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# CALLED TO COMMUNITY

## CHAPTER GOALS

### In this chapter you will:

- ★ consider what faith is, how it impacts the way you live out your baptismal call as a member of the Body of Christ, and how it influences your vocation awareness.
- ★ learn how the Church's moral teachings are a clear guide for Catholics in all walks of life, how these teachings can help you live out the common call to holiness now, and discern your future vocation.
- ★ discover how the sacramental life of the Church is an essential part of responding to God's call to know, love, and serve him.
- ★ see the importance of family and a Catholic home environment in introducing us to the faith and encouraging our vocations.
- ★ meet a permanent deacon who serves a parish community.

# Who Are You?

Take a few minutes to fill out the boxes below.

**Have you ever wondered what being a Catholic has to do with who you are as a person, what life choices you will make, what career or occupation you will have? Would you be surprised to find out that many mature Catholic adults include their Catholicism as a deciding factor in how they live their lives? Consider these examples:**

- a Catholic store owner who sets her and all her workers' hours so that everyone can get to Mass or to their own church service each weekend
- Catholic parents who choose to sacrifice some material needs so they have enough money to pay for Catholic educations for their children
- Catholic travelers who search for a Catholic Mass to attend on Sunday no matter where they are traveling
- a Catholic banker who spends one night a week helping at a homeless shelter
- a Catholic mother of four young children who drives an elderly neighbor to kidney dialysis twice a week
- Catholics who make decisions about how they spend their money, use their time, speak to others, or vote based on their faith

Now spend some time thinking about these questions.

1. Can you think of any other examples of faithful Catholic living you have observed in your family, friends, or other people you know?
2. Do you think being a Catholic has influenced who you are? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. Do you know any other examples of Catholic adults who live their faith in their everyday activities—home, work, school, and so on?
4. How do you live your Catholic faith as a high school student today?

You'll revisit these at the conclusion of this chapter to see how God might be acting in this area of your life.

# The Path to Vocation Awareness: Living a Faithful Life

**H**ow can you come to know what God is calling you to do with your life? What can you do to become aware of your vocation? You won't find quick answers and you probably won't reach out and grab the first idea that comes along. Every state of life—dedicated lay single, married, consecrated religious, ordained minister—is a calling, an invitation from God that asks for a response.

“The Christian, whether laborer or judge, doctor or farmer, business person or professor, is recognized by the way he or she practices the commandment of love for God and neighbor....Whatever place you take in society, whatever profession you carry out, you are called to do as a service.”

—Papal Message to College Students at Villa Nazareth in Rome June 8, 1996  
*Sons and Daughters of the Light*, p.12

But how do you recognize what you're being called to do with your life? You can look at your abilities, skills, activities, and relationships. It is there that God motivates us and calls us. Self-discovery is a life-long process, and a very important part of the discernment process. You have to know yourself to know how God is calling you to know, love, and serve him.

## Know Yourself Well Enough to Make a Life Choice

Recognize your abilities, what you can give.

Understand your needs.

Know what makes you happy.

Know how you best relate to others.

Don't overlook the importance and role of your family, neighborhood, and parish and school community.

Since God is calling you right here where you are, one important aspect of discerning your vocation is to live each day faithfully. One key to this is realizing how important you are to those around you, and how necessary it is to take part in the community and to use your gifts and talents for the benefit of the Body of Christ near and far.

So, notice who is around you. How do they love you, and how do you love them? What do they need that you could give them? What do you need that they can give to you? Where do you fit? What do you do well? What do the people around you—your community—need you to do? How might that translate into the future?

“But,” you might argue, “how is that being a disciple? Doesn’t everybody have to live like that? It isn’t only Church people who have to get along with others!” While that is true, it is also true that faith-filled people are called to add a faith dimension to everything they do.

#### GROUP TALK

- 1 What do you think is most difficult about figuring out your vocation in life? How often do you pray for guidance?
- 2 What do you need to know and want to learn about yourself before deciding permanently on a way of life?
- 3 When do you usually seek someone else’s guidance or advice? How have close friends and family members been helpful or unhelpful when you seek advice?

## Faith: a Divine Gift and a Human Response

**Faith** might be a word you haven’t thought a lot about. You’ve been raised in a particular community of faith and you might just take your own faith for granted. That’s true for many young people. You, or people you know, might struggle with questions and ideas about the faith of their families and communities and wonder if they actually have that faith or any faith at all.

