



National Office  
for Vocation

*Helping people hear God's call*

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# National Vocations Framework

## 2020 – 2023

### The 'CALL' comes first

*God, who calls us before we are formed in our mother's womb,<sup>1</sup>  
chooses us<sup>2</sup> and sends us  
so that we in turn might make disciples of all nations.<sup>3</sup>*

The importance of vocation is often underestimated in our society today, especially in our culture of self-determination and choice. For a Christian, however, God initiates the relationship. Before anything else, the invitation of God to be in relationship with him takes first place. Then, from that filial relationship in Jesus Christ, we are sent. These are two essential characteristics of who we are.

The work of Vocations promotion builds upon these two characteristics. We help people hear God's Call<sup>4</sup> and from there, help them discern where that Call is sending them. We are called as disciples of Jesus Son of God, and moved by the Holy Spirit, to be husbands, wives, parents, friends, ordained ministers and consecrated brothers and sisters. From this foundation, we are sent out to bear fruit.<sup>5</sup>

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1 C.f. Jer  
2 C.f. John  
3 C.f. Matthew 28:19  
4 Strapline of NOV Logo 2016-2019  
5 Cf. John 15:16

## Objectives:

1. *To help people discover their vocational identity*
2. *To support the Catholic Church in England & Wales nurture a Culture of Vocation*

## 1 To help people discover their vocational identity

Following the synod on Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment, Pope Francis urged the vocations offices of Europe to remember three things: Holiness, Communion and Vocation.<sup>6</sup>

### Called to Holiness:

We are called to be holy.<sup>7</sup> Holiness is ‘a calling that gives meaning to one’s entire life journey’<sup>8</sup> and prompts us to respond by conforming our lives to that of Jesus, our model and saviour.<sup>9</sup> That is why we are called Christians.<sup>10</sup> It is this meaning of our life that forms the basis of our Christian Identity. We are all called by God to be holy; ‘For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight’.<sup>11</sup>

- *Vocational accompaniment should therefore be founded on a spiritual<sup>12</sup> itinerary aimed at deepening one’s relationship with Christ, sacred scripture, Catholic practices and beliefs.*

### Communion:

God is Trinity, a communion of persons. As we are made in the image of God,<sup>13</sup> we too are made for communion. ‘The life of each is bound up in the life of others,’<sup>14</sup> whether this relationship is through family, love or friendship.<sup>15</sup> We are called to a love modelled on God’s love, which is self-giving and sometimes a sacrifice.<sup>16</sup> This means that any vocation will be a call to be in communion with the Church and with our brothers and sisters.<sup>17</sup>

- *Vocational animation must therefore have a communal dimension. This includes community prayer, friendship and service.*
- *For those discerning ordained ministries, or some form of special consecration in the Church, human<sup>18</sup> and psychological accompaniment should form part of their journey, so that they are best prepared for authentic communion.*

### Vocation / Call:

‘The word “Vocation” is not outmoded.’<sup>19</sup> To help people discover who God has called them to be should be a profoundly liberating experience, ‘but it has to be seen in the context of the entire people of God, our preaching and catechesis, and above all our personal encounters with others, for these are the first step in our proclamation of the Gospel.’<sup>20</sup>

6 Audience with the Participants in the Congress of National Centres for Vocations of the Churches of Europe, 6/6/19

7 C.f. Lev 19:2

8 Audience with the Participants in the Congress of National Centres for Vocations of the Churches of Europe, 6/6/19

9 C.f. Christus Vivit 162

10 C.f. Gal 2:20

11 C.f. Ephesians 1:4

12 C.f. Christus Vivit 159

13 C.f. Gen 1:27

14 C.f. Gen 44:30

15 C.f. Christus Vivit 169

16 C.f. Jn 3:16

17 C.f. Christus Vivit 164

18 C.f. Christus Vivit 161

19 Vocation: Audience with the Participants in the Congress of National Centres for Vocations of the Churches of Europe, 6/6/19

20 Ibid.

It is true that bringing this to light can be an arduous passage,<sup>21</sup> but to follow the example of Jesus our Lord is also the way of the cross. The challenge of vocations promotion today, lies greatly with the plethora of calls for our attention and the draw of our consumeristic culture. It is difficult to hear God's call. In our largely de-Christianised culture, we need to re-learn how to interpret the gentle whisper<sup>22</sup> of God's call in our life.

Vocational accompaniment should be modelled on Jesus' own accompaniment. One example of this is in the Emmaus story.<sup>23</sup> It is only walking with Jesus, and hearing his word, that we can experience the living Christ in our lives and passionately serve him and go out to share with others.

- *Pastoral plans for vocational ministries should therefore be structured on Jesus' model of accompaniment: Encounter – Walking with – Sending*
- *The National Office for Vocation will continue to work on making available signposts and guides, to help people hear and interpret the call of the Lord in their lives.*

## **2 To help the Catholic Church in England & Wales nurture a Culture of Vocation**

### **Discernment**

A person cannot follow God's will for them if they do not know what it is. To be a disciple, a person needs to discern that will. The National Office for Vocation has as its primary task of helping people discover the art of discernment.

