a family. There's not much use thinking about that; I suppose I'll just have to keep looking for work and hope that things will improve.

Single People – Case Studies

Helen

I've been practising law for fifteen years now. My career takes up the greater part of my life and I chose not to marry so that I could work at my cases and keep ahead. People comment on how lucky I am to be so free, but in fact I often get caught up with "hopeless cases" who know I'm a Christian and expect me to help them for nothing. I know I have a good life and I'm happy that they feel they can come to me, so I always help them. And it doesn't leave me with much time for being lonely!

Kereana

Some years ago, I wrote out a list of what is most important in life. I review my list each year; it gives my life a direction and helps me set goals. Now I'm eighteen, I've begun training to fulfil one of those goals, to be a counsellor and work with emotionally disturbed children and their parents. I have to study hard, and I also need time to be alone, although I like people and have many friends. At those times of quietness, I feel close to God; I think it's because I am learning about the suffering people can go through. I see counselling as my mission in life and I don't have time for anything else.

Pat

Each Sunday I go to my parish Mass. People there are quite friendly but I feel out of things because I have no family to go with me. There are numerous sermons about marriage, but I've never heard any about the single life. There are talks and courses for engaged and married couples but although I'm nearly twenty-five, I haven't found anything for single people.

I'm sure single people like me could do with some help, but more importantly, some recognition and respect. People seem to think we must be homosexuals or unbalanced or something. Or that we must be cleverly hiding how desperately unhappy and afraid we are that nobody will 'have us' as a marriage partner! However I have lots of friends and I just prefer at this time, to stay as I am.

Andrew

I don't often think about getting married. Next birthday I'll be twenty-one. I'm in a good job and have plenty of friends and interests so I'm not lonely. But I do wonder what it would be like to come home each night to a woman who is as committed to me as I am to her. How serious could I be in a permanent, sexual relationship? I mean, I think sex is important and really beautiful, but I don't want just sex. There's more to it than that. I'd want mutual respect, deep lasting love, patience, consideration and compassion. Whoever I marry must first be my friend and share my interests. I'd need to know her very well and give her time and opportunity to know me too. So far, I haven't met anyone who measures up to all this.

Task Nine

Discuss and write down the answers to the following questions:

- Why did each of these people remain single?**
- What is your opinion of the reasons for their choice?**
- Do you think that each of these people recognises their single lifestyle as a vocation? Give reasons for your answer.**
- Do you think that the Church gives as much support to single people as to married couples?**
- Why are people who choose to remain single so often misunderstood?**
- Name at least three problems that are experienced by single people.**
- Suggest ways in which single people could be helped and supported by the Church and those around them.**

Extension Activity

Find the following passages of scripture in your Bible and read them.

Jeremiah 1:4-10	Luke 3:1-20	Luke 6:12
Matthew 26:36-46	Matthew 27:45-50	Matthew 25:31-40

- Choose one passage that especially appeals to you.**
- What insight does the passage contain that might be useful for a single person?**



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Part Four:

The Institution of Marriage

Focus:

- **Human society has always recognised the value of marriage, although it has taken different forms throughout history.**
- **The Christian understanding of marriage, which is revealed in the writings of the Old and the New Testaments, developed across two-thousand years of Christian history.**
- **In today's world people marry for many reasons, both positive and negative.**
- **Certain legal requirements must be met by those wishing to marry in Aotearoa New Zealand.**



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The Origins of Marriage

The institution of marriage has existed throughout human history to provide stable family and social life to people in all ages and places.

From the earliest times human societies recognised the need to create a secure environment for the raising of children and to provide a system of rules to control property rights and to protect bloodlines. Incest taboos and sets of rules setting out who could marry whom and under what circumstances soon became important features of many ancient cultures.

In traditional societies marriage is usually an arrangement between families, with heads of families witnessing to the event. Even today, in some cultures, many families organise arranged marriages for their children. In such situations the couples who marry may have varying degrees of involvement in the decision.

In different times and places marriage has not always had the same form. In Europe and those countries colonised from Europe monogamy has been the rule. However, in the ancient Middle East – as seen in the pages of the Old Testament – polygamy was widespread. Today, polygamy is still allowed under Islamic law.

Different Understandings of Marriage

Polygamy – having more than one spouse at a time, such as one man with several wives or one woman with several husbands.

Monogamy – the practice of having one spouse at a time and remaining faithful, sexually, to one person at a time.

Common law marriage – a relationship based on a commitment and agreement to live together rather than by a religious or civil wedding ceremony.

Something to Discuss

Why has human society always recognised the value of marriage, although it has taken different forms throughout history?

Marriage in the Old Testament

Christians, like Jews and members of other faiths, instinctively believe that marriage is willed by God and find support for their belief in the pages of Scripture:

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.' Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.
(Genesis 2:18, 24)

Children are God's blessing on the union of a man and woman:

'Be fruitful and multiply...' (Genesis 1:28)

The Old Testament, while recognising the reality of divorce, praises faithfulness in marriage and looks unfavourably on the abandonment of a first wife:

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth...' (Proverbs 5:18)

...do not let anyone be faithless to the wife of his youth. (Malachi 2:15)

Task Ten

List three important beliefs about marriage that are revealed in the Old Testament.

Marriage in the New Testament

Jesus taught that the marriage bond is sacred and should not be broken:

'So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' (Matthew 19:6)

In John's Gospel Jesus honours the institution of marriage by performing his first miracle while a guest at a wedding at Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-11).

Saint Paul, in his letter to the Christian community in Ephesus writes of the responsibilities that wives and husbands owe to each other. In Paul's time the father of the family had absolute power over the other members of the household, including his wife. Paul insists that in a Christian household the authority of the husband and father of the family has its limits. A Christian marriage must reflect Christ's love for the Church:



The Marriage Feast at Cana (tempera on panel), Juan de Flandes, (c.1465-1519) / Private Collection.

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.
(Ephesians 5:21-33)

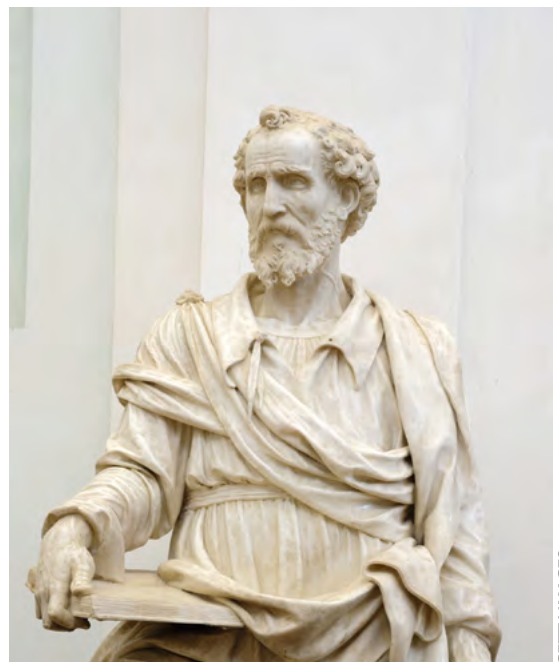
Task Eleven

Saint Paul's essential message in Ephesians 5:21-33 is written within a patriarchal society – our context as readers is very different.

- Which lines from Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians indicate that within the culture in which he lived a husband was regarded as the head of the household, having authority over his wife?**
- Which lines indicate that Saint Paul had very clear expectations that within a marriage between Christians a husband should treat his wife well?**

Something to Think About

Which of Saint Paul's ideas about Christian marriage do you find easiest / hardest to identify with? You should be able to give a reason for your view.



Statue of St. Paul by Francesco Mosca (1531-1578), St. Augustine's church, Orvieto, Umbria, Italy.

Marriage in Christian History

In the early centuries the Church recognised that civil ceremonies between two Christians were a valid way of establishing a Christian marriage. The Church did not require married couples to have their union blessed by a priest. Married couples who converted to Christianity did not have to remarry in the Church.

By the Middle Ages, the Church was emphasising that those who enter Christian marriage should do so freely. This was to prevent couples being forced into marrying by parents and families who saw marriage as a way of increasing their own power, property and prestige. In 866 Pope Nicholas I declared: "If the consent be lacking in a marriage, all other celebrations, even should the union be consummated, are rendered void". This has remained an important Church teaching ever since.

In the twelfth century Pope Alexander III decreed that the consent of the couple created the marriage contract and the first act of sexual intercourse made the marriage binding for life. It was in 1139 at the Second Lateran Council that marriage was first declared to be a sacrament.

By the sixteenth century many marriages were still taking place without either witnesses or ceremonies. The Council of Trent (1545–1563) decided that marriages must be celebrated in the presence of a priest and at least two other witnesses. At this time, the Church emphasised that the main purpose of marriage was procreation – love wasn't regarded as an essential ingredient.

At the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) the bishops of the Church recognised that the purpose of marriage in the modern world was not only the procreation of children but also the companionship and intimacy of the husband and wife.



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Something to Do

Create a timeline showing at least five important stages in the development of the Church's teaching and / or practice regarding marriage. Illustrate the timeline with suitable images from the Internet or other sources.

Marriage Today

In today's world people marry for many reasons – some positive, others negative:

- To enjoy lifelong companionship
- To have their sexual needs met
- For the purpose of children
- For personal fulfilment
- To escape family problems
- To find mutual support
- To escape feelings of emotional insecurity
- To prevent loneliness
- To gain or secure property
- For financial security
- Because of pregnancy
- For political reasons
- Because of pressure from family or friends
- Out of fear of being "left on the shelf"
- To get residency or citizenship in another country
- As a solution to life's problems
- For social advancement

Something to Think About

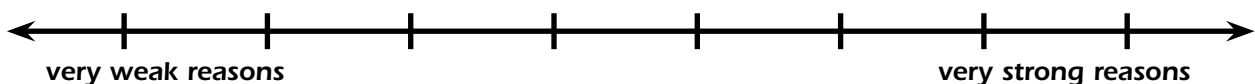
Can you add any other reasons for marrying to those listed above?

Something to Discuss

Consider each of the above reasons that people put forward for getting married.

Decide where you would place them on the continuum below:

You should be able to give reasons for your decisions.



