

A THREE-FOLD CONSIDERATION

St. Ignatius himself suggests a means to avoid being deceived by passion or one's own inclinations. It is the following three-fold consideration:

(a) Imagine that a young person in precisely the same position as yourself came to you, to seek your guidance before choosing a particular calling. Having studied the matter, you would certainly say to that person: "Everything is quite clear. Because of such and such reason, you must choose such and such a vocation." This being the case, do the same yourself, as you would advise a stranger to do under similar circumstances. To do otherwise would be unreasonable.

(b) Having decided upon your vocation, ask yourself, "How would I feel about this on my deathbed? Should I be pleased, or should I suffer remorse of conscience?" If I see that the latter would be the case, there is something wrong somewhere. Review your reasons once again.

(c) Finally, picture yourself at your own judgment. Will all the work that you have been doing just now in coming to your decision, show forth as that of a conscientious person? Or, will you realize on the contrary that you have been trying to cheat yourself by marshaling up silly reasons, dictated by human nature and passion? If such should really be the case, start over again, and this time, go about it more earnestly.

FINAL POINTS

Finally, a few important points must be insisted upon. Before starting to write anything, pray earnestly to the Holy Spirit for enlightenment, beg for the grace to know God's will and the strength to do whatever the Almighty desires of you.

Recall Jesus' words: "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" Since you must always keep eternity in mind, ask yourself these two questions:

Where must I go to save it more surely?

Where shall I do better work for the greater honor and glory of God?

Is not this, however, asking a little too much? No. It is only reasonable that you should employ the very best means to save your soul and to assist others to do the same. Ask yourself frankly then, "In which vocation would I most securely work out my salvation?" Will it be in the world as a layperson, as a secular priest, or in the consecrated life? Go about your work seriously then, in the presence of God. Weigh all your reasons carefully and then decide.

The next thing to do is humbly to submit everything—reasons and conclusions—to your spiritual director, make haste to offer our Lord the choice you have just made, begging Him to receive and confirm it, if it be in conformity with His greater service and glory.

If you are really convinced, and feel within yourself while praying, that your offering is pleasing to Almighty God, resolve immediately to remain faithful to it, and to carry out your decision at the earliest possible moment. Embrace this special grace after learning to discern!

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

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This resource was excerpted and adapted from the booklet, *Choosing Your Career* by Rev. J.I. D'Orsonnens, S.J. It was originally published by The Paulist Press (1951).



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HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE CALLED?

Do you recognize any of these characteristics in yourself?

- Your relationship with God gives you strength and direction.
- You love your Catholic Faith and are faithful to the Eucharist.
- You enjoy working with people.
- You are often found going out of your way for others in some kind of service.
- You are physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy.
- Other people have suggested to you that you may be called to the priesthood or religious life.



- You don't feel worthy of the call; you are somewhat afraid but at the same time excited about the possibility.
- You are able to diligently apply yourself to your studies or your job at the present time. People can count on you to come through for them.

Discernment takes a lot of introspection and prayer. Even if you never become a priest or religious, often the discernment process helps you to know yourself better. Looking into your heart and asking yourself these questions is a big step toward becoming a better Christian!

- Have I experienced God's love in my life?
- Do I actively practice my Catholic faith and participate in my parish?

- Does the Gospel message excite and challenge me?
- Am I searching for a way to share my gifts with others?
- Do I desire a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ?
- Am I willing to offer my life for the mission of Jesus Christ and his Church?
- Do I like working with people and do I get along with men and women from all walks of life?
- Do I want to make a positive difference in the lives of others?

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR THE PRIESTHOOD?

1. Love Jesus Christ and desire others to love Him.
2. Be a believing, practicing Catholic. Go to Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days.
3. Live a life of virtue and striving against sin.
4. Live and desire a life of service in my Church and community.
5. Live and desire a life of prayer. Attend daily Mass or make visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Frequently make use of the Sacrament of Confession. Read the Bible and take time for personal prayer.
6. Desire to be a priest. Be attracted to the priesthood, even though it involves personal sacrifice.
7. Have one's call validated by other people who suggest that you should consider the priesthood.
8. Live a life of virtue. Know what is right and

Every disciple has a vocation

wrong according to the teaching of Jesus and his Church.

9. Able to accept failure.
10. Be a "people person", i.e., have good social skills and like to be around people.
11. Have a good sense of humor!
12. Have a basic human goodness. Be a relatively generous and unselfish person.
13. Have at least average intelligence to complete eight to ten years of college-level and masters-level coursework in Theology.
14. Be physically, emotionally, and psychologically stable.
15. Have a "priest's heart" full of kindness and compassion for others.
16. Possess self-discipline. Be courteous, punctual, and composed.
17. Display stability in lifestyle, i.e., consistency as a student or employee.
18. Have a healthy psycho-sexual orientation.
19. Be a gentleman, i.e., have good manners, correct grammar in communication, a neat appearance and proper hygiene.
20. Be open to the will of God for his life.