Faith begins with God, not with us. It is a supernatural gift freely given by God that requires our cooperation. And we are free to respond, and when we do, that faith is a real, concrete human act. In an act of faith we hold firm to God, who has made himself known to us. When we profess faith, we accept the entire truth of what our triune God has revealed. Our most important profession of faith is in the Blessed Trinity: the three Persons in one God: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to believe, stirring our hearts, heads, and souls to turn to God, helping us see things as he intends.

It is up to each individual person to decide what to do about this offered gift and this action of the Holy Spirit. In fact, his grace connects to the deepest desires of human freedom, calling us to accept and cooperate with his grace, which can lead us to the perfect use of our freedom. We each have

an **intellect** with which we consciously come to know about ourselves, the world, and God. We each have a free will with which we make decisions and choose how we will behave. These two gifts of intellect and **free will** set us apart and give us a special dignity among God's creatures. Our choice of faith is part of what makes us members of the People of God, the Church. Baptism is also necessary for entering God's people, to which all are called. God never works with us outside of our human nature.

So, faith next requires something from us—the act of believing. Here's how the *Catechism* expresses this:

Faith is a personal adherence of the whole man to God who reveals himself. It involves an assent of the intellect and will to the self-revelation God has made through his deeds and words.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 176*

Our choice of faith is part of what makes us members of the People of God, the Church. Baptism is also necessary for entering God's people, to which all are called.

Faith-filled Catholics striving to live out their Baptism and the universal call to holiness will look at the everyday occurrences in their lives through eyes of faith—the decisions made, the actions taken on behalf of someone else, the way they respond to their parents and loved ones, the way they accept or critique the values of society, their priorities, the DVDs they watch, the music they listen to, the way they choose to spend their free time, the way they use their gifts and talents, their participation in parish events. Often subconsciously, people of faith are influenced by what they know about God the Father's love and mercy, by Jesus' example of just and true living, and by the Spirit's motivation to act in ways that bring us closer to him, the Son, and the Father.

### GROUP TALK

In small groups, discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think faith has to begin with God's action?
- Would it be faith if a person didn't freely choose it?
- How do intellect and free will give us a special human dignity among God's creatures?





## FAITH ACTIVITY

**The Nicene Creed and You** Refer to page 249 of your text for the Nicene Creed. Carefully read over each belief statement, or doctrine. Honestly evaluate yourself by asking for each doctrine:

- What do I really know about this doctrine of the Catholic faith?
- How have I ever taken any action based on my belief in this doctrine?
- Where or when have I seen or experienced the Catholic Church acting on this belief?
- What parts of these doctrines are easy for me to understand?
- How does this doctrine challenge me to understand and live my faith differently?

**The Faith of the Church, the Body of Christ** What Catholics believe is no secret. We proclaim our faith out loud every Sunday during Mass when we recite the Nicene Creed. Each statement describes something each individual Catholic believes, but it also reflects our shared Catholic faith that is professed by the whole Church as a community of believers.

We do not believe in a vacuum. The Holy Spirit moves us to believe, and a significant way he does so is through the Church. Our faith flows from the faith of the Church, the visible sign of God's love and salvation.

- The faith of the Church, of all those who have come before us and articulated what it means to be Catholic, is the faith we share and grow in.
- The faith of the all those who make up the Body of Christ, the Church, encourages us so that our faith grows and develops.
- The faith as revealed and passed down from the Apostles through the teachings of their successors, the popes and bishops, forms our own faith.
- The faith of the Church provides for our belief, holding us up and supporting us as we try to understand and accept all that God has made known to us.
- The faith of the Church gives substance to what we believe and teaches us in our faith.

We cannot separate our own belief from the Church's belief, for we are part of the Church, the Body of Christ. In Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians we read:

*"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. . . . Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."*



1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27

Another term used to speak of the Church as the Body of Christ is **Mystical Body** of Christ. This metaphor indicates the intimate connection of Jesus and his disciples. He is the head; the faithful are his body. The Church cannot be separated from Christ; our life comes from him, and we live for him and his message of hope. And, Christ is with his Church always, making it possible for us to continue his mission and to use our diverse abilities and interests to show others what it means to believe in the Good News. In this way the Church is visible and spiritual, human and divine, an earthly, institution, and the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit who is the soul of this Body. The Holy Spirit gives Christ's Body—the Church—her life and her gifts. Because of the Holy Spirit, we are united as one Body while still being a diverse gathering of people from all times in history and all places in the world.