Marrying in Aotearoa New Zealand

As in other countries, there are certain legal requirements which must be met by those wishing to marry in New Zealand:

- The bride and groom must be sixteen years of age. If they are under eighteen, then either their parents or their legal guardian(s) must give their signed permission. If this is a problem, an application to seek permission for the marriage to proceed may be made to the District Court.
- It is not necessary to be a resident of New Zealand nor is it required to reside in New Zealand prior to the wedding.
- There are some restrictions as to who can legally marry. For example, close family members are not permitted to marry.
- A marriage licence is required and can be obtained from the department of Births, Deaths and Marriages at a New Zealand District Court. Out of New Zealand it is possible to obtain a licence application form from any New Zealand High Commissioner's Office in a British Commonwealth Country or a consulate of New Zealand in other non-British Commonwealth countries where New Zealand has a consulate.
- The marriage licence is only valid for three months.
- If a person has been married before, they must provide proof that their marriage has been dissolved when they apply for their marriage licence.
- A marriage needs to be witnessed by two people. These must be old enough to understand what they are doing.
- In New Zealand, a couple may marry at any time of the day or night. They may marry anywhere they wish. But, where they marry must be stated on the licence application and cannot be changed once the licence has been uplifted from the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages.
- The wedding celebrant is responsible for ensuring the Registrar receives their copy of the marriage certificate signed at the ceremony. The other copy is handed to the bride.
- The Marriage Act of 1955 requires that the following words – or similar – be included in the marriage ceremony:

Groom: *I take you to be my wife.*

Bride: *I take you to be my husband.*



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Task Twelve

Couples wishing to marry in New Zealand have to meet these legal requirements. Choose any four of the legal requirements listed above:

- Explain what the purpose behind them is.**
- Suggest what could happen if they were done away with.**

Something to Debate

Organise a class debate on one or more of the following issues:

It is too easy to get married in Aotearoa New Zealand
Pre-marriage classes should be compulsory in Aotearoa New Zealand
New Zealanders take marriage for granted
The institution of marriage deserves greater protection in Aotearoa New Zealand

Part Five:

Understanding Christian Marriage



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Focus:

- **The purpose of Christian marriage is to protect and develop the loving relationship between a husband and wife and to bear and raise children in the best possible circumstances.**
- **Christian marriage is a vocation, a sacrament and a covenant.**
- **A genuine Christian marriage is faithful, permanent and open to the possibility of new life.**
- **An annulment is a formal recognition by the Church that an essential condition for a valid marriage was not in place at the time of a couple's wedding.**

The Nature and Purpose of Christian Marriage

The Catholic Church teaches that women and men are made by God for each other – physically, psychologically and spiritually. The purpose of Christian marriage is to protect and develop the loving union between a husband and wife and to create the best possible environment for bearing and bringing up children.

Christian marriage is much more than a formal legally binding contract. When a man and a woman are joined in the Sacrament of Matrimony they are united in a sacred bond of love with God and each other. They commit themselves to forming a faithful, life-long partnership – an intimate community of life and love. From this relationship – God willing – children are born who are further signs of God's blessing.

Characteristics and Requirements of Christian Marriage

For a marriage to be considered a valid sacrament in the eyes of the Catholic Church certain requirements must be met:

Matrimony is between a **man** and a **woman** – the Church does not recognise the validity of same-sex marriages.

Matrimony is a **sacrament** – God is actively present forming and strengthening the marriage relationship, which becomes a sign to others of Christ's life and love.

The Sacrament of Matrimony unites two **baptised** people.

Christian marriage is a **vocation** that requires the couple to accept certain obligations towards each other, their children and the Church community.

A Christian marriage is a **covenant** – the faithful love between a husband and wife reflects God's faithful love for his people and Christ's faithful love for his Church.

Those entering Christian marriage must promise to be sexually **faithful** to each other (not to do so is to commit adultery).

Those joining in the Sacrament of Matrimony must intend that their marriage be **permanent** (lasting until the death of one of the partners).

Those uniting in matrimony should do so with the intention of being **fruitful** (open to the possibility of children – if God wills it).

In a Catholic marriage the bride and the groom are the ministers of the sacrament which comes about through their **consent** – the "I do . . ."

The Catholic Church requires that a Christian marriage be **witnessed** by a priest or deacon, on behalf of the Church, and two other witnesses.

Task Thirteen

Match the beginning of each statement in Column A with its correct ending in Column B:

Column A	Column B
1. Women and men are made by God for each other –	A. unites a man and woman in a sacred bond of love with God and each other.
2. One purpose of Christian marriage	B. and Christ’s faithful love for his Church.
3. Another purpose of Christian marriage	C. accept certain obligations towards each other, their children and the Church community.
4. The Sacrament of Matrimony	D. is to protect and develop the loving union between a husband and wife.
5. Children born within a Christian marriage	E. the ministers of the sacrament.
6. Because Christian marriage is a vocation the couple	F. physically, psychologically and spiritually.
7. A Christian marriage reflects God’s faithful love for his people	G. are regarded as signs of God’s blessing.
8. Those entering Christian marriage must promise	H. to be permanent and open to the possibility of children.
9. Those joining in Matrimony must intend their marriage	I. is to create the best possible environment for bearing and bringing up children.
10. In a Catholic marriage the bride and groom are	J. to be faithful.
11. A Catholic priest witnesses a marriage	K. is essential to the Sacrament of Marriage.
12. The consent of the couple	L. on behalf of the Church.

Something to Think About

- Which of the Church’s teachings about marriage is clearest to you?
- Which do you find hardest to understand?
- Which would you like to find out more about?



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Divorce and Annulment

Jesus strongly defended the institution of marriage when he announced that remarriage after divorce is a form of adultery:

But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (Matthew 5:32)

The Catholic Church has always maintained that the bond of Christian marriage lasts until the death of one of the partners. At the same time, the Church accepts that difficult life circumstances sometimes drive a husband and wife apart to the extent that they are no longer able to reconcile their differences. However, while it may be wise for people in such circumstances to separate and even obtain a civil divorce, they are not free to remarry within the Church until one or other of them dies.



A marriage annulment is the formal recognition by the Church that while there may have been a real bond between the couple, at least one of the conditions required for a valid marriage did not exist at the time of a couple's wedding – some element essential to marriage is missing. An annulment declares that a marriage was never a valid sacrament in the first place – even if both parties entered into it in good faith and with good intentions.

There are various grounds for an annulment. For example, if one party was forced or tricked into the marriage, or if one partner never intended to have children. Immaturity or lack of knowledge can also affect the validity of a marriage. An annulment is not a form of divorce and has no effect on the legitimacy of children, child custody or support, or property settlement.



Annulments are processed through the Tribunal of the Catholic Church, a Church Court established to assist bishops in this matter. The Tribunal makes no attempt to say who is to blame for the break up of a marriage. While going through the process of an annulment can be a very painful time for those concerned, it also provides an opportunity for spiritual healing and growth.

Task Fourteen

Explain the difference between a divorce and an annulment of a marriage.

Something to Discuss

How might going through an annulment process be both a painful experience and an opportunity for healing and growth?

Part Six:

Preparing for Marriage

Focus:

- **The qualities that enable a marriage to be successful do not develop automatically.**
- **It is important for couples who are thinking about marrying to communicate openly about issues that will affect their future.**
- **Marriage preparation programmes provide engaged couples with an opportunity to grow in their understanding of marriage and the commitment that it involves.**
- **Couples wishing to marry in the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand are expected to attend a pre-marriage course.**

Ten Top Qualities

In a study of married couples, researchers asked them what they most valued in a mate. Ten qualities were identified by both women and men as being most important. These are (in the order in which they were ranked):

1. good companionship
2. consideration
3. honesty
4. affection
5. dependability
6. intelligence
7. kindness
8. understanding
9. being interesting to talk to
10. loyalty

People with these qualities are valued as lifelong partners – they are a joy to live with and love.

Something to Discuss

Discuss each of the above qualities in turn. Why is each one such a valued quality in a marriage partner?

Something to Think About

If you had to come up with five more qualities to add to the above list what would they be? Why?



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Marriage Preparation

No matter how well a couple knows each other, being married is very different from not being married. The qualities that enable a marriage to be successful do not develop automatically and it is important for couples who are thinking about marrying to communicate openly about issues that will affect their future.

Marriage preparation programmes encourage couples to communicate with each other about issues that don't necessarily surface when they are caught up in the excitement of courtship, engagement and planning for a wedding. Good marriage preparation helps the couple to discover more about each other and what the marriage commitment involves.

Some Questions for Couples to Reflect on

Do we agree about the roles that men and women play in marriage?

Do we have the support of our families?

Are we too young?

Are both of us capable of genuine intimacy?

Can each of us accept change in the other?

Can each of us stand psychologically on our own two feet?

Do we give each other time and space to be apart – alone or with our own friends?

What part would children play in our marriage?

What role will sexual expression have for us?

Can both of us confront our problems head-on and then let bygones be bygones?

Do both of us show personal integrity?

Does one of us have to be boss all the time?

Do we share similar religious beliefs?

Do we have enough in common?

Can we express our feelings for each other?

What are our expectations about money and our manner of dealing with financial issues?

How dependable is each of us in our work or study?

Do we like each other's friends?

Do our dreams for creating a life together match?



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Task Fifteen

Look through the questions on the previous page for couples to reflect on. Why is it important for couples who are thinking about marrying to reflect on these and other similar questions?

Pre-Marriage Education

Couples wishing to marry in the Catholic Church are expected to attend a pre-marriage course. If, for some reason, this is not possible, couples are required to spend time in marriage preparation with the priest who is to officiate at their marriage. Pre-marriage courses are presented by trained facilitators in a relaxed and confidential setting. They provide couples with knowledge and skills to help them deepen their understanding of a commitment to their marriage vows. They give couples an opportunity to explore their own particular relationship and help them to recognise and build upon its strengths.

While most dioceses in Aotearoa New Zealand offer the FOCCUS course as part of the pre-marriage programme, each diocese is responsible for running its own pre-marriage programme.