- *The National Office for Vocation will therefore support structures and programmes that favour discernment.*

### **Formation**

*The delicate work of formation provided by the Church for all the faithful at different levels and stages of the faith journey is of paramount importance. The National Office for Vocation works with formation teams who are accompanying others and so;*

- *The National Office for Vocation will continue to listen to vocations ministers to understand their needs for support and respond to those needs as best they can by providing resources and training where possible.*
- *The National Office for Vocation will endeavour to keep up to date with current trends in society and the Church in order to guide those ministers who seek advice.*

### **Resources**

Resources for promoting vocational discernment can be important tools for disseminating a common understanding of vocation.

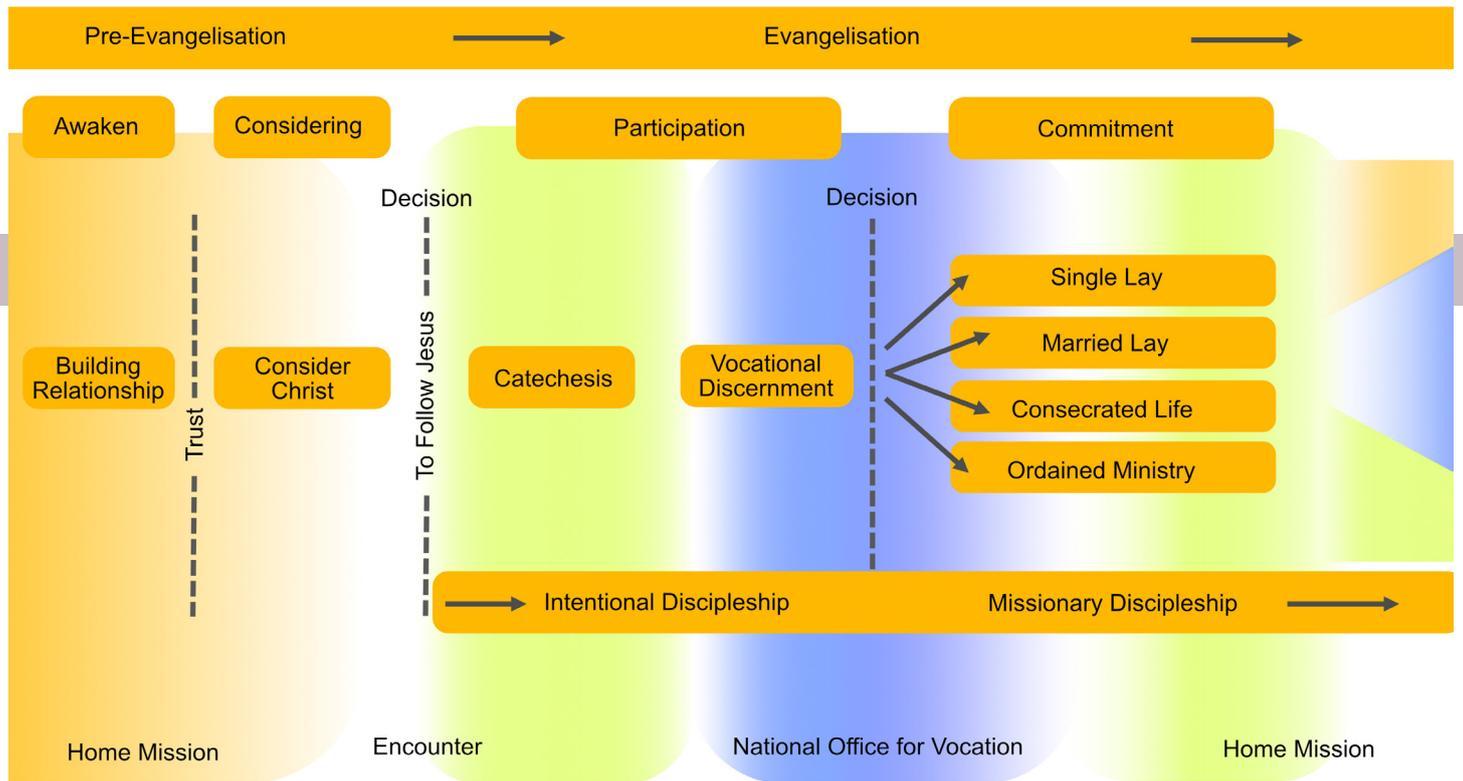
- *The National Office for Vocation will continue to work particularly through websites and social media platforms so that as many people as possible will have easy access to information and support.*
- *The National Office for Vocation will continue to collate statistical information to monitor trends in newly ordained and consecrated religious vocations.*

21 C.f. Lk 22:42-44

22 C.f. 1 Kings 19:12

23 C.f. Lk 24:13-35

# The Department for Evangelisation and Discipleship



## National Office for Vocation

The National Office for Vocation is placed within the Department for Evangelisation and Discipleship. Vocation is an integral part of the faith journey of every individual. In the diagram above, the area coloured blue, indicates where we see our place in that journey.

The work of the National Office for Vocation is to support the movement of the individual from being a passive member of the Church to a member with a particular mission.