**Living as Christ's Body Day to Day** We return to the theme of everyday living. Here you will get glimpses into what God is calling you to do. As you live a faithful life within the Church, you are encouraged to become more involved as a member of your parish community. Often, other members will invite you and recognize gifts in you that the community needs. You may notice people serving in ways you'd like to serve, too. You may notice people in need, and you may want to help them.

Active Catholics participate in their parishes. As an active Catholic you will participate in Mass each Sunday or Saturday evening. As you do that, you may be called to engage in a particular ministry, depending on your time, gifts, and abilities. You may have already been asked to serve in a particular ministry (such as server, lector, or volunteer at a soup kitchen) at your parish, or you may be as people get to know you. Just as Paul described the many gifts he saw in the Church of his time, we see them now. You may be called to help teach young children, perhaps; or to be part of the music ministry, or a lector, or part of a group who reaches out to those in need. There are many ways to "try out" aspects of your future vocation as you live the life of an active Catholic.

## FAITH ACTIVITY

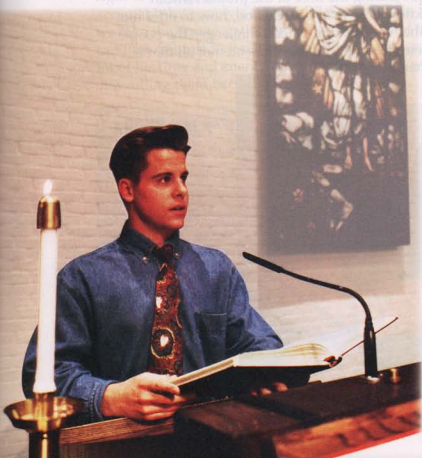
### What Is the Body of Christ?

Look up Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 12, where Paul discusses the Body of Christ. Then look up his Letter to the Ephesians, 4:1-16. How do his words speak to you about your place in the Body of Christ? Work alone or with one or two others to create a visual expression—a poster, painting, collage, or any other form of art—of some aspect of these passages.



## Quick Check

1. What is faith?
2. How is faith unique to humans?
3. What is the Church's role in our faith?
4. How are we the Body of Christ?



# The Moral Life and Following God's Call

**L**ife can get complicated with so many things to do, people to see, and places to go. Trying to sort out all of the things we need to do and want to do can cause a lot of stress.

The pressures of school, family, friends, and jobs may be compounded by the big questions that face people your age: What am I doing after I graduate? What do I plan to do with my life? What are my goals? What is going to make me happy? How does being Catholic make a difference when I'm thinking about all of these things?

All of these issues are real, and they can occupy so much of our time that we start to lose perspective. We can get so wrapped up in the changes and tensions between the present and the future that we overlook what has the most meaning for us today. No matter where we end up, no matter how God calls us to live, we all share that basic call to know, love, and serve God. We can do just that now, however uncertain or clear our future may be; we can do that as we journey through jobs, college, relationships, and self-discovery; we can do that as we discern how we will respond to God's call and what vocation we will live. In many ways, knowing, loving, and serving God can be considered the foundation of simply living life faithfully, day by day.

God's people during the time of the prophet Micah struggled to know how to approach God, how to offer him the worship that was his due. Micah challenges the people to see that their offerings and sacrifices are not all that is required of them.



*With what shall I come before the LORD,  
and bow myself before God on high?*

*Shall I come before him with  
burnt offerings,*

*with calves a year old?*

*Will the LORD be pleased with thousands  
of rams,*

*with ten thousands of rivers of oil?*

*Shall I give my firstborn for my  
transgression,*

*the fruit of my body for the sin of  
my soul?"*

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good;  
and what does the LORD require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?*



**Micah 6:6-8**

Micah tells his listeners to “walk humbly with your God.” This is sage advice to us today. It reminds us that our lives are a journey to and with God. The attitude we bring to that journey makes a big difference for the paths we take. Do we take the paths that are good, that lead to love, justice, and the example of Jesus? Or do we take the paths that lead us away from the goodness in ourselves, and in others, and ultimately the happiness that God wants us to find in him? Are we led by our conscience, the voice inside of us telling us what is right or wrong, or are we swayed by what is popular and acceptable by society’s standards? And what do we do when we take the wrong path, but realize it and want to change? We can find comfort in Jesus’ words and actions, for he spent a lot of his time and energy accepting people for who they were and calling them back to the path to the Father.