All courses are based on the principles of adult education. They invite couples to draw on their own experiences and family background to identify the issues they see as important in their marriage. Areas covered by such courses include:

- personality differences and personal issues
- communication and problem-solving
- values and preferences
- parenting
- sexuality
- friends and interests
- two-career marriages
- budgeting (of time and money)

Something to Research

a) What pre-marriage education is available in the Diocese where you live? Check out your diocesan website by using the following link:

www.catholic.org.nz/about/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=1

b) Most dioceses in Aotearoa New Zealand offer the FOCCUS course as part of their pre-marriage programme. Go to the following website to find out more about this programme:

www.foccusinc.com



Part Seven: The Rite of Marriage

Focus:

- **In order to get married in a Catholic Church at least one of the partners must be a baptised Catholic.**
- **If a baptised person has been married before – and their marriage partner is still alive – evidence that the previous marriage has been annulled is required before they can remarry in the Catholic Church.**
- **Three types of wedding ceremony are available within the Catholic Church – a Nuptial Mass, a wedding without a Mass, and a convalidation ceremony.**
- **When couples marry outside the Catholic Church, it is often possible, at a later point, to have the marriage validated by the Church.**

Getting Married in the Catholic Church

In order to get married in a Catholic Church at least one of the partners must be a Catholic. If the non-Catholic partner was baptised in another Christian church, they must provide evidence of their baptism. If the non-Catholic partner is unbaptised (for example, a member of a non-Christian religion or someone who has no religious beliefs) special permission for the marriage to take place must be obtained from the local bishop. This is organised by the priest or deacon officiating at the ceremony.

If a person wishing to marry has been married before, evidence of an annulment (a declaration by the Church that the previous marriage was invalid) must be provided.

Three types of Catholic wedding ceremony are available:

- A Nuptial Mass (where a wedding takes place during the celebration of the Eucharist)
- A wedding without a Mass
- A convalidation ceremony (where a couple who are already legally married have their marriage recognised as valid by the Church)

The Nuptial Mass

A Nuptial Mass is highly recommended and encouraged when both the bride and the groom are Catholic. At a Nuptial Mass two sacraments are received – the Sacrament of Matrimony and the Sacrament of the Eucharist.



The Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word at a Nuptial Mass follows the same pattern as Sunday Mass. In addition to the reading of the Gospel, there will be one or two other readings taken from the Old Testament and / or the New Testament. There may also be a Psalm. Here are some of the readings which the Church presents for the bride and groom to choose from:

Old Testament Readings	
Genesis 1:26-28, 31a	Male and female he created them.
Genesis 2:18-24	And they will be two in one flesh.
Tobit 7:9-10, 11-15	May God join you together and fill you with his blessings.
Tobit 8:5-10	May God bring us to old age together.
Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a	For love is as strong as death.
New Testament Readings	
Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39	Who will separate us from the love of Christ?
1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20	Your body is a temple of the Spirit.
1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a	If I am without love, it will do me no good whatever.
Colossians 3:12-17	Above all have love which is the bond of perfection.
1 John 3:18-24	Our love is to be something real and active.
1 John 4:7-12	God is love.
Revelation 19:1, 5-9a	Happy are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.
Gospel Readings	
Matthew 5:1-12	Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.
Matthew 7:21, 24-29	He built his house on rock.
Matthew 19:3-6	So then, what God has united, people must not divide.
Matthew 22:35-40	This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is similar to it.
Mark 10:6-9	They are no longer two, therefore, but one body.
John 2:1-11	This was the first of the signs given by Jesus; it was given at Cana in Galilee.
John 15:9-12	Remain in my love.
John 15:12-16	This is my commandment: love one another.
John 17:20-26	May they be completely one.

Task Sixteen

Look through the selection of readings from scripture that the Church puts forward as suitable for weddings:

- a) Locate some of the readings in your Bible and read them.
- b) Choose three readings that especially appeal to you (one Gospel and two others) and explain in your own words the message that each of them contains about marriage.

Something to Do

Produce a wedding card that is based on one of the readings. Use text from the reading and combine it with appropriate visual elements.

Consent and Vows

Following the homily, the priest or deacon invites the bride and groom to declare their intention to marry. He asks the couple to respond to three important questions:

- Have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?
- Will you love and honour each other as husband and wife for the rest of your lives?
- Will you accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

If the couple say, "Yes!" to all three questions the marriage vows follow. The vows (which come in two accepted versions) may be stated by the priest or deacon and repeated by the bride and groom. Alternatively, the vows may be put in the form of a question, to which the bride and groom respond, "I do."



CORBIS

VOWS – Version One

I, , take you, , to be my wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life.

I, , take you, , to be my husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life.

Or

VOWS – Version Two

I, , take you, , for my lawful wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

I, , take you, , for my lawful husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

The priest or deacon receives the consent of the bride and groom with these words:

You have declared your consent before the Church. May the Lord in his goodness strengthen your consent and fill you both with his blessing.

What God has joined, men must not divide.

The couple become husband and wife at the moment they exchange consent.

Something to Discuss

Why is it that the couple become husband and wife at the moment they give consent?

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

The priest or deacon then blesses the wedding rings which are a symbol of the couple's faithfulness and love for each other. The groom places his wife's ring on her finger and says:

**Take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and
of the Holy Spirit.**



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The bride takes the other ring and places it on the groom's finger. She says the same words.

Something to Find Out

Find out more about the symbolism of the wedding rings.

General Intercessions – Prayer of the Faithful

After the exchange of rings, the Prayer of the Faithful is said. The following are examples of the types of petitions that are offered:

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For and
that their love for
each other may
continue to grow in
the peace of Christ.

For the parents of
. . . . and that
they may be an
example of love to
their children.

For all married couples here today,
that witnessing and
making their commitment of love,
they renew their love for one
another.

For all who are gathered here today to
celebrate with and , especially those
who have travelled a great distance, that God
will bless them and watch over them.

For the deceased relatives and friends of . . .
. and that God may shower them with
eternal love.

Task Seventeen

Write some prayers of petition of your own that would be suitable for a Nuptial Mass.



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The Nuptial Blessing

The rest of the Mass follows the Sunday pattern, except that between the Lord's Prayer and the Sign of Peace the priest gives a special nuptial blessing to the couple:

Father, by your power you have made everything out of nothing.
In the beginning you created the universe and made humankind in your own likeness.

You gave man the constant help of woman so that man and woman should no longer be two, but one flesh, and you teach us that what you have united may never be divided.

Father, you have made the union of man and wife so holy a mystery that it symbolises the marriage of Christ and his Church. Father, by your plan man and woman are united, and married life has been established as the one blessing that was not forfeited by original sin or washed away in the flood.

Look with love upon this woman, your daughter, now joined to her husband in marriage. She asks your blessing. Give her the grace of love and peace. May she always follow the example of the holy women whose praises are sung in the scriptures.

May her husband put his trust in her and recognise that she is his equal and the heir with him to the life of grace. May he always honour her and love her as Christ loves his bride, the Church.

Father, keep them always true to your commandments. Keep them faithful in marriage and let them be living examples of Christian life. Give them the strength which comes from the gospel so that they may be witnesses of Christ to others. (Bless them with children and help them to be good parents. May they live to see their children's children.) And, after a happy old age, grant them fullness of life with the saints in the kingdom of heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Task Eighteen

A number of important Catholic understandings about marriage are expressed in the words of the nuptial blessing. What are some of these?



CORBIS

A Wedding Ceremony without a Mass

Often when either the bride or the groom is not Catholic the couple decide to have a wedding ceremony without a Mass. This is because a non-Catholic is not normally able to receive Holy Communion in a Catholic church. To spare any embarrassment, misunderstanding or hurt feelings, the Church suggests that it is generally more appropriate for a couple where one of the partners is not a Catholic to have a wedding ceremony without Mass and the reception of Holy Communion.



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The ceremony includes a number of the same features as a Nuptial Mass:

- The Liturgy of the Word (including a homily)
- The Consent and Vows
- Blessing and Exchange of Rings
- General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful)
- The Lord's Prayer
- Nuptial Blessing
- The Sign of Peace
- Final Blessing

A Convalidation Ceremony

For various reasons, Catholic couples sometimes get married in a civil ceremony or by a minister from another Christian denomination rather than in the presence of a Catholic priest or deacon:

- Many couples realise it is impossible to marry in the Catholic Church because of their personal circumstances – one or other partner may be already married to someone else in the eyes of the Church.
- Some couples choose not to seek an annulment of a previous marriage – they believe that the process is too lengthy, too demanding, or too costly.
- Other couples are in a hurry or feel stressed by various factors – marriage in the Catholic Church seems to be an additional complication.
- Some couples are not practising Catholics when they marry – a Church marriage is not a priority for them.

Regardless of why couples wed outside the Church, the Church is always open, at a later point, to validating such marriages if at all possible. The benefits of this process – known as convalidation – are many: peace of heart, oneness with the Church, reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony and God's special blessing upon the marriage.

If a Catholic wishes to marry in the Catholic Church when there has been a previous marriage, then the other partner in the earlier union must have died or there needs have been an annulment of the previous union.

Something to Think About

Under what circumstances is it sometimes...

- **more appropriate to have a wedding without a Mass?**
- **possible to have a marriage convalidated?**



Part Eight:

The Development of the Priesthood

Focus:

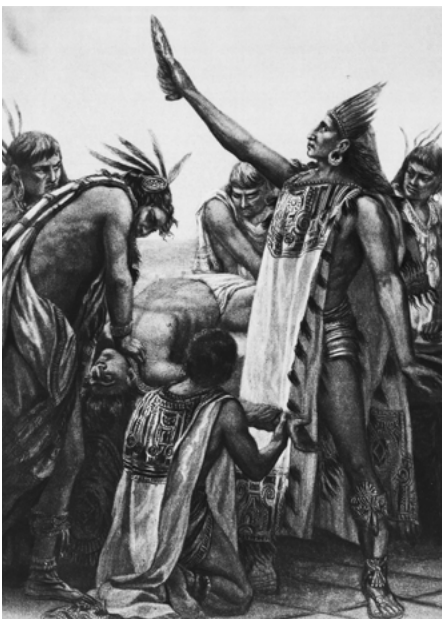
- From the earliest times human societies recognised the need for priests, individuals who acted as intermediaries or mediators between the gods and people.
- In the Old Testament priests offered sacrifices on behalf of the people of Israel in worship of the one true God and to make amends for their sins.
- In the New Testament Jesus is presented as the high priest whose death on the cross was the perfect sacrifice.
- In the early centuries of the Church, bishops and presbyters shared in Christ's priestly work by presiding at the celebration of the Eucharist, the sacrament of Christ's death and resurrection.
- Deacons assisted the bishop in a variety of ways, often taking responsibility for the care of the poor and those in need.
- By the end of the third century, bishops, priests and deacons were seen as three distinct groupings within the one Sacrament of Holy Orders.
- Celibacy is regarded as God's "gift" to the Church – men who become priests in the Roman Catholic Church must commit themselves to living a celibate lifestyle.
- The Catholic Church continues to hold to its long-standing tradition that it has the authority to ordain men only.

