



An objection could be made that it originates by suggestion from some priest or religious but the mere suggestion of a vocation cannot, of itself, explain the persistence of the thought or inclination. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches "the resolution to enter is always from God, no matter who may have inspired it."

This, then, is what St. Ignatius calls the "second time." Those who experience these signs of the first or second "time" may have what is called a "special vocation." It would seem that Almighty God is so desirous of them in His service, that He pursues them with His grace. He is ever at hand with light and strength, repeating the invitation, "Come follow Me!"

### "THIRD TIME": VOCATION THROUGH REASON

"The third time is an hour when the soul is calm," writes St. Ignatius. "Then, first of all considering why man has been created, which is to praise God our Lord and to save his soul, and moved by the desire of sustaining this end, one chooses as a means thereunto a state or kind of life sanctioned by the Church, in order to do better work in the service of our Lord and for the salvation of one's soul. I call that time an hour of calm when the soul is not under the influence of either good or evil spirits, and makes use of its natural powers freely and quietly."

### A METHOD FOR THE "THIRD TIME"

The "election" or choice, according to the third "time," is made as follows:

1. "I must first of all," continues St. Ignatius, "place before my eyes the end for which I have been created, which is to praise God our Lord and to save my soul. I must, moreover, be in a state of perfect indifference, and be without any unreasonable desires, so that I am neither inclined toward, nor desirous of choosing one state of life more than another, keeping a perfect balance and ever ready to choose that state which will

seem most proper to procure the glory of God and the salvation of my soul."

2. Then, St. Ignatius suggests: "I shall ask of God our Lord to deign to move my will, and to Himself suggest to my soul whatever I should do in regard to the choice which I am engaged in making, for His greater praise and glory."

3. Next, ask with all sincerity to know what state of life you should embrace, with the view of more surely attaining the end for which you have been created-the glory of God and the salvation of your soul.

4. To do this in a really practical manner, take a sheet of paper and write the heading, "Life in the World." Then divide the page in two columns and write down on one side the advantages to be gained by living in this state; on the other, all the disadvantages, which may come to mind.

Do the same in regards to the priesthood and/or consecrated life. Jot down all your reasons-spiritual and temporal-and anything else there may be worth noting, always keeping the same end in view-your eternal salvation and the glory that you must procure for the Divine Master.

5. When this is done, draw the conclusion. Weigh each side with its reasons very attentively, considering and comparing each vocation accordingly. Once you have done this, you will be able to see just which one is best for you. Before coming to a final decision, be careful not to be led away by natural inclinations or by passion; let cold reason be your sole guide.



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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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DO YOU KNOW WHAT  
YOU WANT TO BE?



HAVE YOU ASKED ME?  
ASK ME - GOD

LEARN TO

DISCERN

II

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME

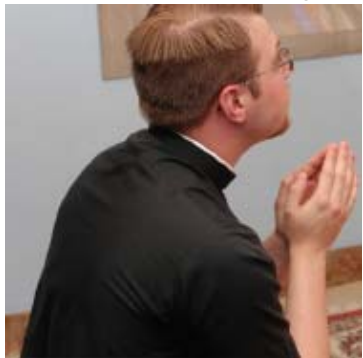
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# DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME

## GOD IS CALLING

The quest for discovering God's call for your life should be paramount. Nothing is more important. There can be no doubt that a person's earthly fulfillment and ultimate happiness greatly depend on properly discerning God's will. And His will is what is already the greatest joy of your heart.

Deciding upon one's specific state in life is not the same as merely choosing a career or pick-



ing a profession. While they may be closely connected, discerning your God-given vocation will greatly

influence your response to the Christian call to holiness. God has a plan for you.

## SEEKING DIVINE GUIDANCE

It is important to remember that discovering one's vocation is a supernatural work, and is impossible without the help of Divine grace. This being the case, it is absolutely necessary to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, through the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, and the regular practice of the sacraments, especially Reconciliation, to

enlighten our minds and to touch our souls. We must be careful to fully cooperate with the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

As we look to college and career, some questions we need to ask ourselves are: Is God calling me to be married and raise a family; to be a priest or religious; a missionary or cloistered nun or monk; a hermit or consecrated virgin?

Whatever the call, rest assured that if you are truly open to God's will in your life, the Almighty will manifest His desire in regards to your particular vocation. Either your calling will be made known in some altogether unusual manner, or else with extraordinary clarity as expressed in some ordinary ways of His Providence.

## TO KNOW WITH CERTAINTY

St. Ignatius of Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises originally proposed this simple three-step method. It has been adapted and updated to meet the needs of young people today.

St. Ignatius was given special spiritual gifts to share with others, including the ability to shed light on discerning one's vocation. In his Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius identifies three specific situations, which he calls "times" or circumstances favoring a good choice.

## "FIRST TIME": A MIRACULOUS VOCATION

"The first time," says St. Ignatius, "is when God our Lord so moves and draws the will that without doubting, or even being able to doubt, the pious soul follows that which is shown it."

Almighty God, does at times, speak thus directly to a soul, or else sends an angel or a saint to convey His will in explicit terms. Such was the case of St. Paul when he was struck to the ground on his way to Damascus (cf. Acts 9:1-18).

At other times God's grace is so strong that a man is drawn toward the priesthood or a woman to the consecrated life almost irresistibly. Such cases are rare, and may be classified with miraculous vocations and extraordinary graces.

## "SECOND TIME": VOCATION BY ATTRACTION

"The second time," St. Ignatius says "is when a soul receives much light and knowledge by means of the interior consolation it experiences, as well as through the discernment of spirits."

It is not rare to find a young person who for a long time-months and even years-has felt drawn the priesthood or consecrated life. They have felt a certain inclination or strong urge to give themselves entirely to God. Others, on the contrary, feel a great repugnance at the idea of giving up all things to follow the Divine call that has been ringing in their ears for a long time. Some even



try to ignore any or all thoughts of a priestly or religious vocation as though they were temptations, yet they fail to do so.

How are we to account for this light, inclination, or at-



traction-whatever it may be called-which is almost unnatural, haunting a person for years?

Such movements of the soul cannot be explained in any other way except that they are the attractions of grace. Surely such thoughts, attractions or inclinations do not come:

- From the devil-for devoting oneself to the service of God means working against the rule of Satan;
- Nor from human passions-which are properly integrated for a higher purpose in the priesthood or consecrated life;
- Nor yet from the world-for most people fail to appreciate or understand these sublime vocations.

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