### **GROUP TALK**

Look again at the threefold advice of Micah. How does this advice relate to our common vocation to know, love, and serve God? How do Micah’s words speak to people in the twenty-first century? Think of some ways you could share the wisdom of this passage with other people—in art, music, drama, dance, or writing.

## FAITH ACTIVITY

### The Way to the Father Read

Chapters 14 and 15 in the Gospel according to John. Then discuss the following: How does Jesus lay out the path in these chapters? What is the first requirement for the newness of life and the hope for living forever with God? What is the Church's role in helping us reach the Father?

## The Path to Take

How do we know the right path? Even the Apostles asked Jesus that question. In the Gospel according to John we read that, at the Last Supper, Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (*John 14:5-6*).

**Guides on the Path** Explorers in uncharted territories can tell you: It takes a lot of extra energy to go first. The first explorers of an area often have to draw their own maps, or make major corrections on the ones they were given. They often make their way slowly because they have to open a path first by cutting away underbrush, moving huge obstacles, and finding detours around hazards. Anyone coming that way later will reap the benefits of the first explorations by following well-drawn maps, walking well-cleared paths, and meeting few, if any, hazards.

If you want to know how to follow Jesus and how to live a good life, you don't have to go into uncharted territory and figure everything out for yourself. Wise guides have come before you, leaving clear directions, cleared paths, and careful warnings about possible hazards. Among these wise guides are the Apostles, the evangelists who wrote the four Gospels, Paul who wrote many of the New Testament letters, early Church fathers, and men and women saints who recorded their journeys and left advice and direction from their own experiences. Following these guides, we have a focus and a path for our own journeys. We learn from the ways they discerned God's call in their lives, and we gain insight into how we can interpret God's action in our own lives. We have a clearer sense of what it means to be a disciple.

We get specific guidance from the ways our popes and bishops have interpreted, applied, and presented the moral teachings of the Church. Through the Tradition of the Church, we gain a sense of how God calls us to live based on the Ten Commandments given to Moses and on the Beatitudes taught by Jesus. From all this Catholics have a body of moral teachings to guide us to live faithful lives and respond to God's desire for us to know the freedom and true happiness that only comes from being in relationship with him.

But some people might object, "Those are all lists of rules! They don't give us freedom; they just tell us what we can't do!" The gift of these rules and moral laws is that, in some ways, they work like guidebooks for a traveler. Far from tying you down, they direct you in how to live out your relationship with God, those you love, and even those you may not know. These moral teachings protect you and free you by directing you to put trust in God, to look for the things in life that will give you real happiness. In this way,

▼ The Four Apostles by Albrecht Durer



you can handle the problems, distractions, and obstacles that might arise on your journey of faith. Most importantly, these moral teachings are intended to help you avoid sin, which is completely contrary to true freedom. Sin in many ways enslaves people, creating a cycle of actions that lead them away from God and true freedom. They then find that they actually have very little choice about how they live their lives.

### GROUP TALK

Choose one activity you engage in—driving, dating, or getting a job, for example. Work with one or two other people to discuss the following.

- 1 List all the rules you can think of that apply to this activity—Church teaching, civil laws, family rules, etc.
- 2 How do these rules restrict your freedom to engage in this activity?
- 3 How do these rules give you freedom as you engage in this activity?
- 4 Where do these rules come from?

**The Precepts of the Church** It is in and through the liturgy that we express and celebrate our moral living and we get the spiritual nourishment we need. The *Catechism* indicates five precepts that the Church has given us that concern the connection of our moral life and our liturgical life.