Priesthood in Human Societies

From the dawn of history, human societies have sensed a need for priests – individuals, usually men, whose role it is to act as intermediaries or mediators between their gods and the people. For thousands of years, across almost all cultures, priests have carried out a variety of functions. These include:

- speaking to their gods and offering prayers on behalf of their people
- communicating the gods' messages to their people
- performing sacrifices and making offerings so as to obtain the co-operation and blessing of the gods, to have the people's sins forgiven, or to turn away the gods' anger
- casting lots in an attempt to work out the will of the gods

Because they spoke and acted on behalf of the gods, priests in the ancient world held great power. They could say whether or not a god was pleased, and could decide what offerings were necessary. Priests were able to influence the lives of whole nations by claiming to read a god's mind.



Something to Think About

From the earliest times, priests have served as mediators or intermediaries between the gods and human beings. What is an intermediary or mediator? Recall various ways in which priests in ancient times acted as mediators.

In some cultures, including the Aztec, human sacrifice was carried out by priests.

Priesthood in the Old Testament

In Old Testament times, the people of Israel stood out from the various neighbouring tribes because of their worship of “the one true God”. To begin with, heads of families and clans served as Israel’s priests. They offered sacrifices to thank God for his goodness and in an attempt to secure the well-being of those close to them. Abraham, the common ancestor of all the people of Israel was willing to go so far as to kill his own son, Isaac, in order to please God:

‘Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.’ (Genesis 22:2)

Just as Abraham raises his knife to kill Isaac, God provides a ram for Abraham to sacrifice instead.

One of the most famous priests in Old Testament times was King Melchizedek, who met and blessed Abraham after a battle:

And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!’ (Genesis 14:18-20)

Other important priests were Aaron, the elder brother of Moses, and Zadok, who was appointed high priest by King David.

Over time, members of the tribe of Levi, one of the twelve tribes of ancient Israel, became its professional priests. Levites were consecrated to God and set apart from the other tribes for religious duties, including the offering of various types of sacrifice, which they carried out at the Temple in Jerusalem.



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The Scapegoat, 1854 (oil on canvas), Hunt, William Holman (1827-1910) / © Lady Lever Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool

Thousands of animals were slaughtered at the Temple each year – some for thanksgiving, some for sin. The role of the priest was very much that of a ritual slaughterer. His job involved sprinkling the blood on the sides of the altar, offering the blood of the animal to God.

One of the most important priestly actions took place every year on the Day of Atonement. On this occasion, the high priest at the Temple in Jerusalem made two sacrifices. The first, a bull was killed to make amends for the high priest’s own sin and the sin of the other priests. The second, a goat, was sacrificed for the sin of the people. The high priest then laid a hand on the head of a second goat – the “scapegoat” – symbolically transferring the sin of the people to the goat. The scapegoat was then released into the desert.

Task Nineteen

Which of the following statements about priesthood in the ancient world and Old Testament times are true and which are false? If a statement is false change it so that it becomes true.

- a) Since earliest times human societies have recognised the need for priests.
- b) Priests are intermediaries linking the human and the divine.
- c) In the ancient world priests held great power.
- d) Abraham sacrificed his son, Isaac, in order to please God.
- e) Melchizedek was appointed high priest by King David.
- f) Levites came from one of the eleven tribes of Israel.
- g) Members of the tribe of Levi, based at the Temple in Jerusalem, served as professional priests.
- h) Hundreds of animals were slaughtered at the Temple each year – some for thanksgiving, some for sin.
- i) On the Day of Atonement the high priest sacrificed a bull to make amends for his own sins.
- j) The sins of the people were symbolically transferred to a goat which was then killed.

The Priesthood of Jesus Christ

In the Letter to the Hebrews Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is described as the one appointed to be God's high priest – the best possible mediator between God and humankind. Because of his great love for God, Jesus is the perfect victim whose death on the cross brings life to all who believe in him.

...Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 5:7-10)

Jesus' offering of himself in death is totally pleasing to God. His is the perfect sacrifice that makes all other sacrifices unnecessary.

Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans makes it clear that following his resurrection and ascension, Jesus Christ continues to be the high priest who intercedes with God on behalf of his people:

It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. (Romans 8:34)

For Christians, Jesus Christ is the one and only high priest:

...there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus,... (1 Timothy 2:5)

But through baptism, all who follow Jesus as members of the Church are able to become "living stones . . . built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2: 4-5).

Something to Discuss

Work in a pair. Read through the section above on the Priesthood of Jesus Christ and discuss it.

- Which ideas do you find easiest to understand?**
- Which ideas are more of a challenge?**
- Which one idea makes the strongest impression on you?**

The Beginnings of the Christian Priesthood

At the Last Supper, Jesus had instructed his apostles: "Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.' (Luke 22:19-20)

By the end of the first century AD, the followers of Jesus no longer maintained Jewish traditions and religious practices. The celebration of the Eucharist, which had replaced Temple sacrifices, was at the heart of Christian life and worship. Christians gathered for the "Breaking of the Bread" which they saw as a sacred meal, the sacrament of Christ's death and resurrection.

Chastity

The virtue which enables human beings to integrate sexuality within their whole personality and to express it in ways appropriate to their state in life – single, married, religious.

Sexual Abstinence

The commitment to refrain from sexual activity, usually until marriage.





By the turn of the second century an *episkopos* (bishop or “supervisor”) was responsible for leading each local Christian community in the celebration of the Eucharist. It was these *episcopoi* who first came to be referred to as “priests”. As the number of Christians grew, especially in rural areas, *presbyteroi* (presbyters or “elders”) presided at the celebration of the Eucharist on behalf of the bishop. They too were called “priests”. *Diakonoi* (deacons or “servants”) assisted the bishop in a variety of other ways, often taking responsibility for the care of the poor and those in need.

By the end of the third century, bishops, priests and deacons were seen as three distinct groupings within the one Sacrament of Holy Orders. Bishops and priests, especially, were regarded as sacred persons – set apart to offer sacrifice on behalf of the faithful.

Task Twenty

Write a paragraph on the beginnings of Christian priesthood. Address as many of the following questions as you can:

Who?	What?	When?
Where?	Why?	How?

The Tradition of Priestly Celibacy

Men who become priests in the Roman Catholic Church must commit themselves to living a celibate lifestyle. They promise to give up their natural right to marry in order to devote themselves completely and totally to God and to the Church.

Although a tradition of priestly celibacy had become the norm in some parts of the Church by the fourth century, it wasn’t until 1074 that Pope Gregory VII made celibacy compulsory throughout the Western Church. His decision was reaffirmed by the Second Lateran Council in 1139 and again at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century.

As time went by, there were a number of reasons why priestly celibacy came to be seen as a great benefit to the Church. Celibate priests were free from the responsibility of caring for wives and families. This independence meant they were able to serve the Church, especially the people under their care, with full attention and loyalty.

In Catholic theology, the Church is described as the “bride” of Christ. Priests, who must resemble Christ in all ways, are called to love the Church with the same faithfulness and commitment that Christ does:

The priest is called to be the living image of Jesus Christ, the spouse of the Church.
(Pope John Paul II Pastores Dabo Vobis – I will Give You Shepherds 22)

Priestly celibacy is viewed very positively by the Church – it is a “gift” and a sign of love:

“...celibacy is a priceless gift of God for the Church,... a sign of God’s love for this world and of the undivided love of the priest for God and for God’s people...”
(Pope John Paul II Pastores Dabo Vobis – I will Give You Shepherds 29)

Within the Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches celibacy has always been compulsory for those priests who are members of monastic orders. However, the diocesan priesthood is open to married men – but only celibate priests are able to be appointed bishops.

Something to Think About

Think of as many points as you can in support of Pope John Paul II’s statement that celibacy is “a priceless gift of God for the Church”.

The Ordination of Women

In these days of far fewer priests in the western world, and the availability of many willing, able and theologically well-educated women in the Church, the question is often raised as to why those Catholic women, who believe they have been genuinely called to priesthood, are refused ordination. There continues to be much discussion about this controversial issue, with many arguments presented both for and against the ordination of women.

The Catholic Church, along with the Orthodox Churches, continues to hold to its two thousand year old practice of having only men ordained to the priesthood. Behind the Church’s refusal to ordain women is the belief that Jesus did not intend this ministry for women. The long-standing and unbroken tradition that only men have been ordained, has moved the Church’s teaching authority to declare that it does not have the authority to ordain women.

Pope Gregory VII acted to make celibacy compulsory for priests in the Western Church.



Part Nine: Holy Orders

Focus:

- **Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders certain men are called in the name of Christ and with his authority to serve the people of God as deacons, priests and bishops.**
- **When a person is ordained, he receives from the Holy Spirit a special mark or character which enables him to act on behalf of Christ and in the name of the Church in his ministry as a deacon, priest or bishop.**
- **Bishops, as the successors of the apostles, possess the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders: they are responsible for leading people to holiness, teaching them about *Hehu Karaiti* and his Church, and governing them with compassion and wisdom.**
- **Priests are consecrated to assist a bishop in the work of the Church by sharing in the bishop's own priesthood and mission, mostly by taking responsibility for the care of parishes.**
- **Deacons are ordained to serve the Church in various ways by working under the authority of a bishop to assist him and his priests.**
- **The Sacrament of Holy Orders is performed by a bishop who lays his hands on the head of the one to be ordained while saying a special *karakia* of consecration.**

The Sacrament of Holy Orders

Through Baptism, all Christians share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders certain men are ordained or consecrated in the name of Christ and with his authority to serve the people of God within one of three orders – as deacons, priests or bishops.

The term “ordination” comes from the Latin *ordinatio*, which means incorporation into an established *ordo* or governing body. To join each of the three orders of ministry within the Church there is a special liturgy of induction – an ordination.

Catholics believe that when a person is ordained as a deacon, priest or bishop, he receives from the Holy Spirit a special mark or character which enables him to act on behalf of Christ and in the name of the Church. This character or mark is permanent.