The Precepts of the Church	
1. You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and abstain from servile labor.	We are required to participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy on all Sundays and holy days of obligation.
2. You shall confess your sins at least once a year.	This is the minimum required of a Catholic. It is only required of a Catholic if one has committed an unconfessed mortal sin since one's last worthy confession. The reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation continues the Holy Spirit's work of conversion and forgiveness and ensures that we are prepared to receive the Eucharist.
3. You shall receive Holy Communion at least once during the Easter season.	This, too, is a minimum requirement. It is hoped that most Catholics receive both Reconciliation and the Eucharist more than once a year. This precept, however, highlights the importance of the Easter season, for the feasts of Holy Week and Easter are the origin and center of the Catholic liturgy.
4. You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.	The Church prescribes certain days when we are to fast (eat only one full meal) or to abstain from eating meat. These days prepare us for liturgical feasts and help us practice control of our instincts and appetites.
5. You shall provide for the material needs of the Church according to your abilities.	There could be no liturgical life to support our moral life if there were no church buildings, liturgical vestments and objects, and parish personnel. Each Catholic is expected to contribute to the material needs of the Church as well as the needs of the larger community and the world.

You might wonder what the precepts of the Church have to do with vocation. There are several connections worth considering. First, we all have a responsibility to offer our lives to God.

- We do this by sincerely talking to God, and being open to his Spirit, in personal prayer. We offer our hopes, concerns, joys, and needs as we participate in the Church's liturgy, most particularly the Eucharist.
- We are called to look at our personal challenges and struggles as a way to connect to Jesus' suffering and his ultimate offering and sacrifice on the cross as the one, true priest.
- Our participation in the Eucharist commits us to those who are poor and in need, and to offering our time, talent, and treasure for their benefit and the benefit of the whole Church.

The precepts guide us by emphasizing our obligation to participate in the Mass and to work on behalf of those in need. We are strengthened by the grace of the Eucharist, united more closely to Christ and with his Body. The Church does not want us to deprive ourselves of this amazing share in divine life. This grace makes it possible for us to have faith, and to respond in faith in our daily lives.

Second, an important part of discerning our vocation and responding to God's call is assessing our current lives and praying for guidance. The Church teaches us to pray always, for no matter what is happening, we can pray. In fact, to live the Christian life one must pray. You cannot separate prayer from living as members of the Church.

If we are honest with ourselves, when we evaluate who and what are important in our lives, how we communicate, the values we honor, and what talents and abilities we have to offer God and the world, we might see the need for change in some areas of our lives. Taking a serious look at our lives opens us to conversion and the Holy Spirit's transforming power. If we are open to that conversion, we will be led to the grace of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. We need that grace if we have committed such a grievous sin that our relationship with God is broken; we need his healing and forgiveness in order to be able to hear and respond to his will for our lives. We also benefit from the regular celebration of the sacrament as a way to strengthen our will to make the right choices in our lives.



## Quick Check

1. What does the prophet Micah teach us about what is "good" and how does this relate to our moral life?
2. Who and what are the guides we have on our path to the Father through the Son?
3. What are the precepts of the Church?
4. What is the common priesthood of the faithful and how do the precepts connect to it?

## The Little Sisters of the Poor of the Poor

In an ideal world, every person would live within a family until death. Every elderly person would be cherished and cared for by family members. In our real world, sadly, that is not always the case. Some elderly people outlive their other family members, some are neglected by family members, and others have families who cannot properly care for the elderly or sick.

Among the many agencies, for-profit businesses, and charities that offer assistance to the elderly, there is one group that offers hospitality and different levels of care for elderly people who are poor. The group is called the Little Sisters of the Poor, and they were founded by Blessed Jeanne Jugan. Jeanne knew God desired her to give her life in his service, but at first she wasn't sure how this was to be accomplished. In 1839, she found an elderly, blind, destitute woman who had been abandoned by her family. Jeanne carried the woman home and put the woman in her own bed. Before long two other young women joined Jeanne and together they helped give other elderly people who were poor a home.

From those humble beginnings, the Little Sisters of the Poor has become an international order of religious sisters with homes for elderly people who are poor in thirty-two countries on five continents. When Jeanne began her ministry, she and her companions went out to work or to ask for alms each day to get the money and food needed to provide for their residents. To this day, the Little Sisters of the Poor still operates this way—since the Social Security or pensions their residents receive in no way cover the cost of their care, they rely on gifts of charity for which they beg or which they receive from admiring benefactors.

The headquarters—or Motherhouse—of the Little Sisters is in France, and each sister, no matter where she is from, spends at least a year in training there. While the Little Sisters want their elderly residents to call their houses “home,” the sisters themselves vow to go to any house in any country where they are needed. They give up their homes in their native lands and cities in order to provide homes for these elderly guests. Each house is called a “Little Family,” and everyone in that family calls the Sister Superior, “Mother.”