The Order of Bishops

The episcopal order – made up of bishops – is the highest of the three orders of ordained ministers in the Church. The bishops, as the successors of the apostles, possess the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The three main responsibilities of bishops are:

- To lead the people under their care to holiness
- To make clear to them the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Church
- And to govern them with compassion and wisdom

While a bishop is usually responsible for looking after a diocese – a particular area or local Church – he must also co-operate with the other bishops, under the leadership of the Pope, the bishop of Rome, to advance the mission of the Church throughout the world. The term used by the Church to describe the special relationship among the world bishops is *collegiality*. Collegiality is seen in many situations, including when bishops come together to consecrate a new bishop.



The bishop's laying of hands on the head of the one to be ordained is an essential aspect of the Rite of Ordination for bishops, priests and deacons. This action is accompanied by a prayer asking for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Order of Priests

Priests are consecrated to assist bishops in the work of the Church. When a bishop ordains a priest he gives him a sharing in his own priesthood and mission:

Priests are co-workers of the order of bishops. They are joined to the bishops in the priestly office and are called to serve God's people. (From the *Rite of Ordination of a Priest*)

Priests preach the Gospel, care for the faithful, and celebrate the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. Priests carry out their ministries on behalf of the bishop whom they serve. Most priests do this by taking responsibility for or assisting with the care of a parish – a particular area within the diocese. All priests in a diocese work collegially as members of the college of priests or *presbyterium*.

Something to Do

Explain in words or show by way of a diagram the relationship between the ministry of a bishop and that of a priest.

Task Twenty-One

Priests share in Christ's ministry and serve the Church in various ways.

- a) **Working in a pair or small group, choose five aspects of priestly ministry listed below that you think are most important.**
- b) **Explain why you consider each of them important aspects of a priest's ministry.**
- c) **Give examples of how these important aspects of priestly ministry are seen in the lives and work of priests you know.**

Aspects of Priesthood

Preaching the Gospel

Teaching about Jesus Christ and the Church

Living a good and holy life

Doing all in their power to help the people in their care grow to be mature Christians

Helping people apply the Gospel to their own lives

Encouraging missionary outreach

Visiting people in their homes, especially the sick and the elderly

Building up community and unity within the Church

Caring for all parishioners

Showing compassion for all people

Working for justice for the poor and the oppressed

Bringing new members into the Church through Baptism

Forgiving sins in the Sacrament of Penance

Acting as the Church's witness in the Sacrament of Matrimony

Bringing healing to the sick in the Sacrament of Anointing

Conducting funerals

Helping people to pray

Presiding at the celebration of the Eucharist, the centre of the Church's life



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The Order of Deacons

Deacons are ordained to assist the bishop and are usually directly responsible to him. They assist at the celebration of the Eucharist by reading the Gospel, preaching the homily and by distributing Holy Communion. Deacons are also able to witness and bless marriages on behalf of the Church, and can conduct funerals. Deacons may be married.

What Happens at an Ordination?

The Sacrament of Holy Orders, whether it is for bishops, priests or deacons, is performed by a bishop who lays his hands on the head of the one to be ordained while saying a special prayer of consecration.

Various other rituals form part of the ordination ceremony, which always occurs during the celebration of the Eucharist. These include the presentation, instruction and examination of the candidate for ordination.



At the ordination of a bishop or priest there is an anointing with the Oil of Chrism – a sign of his share in the high priesthood of Christ and of the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit. During the ordination of a bishop, priest or deacon the following items are presented to him as a sign of the responsibilities that he has to Christ and the Church.

At their ordination, bishops and priests are anointed with the Oil of Chrism as a sign that the Holy Spirit will make their ministry fruitful.

Items Presented to a Bishop	
Item	Meaning
The Book of the Gospels	A sign of the bishop's mission to proclaim the Word of God
The ring	A sign that the bishop is called to be faithful to the Church
The mitre and crosier	A sign that the bishop is to be a shepherd to Christ's people
Items Presented to a Priest	
Item	Meaning
The paten and chalice	A sign that the priest is called to offer the Mass to God on behalf of God's people
Items Presented to a Deacon	
Item	Meaning
The Book of the Gospels	A sign that the deacon assists the bishop in his mission by proclaiming the Word of God

Something to Do

Find out more about the symbolism behind one of the items presented to a bishop, priest or deacon at his ordination.

Part Ten:

The Pathway to Priesthood

Focus:

- **The “call” to priestly ministry comes in a unique way to each person, but certain signs indicate that a man may have a vocation to the priesthood.**
- **Someone called to be a priest is challenged to develop those qualities and skills that better enable him to be Christ’s special instrument in building up the Church.**
- **Men hoping to be diocesan priests in New Zealand are trained at Holy Cross Seminary in Auckland, usually over six years.**
- **Priesthood is a challenging but rewarding vocation for those who are called to it.**

The Call to Priesthood

Although some priests are members of religious congregations (for example, the Franciscans, the Jesuits, the Dominicans, the Marists, etc), a vocation to the priesthood differs from a call to religious life.

Priests are ordained for ministry, which at its heart is a call to lead the members of the Church to holiness by loving and serving the people of a parish or other diocesan community. They do this by making available to the people they serve the sacraments and other means to holiness offered by the Church. Because he presides at the celebration of the Eucharist the priest is central to the life of the Church, offering members of Christ’s family the gift of Christ’s very own presence.

In addition to presiding at the Eucharist and other sacramental celebrations, priests have the responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel in ways that inspire and challenge the members of the Church.

Jesus Christ came into the world to restore and renew people’s relationship with God. Reconciling people to God and to one another is a key aspect of the ministry of a priest. In order to bring healing and health to members of the Church, a priest is called to live close to the people, knowing their successes and failures, their pain and their joy. A priest stands with the members of the community he serves at significant moments in their lives – when they are joined in marriage, when they bury their loved ones, and when they are sick.

It is in these moments that a priest’s special relationship to the Church – the Body of Christ – is most visible. He is both the presence of Christ for the community and the representative or voice of the community in its celebrations. The priest has the privilege and responsibility of modelling the holiness of God for the People of God.

Diocesan priests (those who are not members of religious communities) do not take vows or commit themselves to live in community. They do make promises of celibacy and of obedience to their bishop. These promises are a sign that a man who takes on the privilege and responsibility of priesthood is willing and able to give priority to God and God’s people in his life and work.

Something to Discuss

“The priest is Christ’s special instrument in building up the Church to be what it is called to be.”

- a) What personal qualities do you think are desirable in someone who is called to priesthood?**
- b) How might a person develop these qualities?**



The ordination to the priesthood of Fr Chris Orr by Bishop John Cunneen, Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Christchurch, 17 December, 2004.

The priest is Christ’s special instrument in building up the Church to be what it is called to be. The vocation of a priest is to be the hub of his community, at the service of the vocation of all, and the more active lay people become in the Church, the more the priest is needed to sustain and empower them in living out their own spiritual vocation.

(Michael Evans, CTS pamphlet, 1989)

Possible Signs of a Call to the Priesthood

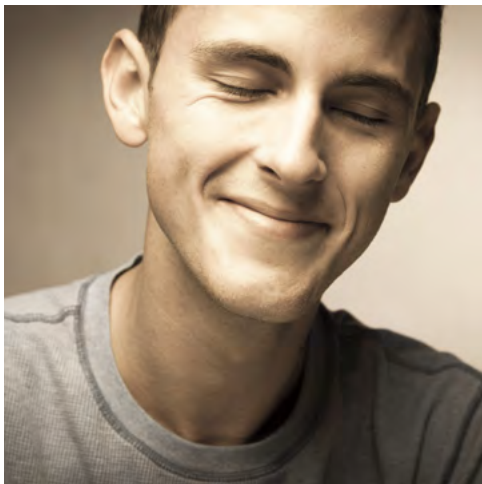
God calls men of all ages and from all walks of life to become priests. Each person experiences this call in their own unique way – through life's events, through other people, or through their own thoughts or desires.

There are certain signs or indicators that a man may have a vocation to the priesthood:

- *A love of God* that shows itself in a desire to give one's life in service to God's People
- *A love of the Church* and its sacraments and a desire to celebrate the sacraments with the community
- *A love of God's Word* and a desire to spread the message of the Gospel among God's people
- *A desire to live a life of holiness* as Christ's representative among the People of God
- *A heart that can listen* to others and reach out in healing
- *An ability to be happy* without the intimate companionship of a wife and family
- *Generosity* of heart and hand
- *A desire to deepen* prayer and relationship with God



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Something to Think About

Do you recognise any of these possible signs of a priestly vocation in anyone close to you?

Formation and Training

Good formation and training are essential for those who feel called to be priests. Men hoping to be diocesan priests in New Zealand are trained at Holy Cross Seminary in Auckland, usually over six years. Religious congregations, such as the Marists, have their own formation programmes and seminaries for men who wish to be priests.

Training to be a priest is an exciting journey in faith. During this time of formation, candidates are encouraged to grow spiritually, academically, and in areas of their own personal development, and are given the skills necessary for good pastoral care. Financial assistance is available to help with costs.

- **Pre-seminary preparation:** Formal preparation begins before a person enters the seminary. Someone interested in priesthood as a way of life will meet regularly with others with the same intention under the guidance of a priest. In some dioceses men considering going to the seminary will first spend a year in a house of formation, such as Good Shepherd House in Christchurch, where they will be assisted to develop a solid prayer life and spend time learning about basic Catholic theology. If a person decides to enter the seminary and test their vocation, they need to be accepted by the bishop of their own diocese as a candidate for the priesthood.

- **Year One:** New seminarians are assisted to develop their faith and prayer life. They become involved in a variety of parish activities as well as doing special introductory courses of study.
- **Years Two to Four:** These years are taken up with specialised courses in philosophy, theology, scripture and church history. Seminarians are encouraged to complete a Bachelor of Theology degree, which they are able to do at Good Shepherd College – Te Heparā Pai, Auckland. The seminary follows the university year with a lengthy break over the summer months.



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- **Year Five:** This is a time for the seminarian to gain pastoral experience. Most of this year is spent in the seminarian's home diocese where he will be appointed by the bishop to work in a parish. Parishioners are genuinely delighted to have a seminarian in their midst, and in turn, the seminarian receives much encouragement from the people he gets to know.
- **Year Six:** During this final year, seminarians do courses that help to prepare them more directly for their new priestly life. They will also be ordained as deacons. At the end of the year deacons are appointed to parishes in their own dioceses, and soon afterwards are ordained to the priesthood.

Task Twenty-Two

Read the following brief testimonies by priests.

What are some of the rewarding aspects of priestly life and ministry that they identify?