Because the Little Sisters of the Poor do not run schools or orphanages, some thought that they might not attract new members and would not be able to survive. But from the time of their founding until today, women have learned of the mission of the Little Sisters of the Poor and of the gifts of their foundress, and have come in great numbers to care for elderly poor people who have been abandoned or need their assistance.



▼ Little Sisters of the Poor working with the elderly

### FAITH ACTIVITY

**Caring for the Elderly** Visit a house of the Little Sisters of the Poor or go to an assisted living facility near you. Consider volunteering to visit there on a regular basis. Talk to two or three of the residents about their memories of family life when they were young. Notice how the home you are visiting tries to make the guests feel at home and part of a family. How well do they succeed in doing this? How could you help?



You can find a link to their Web site at [www.harcourtreligion.com](http://www.harcourtreligion.com). Check it to see if there is a house of the Little Sisters of the Poor near you. If there is, pay them a visit. You'll find a joyful welcome there.



## CHAPTER WRAP UP

Here I Am Lord:

A Conversation with . . .

# a Permanent Deacon and His Wife

**Meet Ed and Theresa Morrison.** Ed is a permanent deacon; Theresa is his wife of thirty-five years. They are the parents of three grown children and have six grandchildren. Ed was ordained a permanent deacon in 1999 and was assigned to a large suburban parish. At that time he was still working as a college professor, teaching history. When he retired from teaching in 2003, he was able to give more time to his ministry at the parish.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have you always felt an inclination to give of yourself to others?

**ED:** Yes. I knew I that I wanted to have a wife and children, but I also felt called to serve the Church. Meeting Theresa was the best thing that ever happened to me, and we've had a happy marriage. We both are devout Catholics and raised our two daughters and our son in the Catholic faith.

**I:** When did you first know you were called to be a permanent deacon?

**E:** Back in my youth there was no such thing as a permanent deacon. After Vatican Council II, that began to change. The Church has always had deacons, but in modern times before the Council, there were no permanent deacons. At first I just thought it was interesting that this form of ordained ministry was being reestablished. I didn't think about becoming a deacon myself until a few years later.

**TERESA:** We both got the idea one night—at dinner with a priest-friend of ours. He was asking us about our life in the parish and noticing how active we both were.

**E:** Right! He asked me if I'd ever thought of becoming a permanent deacon, and as soon as he asked the question, I knew he'd hit on something that I ought to pay attention to.

**I:** Theresa seems to have played a big part in the decision.

**E:** She did! And that was very important. Married men cannot be ordained deacons unless their wives are part of the discernment and the training. I've known men who were unable to continue their training because

their wives did not support their ordination for some reason. Theresa has always been real supportive of me, though.

**T:** (laughs) And I like it that he won't be able to get married again, if I die before he does.

**I:** Is that true?

**E:** Yes, those of us who are married may not remarry if we are widowed.

**I:** What do you do in your parish as a deacon?

**E:** In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that the Apostles decided they needed deacons to help with the distribution of food. (See *Acts 6:1-6*.) So, our first mandate is to be of service to the parish in any way the pastor needs. Besides my liturgical ministry, at my parish I'm in charge of the social outreach ministries. I organize people to assist the poor, to visit the elderly, and to do anything like that. There are two permanent deacons at the parish, so we each have some outreach responsibilities. We are also given certain roles in the liturgy. An important part of our work is assisting at Mass. We each have a turn to preach the homily at a Sunday Mass once a month. We also take turns celebrating infant Baptisms after Mass one Sunday a month. I've officiated at a few weddings and the pastor almost always has me run the wedding rehearsals. I also lead wake services for the dead and Communion services when no priest is available to say Mass.

**I:** I would think that ordination as a deacon has had a big effect on your spiritual life.

**E:** It has. Like those in the consecrated life and other devout Catholics, we deacons pray the Liturgy of the Hours every day. I spend time praying before the Blessed Sacrament, and I celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation twice a month. I also do spiritual reading and have a spiritual director. One of my prayers every day is a prayer of thanks that God has called me to be both a married man and a deacon. I take both sacraments very seriously and know that I'm in a unique group of men who are privileged to have received both these sacraments.

# who will you become?

Spend some time thinking about these questions.

**Think about how you live your Catholic faith today. Now look ten years into the future.**

**How do you see yourself?**

**What tasks are you doing for, with, or in the Church?**

**What tasks are you doing for or with other people in need?**

**How do you envision these tasks and/or activities impacting your daily life? Are the tasks and/or activities themselves your daily life?**

**What one or two traits of your Catholic faith and identity would you want the people around you to see in you?**

**If your faith today could be a little bit stronger, what can you do to improve it so that ten years from now you'll be living more faithfully?**

**At the present time, which state of life do you feel inclined to pursue? The lay person (married or dedicated lay single), ordained, or consecrated life? Why are you so inclined?**

**At the present time, what career or profession do you feel inclined to pursue? Why are you so inclined?**

# Prayer



**Leader:** Let us unite ourselves with the Holy Trinity as we pray the Sign of the Cross, the Sign of our Faith.

**All:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Leader:** The prayer of Saint Richard is a treasure of the Church which gives us words to express our simplest needs from God. Let us pray it together:

**All:** O most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother,  
May I know Thee more clearly,  
Love Thee more dearly,  
Follow Thee more nearly,  
Day by day.

**Reader 1:** Read Micah 6:6–8.

**All:** O most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother,  
May I know Thee more clearly,  
Love Thee more dearly,  
Follow Thee more nearly,  
Day by day.

**Reader 2:** Guide us today, Lord. Show us the way we should follow as we deal with school, friends, family, and job. Guide our steps, guide our words, and guide the decisions we make.

**All:** O most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother,  
May I know Thee more clearly,  
Love Thee more dearly,  
Follow Thee more nearly,  
Day by day.

**Reader 3:** Guide us into the future, Lord. Show us how you want us to use our talents. Send your Spirit to guide our decisions about relationships, careers, and vocations. Help us to stay connected to you as we grow older and become more independent of our childhood homes and families.

**All:** O most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother,  
May I know Thee more clearly,  
Love Thee more dearly,  
Follow Thee more nearly,  
Day by day.

**Leader:** Let us pause to pray our personal prayers in silence.

(After a minute of silence continue.)

We unite all our prayers in the one prayer that Jesus taught us to pray:

**All:** Our Father, who art in heaven. . . . Amen.

# Study Guide

## ► Check Understanding

1. Identify the different aspects of faith.
2. Explain what makes faith a unique human response to God.
3. Detail how individual faith flows from the faith of the Church.
4. Describe the images of Body of Christ and Mystical Body.
5. Expand upon how the prophet Micah's message related to our moral life.
6. Identify some of the guides on the path of discipleship, and identify their role.
7. Name the five precepts of the Church and tell what their purpose is.
8. Summarize how the precepts help us to live out the common priesthood of the faithful.
9. Give an explanation of the sacraments and what they mean for us as we live out our vocations.
10. Tell how the Eucharist helps a Catholic live faithfully.
11. Express in your own words the purpose of the liturgical year and its place in our journey of faith.
12. Explain the significance of the Sanctoral Cycle for our worship and for response to God's call in our own lives.
13. Describe the role of parents and adult family members in their children's sacramental life.
14. Identify the effects of the Sacrament of Baptism and why it is so important.
15. List the effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
16. Explain why parents are called the first teachers of their children.

## ► Apply and Develop

17. Support with examples how having faith and being a member of the Body of Christ makes a difference in the daily lives of faith-filled Catholics. How can faith and membership in the Church make a difference as you discern your vocation?
18. Conclude from the chapter content how the Church's moral teachings guide us on our path and lead to freedom and happiness. Consider what specific guidance people your age would benefit from.
19. Compare and contrast the expression and role of private prayer and public prayer (liturgy) in our spiritual lives. Consider the implications of the liturgy as the spiritual work of the community on your participation in the Sunday Mass.
20. Compose a poem, prayer, or illustration that depicts the difference a Catholic family and home can make in discerning and living out one's vocation.

## ► Key Words

See pages noted for contextual explanations of these important faith terms.

cantor (p. 57)

celebrant (p. 57)

communion of saints (p. 56)

deacon (p. 57)

domestic Church (p. 61)

faith (p. 42)

free will (p. 43)

intellect (p. 42)

lector (p. 57)

Liturgy of Hours (p. 52)

Mystical Body of Christ (p. 44)

Paschal Mystery (p. 55)

precepts of the Church (p. 49)

sacraments (p. 52)

sacristan (p. 57)

Sanctoral Cycle (p. 56)