More and more I realise priesthood is a journey into the priesthood of Jesus himself. It is truly humbling to see how he uses me as his priest. I find this incredibly exciting and satisfying, (though not always easy), as I live and work among his people. (Fr Stephen Lowe)

Being a priest is the privilege of meeting many people, the opportunity to serve differing races and cultures – New Zealand, Pacific, South American – the challenge to believe that you are creating a better Church in a better world. (Fr Bernard Dennehy)

Working for several years helped me to see the great need for a purpose in life. I discovered that Christ is the answer and as a priest, try to be Christ to all people. (Fr Raymond Green)

I am thankful that I am given the freedom to proclaim the Gospel, to pray, reflect and to celebrate the Eucharist with God's people in a way that makes Christ real in today's world. (Fr Terrence Dibble)

Something to Think About

- What are some of the challenges that priests face in Aotearoa New Zealand today?
- Why do you think fewer Catholic men take time to consider priestly life as a vocation?

Too few Priests – Some Facts

Fewer parish priests

New Zealand has six dioceses with a total of 272 parishes. *At present 44 parishes, or 15% plus, do not have a resident parish priest.*

The size of our parishes

How large are our parishes in terms of people to be pastored? *In New Zealand the average number of Catholics per parish is 1,626, well below the world average of 2,475 parishioners per parish. In some countries the average number of Catholics per parish is much higher. To give some examples: in Australia it is 3,560; in Poland 3,467; in Peru 4,979 and in the Philippines 10,106.*

New Zealand's average of 1,626 includes all who are Catholics according to the national census data. Of those some 25 to 30% will be *practising Catholics, or on average 450 per parish.* The fact is: our parishes are small.

Priest-parishioner ratio

We may not look at it that way because in the past the number of Catholic priests in New Zealand has been exceptionally high for the number of Catholics. *We still have a very high priest to Catholic ratio: In New Zealand the average number of Catholics per priest is 780. In Australia for example it is more than twice the figure: 1,566.*

Conclusion

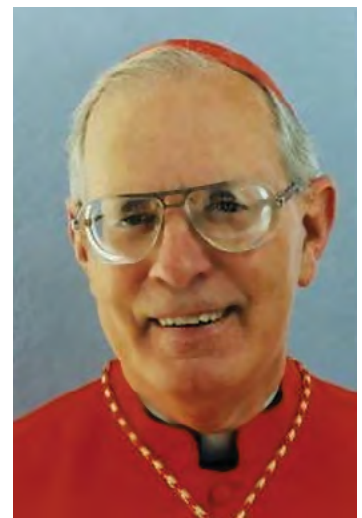
The facts are clear: it is true that the number of priests is declining and that priests are getting older. But it is *not true that we have too few parish priests. It is not true that our parish priests have to pastor impossibly large flocks. Not compared to many other countries in the world. And lastly, it is not true that we have so few priests. Not compared to nearly all other countries in the world.*

The Spirit is constantly at work in the world and in the Church. We do not live in a time of crisis, we live in a time of grace and opportunity.

(Based on a talk from Cardinal Thomas Williams to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, September 2002)

Something to Discuss

Many Catholics worry that New Zealand has too few priests. What points does Cardinal Williams make in response to these concerns?



Part Eleven:

The Story of Religious Life

Focus:

- Men and women called to live as religious sisters, brothers, nuns, monks or priests have a desire to serve God and God's people.
- Those called to religious life live the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in community as members of a religious order or congregation.
- Consecrated religious life traces its origins back to the third and fourth centuries when men and women left their homes to live in the desert as hermits, monks and nuns – their motivation was to grow closer to God through prayer, penance and solitude.
- From its origins, consecrated religious life has continued to adapt to changing circumstances.
- Some religious orders and congregations are *contemplative* in their lifestyle and focus, others are *active*.
- Today, members of religious congregations in Aotearoa New Zealand are involved in a great range of ministries.

Consecrated Religious Life

The call to religious life as a sister, brother, nun, monk, or priest is always marked by a desire to serve *Te Atua* and God's people, to care for those in need and to bring people to experience God's love.

What is unique about the consecrated religious life is the call to live the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience as members of a religious congregation, order or institute. The vocation of a religious is to be a sign to others that the whole of creation is a gift from God. The religious life when it is well lived challenges people to treat all things, persons and our own selves with reverence and respect because they ultimately belong to God.

At the heart of the vocation to consecrated religious life is the desire to give oneself completely to God. Because the love of God takes priority in the life of a consecrated religious, those who have committed themselves to consecrated religious life do not marry.

consecrate (say *konsi-krate*) verb
to dedicate to a special or sacred purpose: 'she *consecrated* her life to music'.
Word Family: **consecration**, noun.
[CON- + Latin *sacer* sacred]

Task Twenty-Three

List at least four characteristics of the consecrated religious life.

Something to Think About

Why is the word "consecrated" used to describe those who become vowed members of religious orders or congregations?



The Origins of Religious Life in the East

In the third and fourth centuries, in Egypt, Syria and Palestine, men and women left their villages and towns to live in places remote from ordinary human society. In these often harsh environments, people freely accepted a life of hardship and physical suffering. Their motivation was to grow closer to God in the "desert" through prayer, penance and solitude. In this, they were following the example of Jesus who "was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil" (see Luke 4:1-13).

Something to Discuss

Read the account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness in Luke 4:1-13. How might Jesus' experience have inspired men and women to go into the "desert" to find God?

St. Benedict (oil on panel), Perugino, Pietro (c.1445-1523) / Vatican Museums and Galleries, Vatican City, Italy, Giraudon

Hermits and Monks

To begin with, most of these men and women lived alone as hermits. But soon organised religious community developed around holy people such as Saint Anthony of Egypt (251–356). Anthony's followers continued to live as hermits but came together at certain times for spiritual instruction and prayer.

It was under the influence of Saints Pachomius (290–346) and Basil (330–379) that men began to live together in more settled communities, each under the direction of an abbot. These were the first monasteries. Saint Basil developed a rule – a set of guidelines – for his monks to live by. This emphasised the values of chastity, solitude, poverty, obedience to a leader, love and service of others, prayer, and faithfulness to God. Monasteries for women were also founded. Basil's rule was taken up and adapted by religious orders that were established later.



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Saint Anthony with pig in background, c. 1480, by Piero de Cosimo (1462–1522) / National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA

The number of men and women who joined these “desert” communities was extraordinary. Some were attracted by the opportunity to grow closer to God in solitude and prayer. Others wanted to live the simple life of Christ and his apostles. Many felt the need to express their devotion to God through self-denial and penance.

Task Twenty-Four

Explain in your own words the difference between a hermit and a monk?

St. Jerome in the Wilderness, c.1450 (tempera on panel), by Bellini, Giovanni (c.1430-1516) / The Barber Institute of Fine Arts

Western Monasticism

Soon people in the West, in places as far away as Ireland, were also living as hermits or monks. Monks, including Saint Patrick (c389–c461), were responsible for the spread of Christianity throughout Ireland during the fifth century.

Saint Benedict of Nursia (480–547) was the most important figure in the development of monasticism in Western Europe. To begin with, Benedict lived as a hermit on Mount Subiaco in Italy where he attracted many followers. Later, he founded many monasteries, including Monte Cassino, south of Rome. The rule that Benedict wrote for his monks was based on earlier models but was more moderate in its demands. Benedict wanted his monks to lead balanced lives – he recognised the importance of worship, manual labour and study. Benedict's sister, Saint Scholastica, began monasteries for women that were based on her brother's rule.

Eventually, Benedict's rule was so highly regarded that it became the handbook of Western monasticism. It shaped new monastic orders, including the Carthusians and Cistercians, which were founded later.

During the Middle Ages, monasteries had a very important role in society. Monks and nuns ministered to the poor and sick, and they welcomed travellers. They also established libraries and provided some basic education for children. Monasteries preserved the literature of the ancient world and the earliest Christian texts. Monks and nuns spent hours copying the most important works into beautifully illuminated manuscripts. During times of war and social upheaval monasteries were oases of peace and order – often because they were located in remote places. They kept the flame of Christianity alive.

The Friars

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Saints Dominic de Guzmán (1170–1221) and Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) recognised the need to serve the increasing numbers of people who were living in the towns. Francis, an Italian, and Dominic, a Spaniard, each established a band of friars – brothers – who moved around the towns and villages ministering and preaching to people wherever they found them. Over the centuries the Dominicans and the Franciscans have been two of the most influential religious orders in the history of the Church. Saint Clare (1193–1253), a friend of Francis, established a contemplative order for women called the Poor Clares. Saint Dominic also founded an order for religious women.

St Clare, 1318, frescoes, Simone Martini (ca 1284-1344), Chapel of St Martin, Lower Church, Papal Basilica of St Francis of Assisi, Assisi, Umbria, Italy



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The Jesuits

For hundreds of years members of religious congregations were not usually priests. In time, communities of ordained priests who took the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience were established. The best-known of these is the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, founded by Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1471–1556). The Society of Jesus sent many of its members to spread the Gospel among the indigenous peoples of North America, Africa and the Far East. A number of Jesuit missionaries were martyred. Some became great scholars at colleges and universities. Other Jesuits, through their preaching and personal example, led people who had stopped practising their faith back to the Church.

The Vision of St. Ignatius of Loyola (c.1491-1556) detail of the saint, 1617-18 (oil on canvas), Rubens, Peter Paul (1577-1640) / Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria



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The New Apostolic Religious Orders

Some religious are called to the contemplative life, deepening their relationship with God and serving other people through prayer. One of these was Saint Teresa of Avila (1515–82) who founded the Discalced Carmelites. Other religious are called to an active life – while prayer is an important aspect of their lives, these religious men and women serve God and others in countless practical ways.

Members of many of the older religious congregations, especially those for women, were contemplative in their focus, spending their time in prayer, never moving outside their convent walls.

From the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries many new religious orders were founded. Most of these new congregations were “apostolic” – their members were called to be active in the world, providing education and health care, and generally helping the poor and needy.

The best known of the twentieth century apostolic congregations is the Society of the Missionaries of Charity. It was founded by Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta to care for the dying and the abandoned of India, but has now spread to other countries. Women of many nationalities join this society.



CREATIVE COMMONS / MANFRED FERRARI

Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910–1997) is among the most famous figures of the twentieth century.

Task Twenty-Five

Write a quiz of ten questions focusing on the history of consecrated religious life. The answer for each question should include the name of one of the following important figures in the history of religious congregations:

Saint Anthony of Egypt
Saint Teresa of Avila
Saint Scholastica
Saint Francis of Assisi
Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Saint Basil
Saint Benedict of Nursia
Saint Dominic Guzmán
Saint Clare of Assisi
Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Religious Congregations in Aotearoa New Zealand

The first Catholic missionaries who came to Aotearoa New Zealand with Bishop Pompallier in 1838 were Marist priests and brothers. The first congregation of religious women, the Sisters of Mercy, followed in 1850. Both these congregations were “apostolic” and played a very active role in the mission of the Church in this country.

Like the Marists and the Sisters of Mercy, most of the religious congregations that are found in New Zealand today have their roots in nineteenth century France or Ireland. Most were established in response to particular needs of the time, for example:

- to educate of the poor
- to provide higher education for women
- to nurse the sick and the elderly
- to care for the homeless, for orphans and those in prison
- to work as missionaries, spreading the Gospel among indigenous peoples

Today, members of religious congregations in Aotearoa New Zealand are involved in a great range of ministries. Some are hospital, school, industrial or prison chaplains. Others are spiritual directors, counsellors or social workers. Members of religious congregations work with the homeless, with migrants, with abused women and children, or with people addicted to drugs and alcohol. A number assist bishops in the administration of their dioceses.

Wherever a need arises in contemporary society, religious congregations will try to meet it, especially if the particular need can be linked to the reasons why the congregation was established in the first place.

Something to Do

Read through the following list of religious orders and congregations that have communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

- Which religious congregations on the list are you already familiar with?**
- Is their lifestyle active or contemplative – or a mixture of both?**
- Choose one religious congregation from the list that you are unfamiliar with and find out more about it. Would you describe it as active or contemplative in its emphasis? Give reasons to support your opinion.**

Many religious congregations in Aotearoa New Zealand have websites that can be found through the following link:

www.catholic.org.nz/about/dsp-organisations.cfm?loadref=17



Suzanne Aubert (1835–1926), who established the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion, the only surviving religious congregation to be founded in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Religious Orders and Congregations with Communities in Aotearoa New Zealand

Adorers of the Sacred Heart of Montmartre OSB
Assumptionists AA
Capuchin Friars OFM Cap
Cenacle Sisters rc
Christian Brothers CFC
Cistercians OSCO
Congregation of Our Lady of the Missions RNDM
Columban Fathers
Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy RSM
Daughters of Charity DC
Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion DOLC
De La Salle Brothers FSC
Discalced Carmelite Nuns OCD
Divine Word Missionaries SVD
Dominican Friars OP
Dominican Sisters OP
Fathers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary SSCC
Franciscan Friars OFM
Hospitaller Brothers of St John of God OH
Little Company of Mary LCM
Little Sisters of the Assumption LSA
Little Sisters of the Poor LSP
Marist Brothers FMS
Marist Sisters SM
Mill Hill Missionaries MHM
Missionaries of Charity MC
Missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver SSPC
Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary SMSM
Redemptorists CSSR
Religious of the Sacred Heart RSCJ
Rosminians IC
Sister Disciples of the Divine Master PDDM
Sisters of Nazareth CSN
Sisters of Saint Brigid CSB
Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny SJC
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Nazareth RSJ
Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart RSJ
Sisters of the Good Shepherd RGS
Sisters of the Holy Faith CHF
Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary PBVM
Society of Christ SCHR
Society of Mary SM
Workers of Christ the Worker WCW



The Madonna delle Ombre, detail of St. Dominic, 1450 (fresco), Angelico, Fra (Guido di Pietro) (c.1387-1455) / Museo di San Marco dell'Angelico, Florence, Italy

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Part Twelve:

The Heart of Religious Life

Focus:

- **Religious vows are public signs that those who promise to live by them are giving themselves completely to God.**
- **By living according to their vows within a particular community or closely linked to one, members of religious congregations witness to values that are unfashionable in our culture.**
- **The “call” to religious life comes in a unique way to each person, but certain signs indicate that a man or woman may have a vocation to be a religious sister, brother, nun, monk, or priest.**

The Three Vows

The three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience help religious sisters, brothers, nuns, monks or priests:

- to give themselves totally to God,
- to grow in intimacy with Jesus Christ,
- and to help people come to love God more fully.

The vows are public signs that those who promise to live by them are giving themselves completely to God. It is not easy to make and keep such important promises but, strengthened by prayer and the sacraments, a religious is able to remain close to God. Prayer, both individual and as community, is central to the life of every religious.



Chastity – Consecrated Celibacy

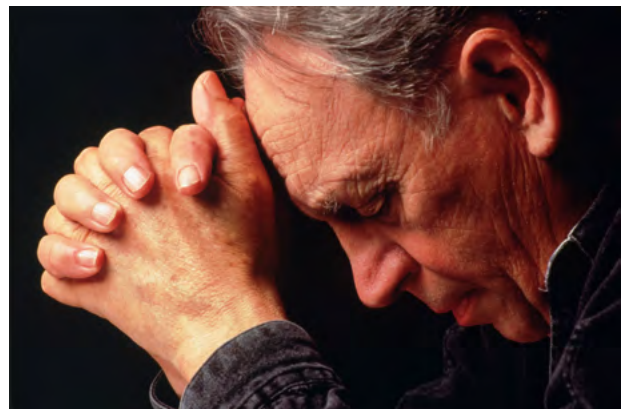
The vow of chastity or consecrated celibacy expresses a desire to follow Jesus Christ unconditionally. When a religious takes this vow, they are stating in a public way that their well-being and happiness will be found in Jesus – their hunger to love and be loved will be satisfied in him.

A characteristic of consecrated celibacy is a desire to love more and more people. The vow of consecrated celibacy obliges a religious to love and care for all God’s daughters and sons, especially those who are most needy. When a religious lives the vow of consecrated celibacy well they inspire other people to love without measure, even those who have no claim on them as family.

Religious Poverty

The person called to religious life feels a desire to live simply. The vow of poverty challenges a person to reverence all things, and creation itself. Underlying this is the understanding that all things come from God.

Religious share material goods in common and depend on the religious congregation or community to provide what they need. Religious poverty is a reminder that people do not have an absolute right to the goods of this world. The earth’s resources are to be used wisely, for the common good as well as to meet the genuine needs of individuals. The earth and other people are not to be exploited to satisfy greed. The vow of poverty expresses dependence on and trust in God’s care for us.



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Religious Obedience

Religious obedience is easily misunderstood – it is not about following senseless “orders” but an acknowledgment that all of us are called to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking through the circumstances of our lives. The vow of obedience assists religious sisters, brothers and priests to be honest in their search for God’s will.

Religious commit themselves to listen to God speaking through the constitutions and decisions of their congregation or order and through those members who are appointed as its leaders. God’s call is also heard in other ways – through the voice of the Church and of Sacred Scripture, in the needs of the world, and in the mission that the congregation dedicates itself to. Listening is always done in prayer and with respect for each person. The vow of obedience is a sign that we are all ultimately dependent on God and that a life of interdependence, as opposed to dependence or the illusion of absolute independence, is the way to holiness.



SISTERHELEN.ORG © SCOTT LANGLEY

Sister Helen Prejean of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Medaille is a leading American campaigner for the abolition of the death penalty.

Task Twenty-Six

Living out the vows of poverty, chastity (consecrated celibacy) and obedience form the basis of life as a religious. Explain in your own words the meaning and purpose of each of the three vows for religious who live them today.

Community

Within our culture sex, money and power are valued much more highly than chastity, detachment from material goods and interdependence. In such an environment, self-interest and individualism often lead to isolation and even violence.

Those who attempt to live according to values that are not considered important in our society need the support and encouragement of a community. But community life is a challenge. It is difficult for people to make room in their lives for the idiosyncrasies of others – we are easily annoyed by behaviours that we do not like. Community living challenges individuals to become more tolerant and self-giving, to respect those who are different from us. By living within a particular community or by being closely linked to one, members of religious congregations witness to the value of communal life.



Something to Discuss

How does living within a religious community challenge both its members and aspects of our culture?

Possible Signs of a Call to the Religious Life

God calls people of all ages and from all walks of life to become sisters, brothers or priests within religious congregations. Each person experiences this call in their own unique way. However, there are certain indicators that a person may have a vocation to the religious life.

- *A love of God* that shows itself in a desire to give one’s life as witness to God’s great love for all people
- *A desire to live simply*
- *An ability to relate* to a variety of people, to be happy alone or in a group
- *A joy* in serving others in any outreach or parish involvement
- *Generosity* of spirit, heart and hand
- *An ability to listen to others* and to accept direction when needed
- *A desire to love expansively* rather than needing an intimate relationship with one person
- *A desire to grow in union with God* through prayer and service of those in need

Something to Think About

Do you recognise any of these possible signs of a vocation to religious life in yourself or in someone close to you?

Task Twenty-Seven

Read the following brief testimonies by members of religious congregations. What are some of the rewarding aspects of religious life that they identify?

I believe that I can best be who I am called to be as a Sister of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart. I am responding to a call deep within me to serve the people of God in a radical way. It is a call to make Jesus' presence visible in our world; to witness to God's compassionate, unconditional love. I value being a member a congregational community who share a similar passion. I am challenged by these words on our Chapel window "Go out, you must not rest secure for need calls loudly. You must seek God there. Loving shall be your flame." (Sr Jill McLoughlin rsj)

Being a member of Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand is about responding to my Baptismal call to bring about the reign of God. Through Religious Life I can use my God-given gifts to bring mercy to our world. The journey is not always an easy one, yet it is one that enables me to experience the love of God through personal and community prayer, through the people whom I meet each day and through the love and support of my sisters. (Sr Anna Nicholls rsm)

As a brother I have responded to a call to be committed to the spirituality and mission of the De La Salle brothers. By nourishing my relationship with Jesus Christ I can respond in a more human way. I live a life enriched by the vows of chastity, poverty, obedience and service of the poor through education and dare to believe that the Spirit will heal me and use me to bring Jesus, the divine truth, to people. Being open to this exciting and demanding challenge will help make a better world. (Br Peter Bray fsc)

Belonging to the Society of Mary allows me to live the Gospel with a group of other men who want to do the same thing in a particular way. As Marists we want to have the qualities and attitudes of Mary in the way we follow Jesus. By living together in groups we are able to support one another in doing this, we are able to pray together and to have a common life together. Many of us also are involved in the same work together. I enjoy being a religious and I like the fact that we work in many parts of New Zealand or even the world. Belonging to a religious congregation makes sense to me and I appreciate the opportunity to be able to follow Christ in this way in the Church. (Fr Paul Martin sm)



Something to Discuss

- What are some of the challenges that consecrated religious face in New Zealand today?**
- Why do you think fewer Catholic men and women take time to seriously consider religious life as a vocation?**

Becoming Fully Alive



Through which of the vocational paths will I come to 'fullness of life'?

**God's Call to each of us:
is *NOT* to a job or career
BUT to a **VOCATION**
the life-long process
of becoming fully alive!**



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Jesus' dream for all of us...
**"I have come that you may have life
and have it to the full."**
John 10:10

Summary

- **Through baptism, all Christians are called to holiness and fullness of life – a deep sharing in the life and love of *Te Atua*.**
- **Christians, both lay and ordained, serve God and others through the various ministries they carry out on behalf of the Church.**
- **The Church has traditionally recognised and honoured certain pathways to holiness which it calls “vocations” – the single life, marriage, Holy Orders and religious life.**
- **The single life is a true Christian vocation whenever the person concerned accepts the single state as a means of deepening their commitment to *Te Atua* and neighbour.**
- **Christian marriage is a vocation, a sacrament and a covenant – its purpose is to protect and develop the loving relationship between a husband and wife and to bear and raise children in the best possible circumstances.**
- **A genuine Christian marriage is faithful, permanent and open to the possibility of new life.**
- **The qualities that enable a marriage to be successful do not develop automatically – preparation for marriage is essential.**
- **Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders certain men are called to serve the people of God as deacons, priests and bishops.**
- **Jesus is the one high priest whose death on the cross was the perfect sacrifice – bishops and priests share in Christ’s priestly work by presiding at the celebration of the Eucharist, the sacrament of Christ’s death and resurrection.**
- **The Sacrament of Holy Orders is performed by a bishop who lays his hands on the head of the one to be ordained while saying a special *karakia* of consecration.**
- **Celibacy is regarded as God’s “gift” to the Church – men who become priests in the Roman Catholic Church must commit themselves to living a celibate lifestyle.**
- **The Catholic Church continues to hold to its long-standing tradition that it has the authority to ordain men only.**
- **Men and women called to be religious sisters, brothers, nuns, monks or priests have a desire to serve God and God’s people by living the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in community as members of a religious order or congregation.**
- **From its origins in the third and fourth centuries, consecrated religious life has continued to adapt to changing circumstances.**
- **Some religious orders and congregations are *contemplative* in their lifestyle and focus, others are *active*.**
- **Today, members of religious congregations in Aotearoa New Zealand are involved in a great range of ministries.**

GLOSSARY OF MĀORI TERMS

This glossary gives explanation of Māori terms which are italicised in the text. The first time a Māori term appears in the text, its English meaning appears in brackets after it.

Pronunciation – correct pronunciation of Māori comes only with practice in listening to and speaking the language. The English phonetic equivalents provided under each Māori word are intended to provide a reasonably accurate guide for students. If in doubt please seek assistance from someone practised in correct pronunciation of Te Reo Māori.

´ indicates stressed syllable

Aroha – úh-raw-huh	In general, means love and/or compassion. Note that the word is used in two senses: 1. a joyful relationship involving the expression of goodwill and the doing of good, empathy. 2. sympathy, compassion towards those who are unhappy or suffering.
Atua – úh-too-uh	The Māori word Atua has been used to describe God in the Christian sense since missionary times. Before the coming of Christianity, Māori used the word atua to describe many kinds of spiritual beings (in the way we now use the word “spirit”) and also unusual events. Only the priestly and aristocratic classes of Māori society (ariki, rangatira and tohunga) had access to knowledge of the Supreme Being, Io, also known as Io-matua, Io-matua-i-te-kore, Io-te-wananga, etc. It seems that many, but not all, tribes had this belief in Io before missionary times. Māori use several words to refer to God in the Christian sense: Te Atua – God, the Supreme Being Ihowa – Jehovah Te Ariki – Lord, more correctly used of Jesus Te Matua – the father (literally, parent) Io – a term used for God in some, but not all Māori circles. (Te Atua is acceptable in all circles).
He Tangata – heh túh-nguh-tuh	Human beings, humankind.
Hehu Karaiti – héh-hoo kuh-rúh-ee-tee	Jesus Christ.
Karakia – kúh-ruh-kee-uh	Prayer, ritual.
Rongopai – ráw-ngaw-puh-ee	Gospel or Good News. Ngā Rongopai (plural). Te Rongopai (singular).
Te Kupu a Te Ariki – teh kóo-poo uh teh úh-ree-kee	The Word of God.
Te Rangatiratanga – teh ruh-nguh-tée-ruh-tuh-nguh	The Kingdom or Reign of God.
Te Wairua Tapu – teh wúh-ee-roo-uh túh-poo	The Holy Spirit.
Tika – tée-kuh	Justice.
Tūmanako – tóo-muh-nuh-kaw	Hope.
Whakapono – fúh-kuh-paw-naw	Faith.
Whānau – fáh-nuh-oo	Extended Family.

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LOGO: Annette Hanrahan RSCJ

FIRST EDITION (1991)

This booklet was part of a series prepared by the members of a Writing Party:

Anna Heffernan (Auckland)
Lorraine Campbell SM (Auckland)
Steve Jorgensen (Hamilton)
Mary Lynch (Palmerston North)
Gary Finlay (Wellington)
Mervyn Duffy SM (Wellington)
Sharon Alexander (Wellington)
Karaitiana Kingi SM (Christchurch)
Richard Walsh CFC (Dunedin)

SYLLABUS CO-ORDINATOR: Gary Finlay (NCRS, Wellington)
EDITORS: Gary Finlay (NCRS, Wellington)
Elizabeth M Russell SJC (NCRS, Auckland)
THEOLOGICAL CONSULTORS: + John Mackey DD
Paul Williamson SM
ARTWORK: Maria Josef Park RNDM

SECOND EDITION (2008)

CO-ORDINATOR/EDITOR: Charles Shaw
THEOLOGICAL CONSULTOR: Mons. Vincent Hunt
LITURGICAL CONSULTOR: Rev. Anthony Harrison
CONTACT FOR
MĀORI CONSULTATION: Rev. Bernard Dennehy
NCRS: Kevin Wanden FMS, Director
Joan Parker RNDM, Editing
Nuala Dunne, Secretary
ARTWORK: Hayley Roker, Carol Devine

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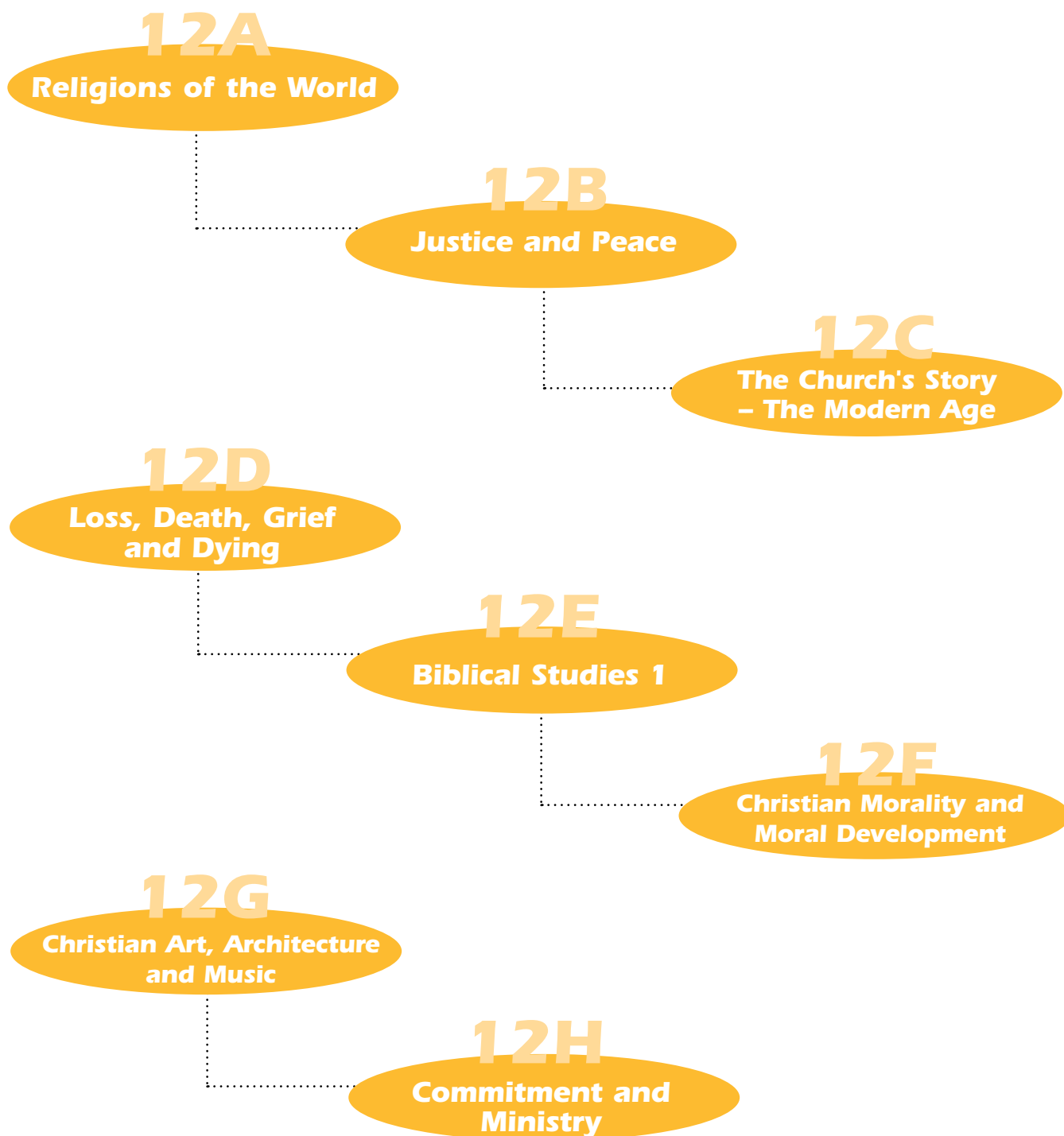
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