

Vocation

A **vocation**, from the [Latin](#) (verb, *to call*), is a term for an occupation to which a person is specially drawn or for which they are suited, trained or qualified. Though now often used in [secular contexts](#), the meanings of the term originated in [Christianity](#).

Senses

The word "vocation" comes from the Latin *vocare* (*verb to call*);^[1] Its usage before the sixteenth century, referred firstly to the "call" by God to the individual, or [calling of all humankind to salvation](#), particularly in the [Vulgate](#), and more specifically to the "vocation to the [priesthood](#)", which is still the usual sense in Roman Catholicism.^[2] Roman Catholicism also recognizes the single, [married](#), and [religious](#) life as vocations.

Concept

The idea of vocation is central to the Christian belief that God has created each person with gifts and talents oriented toward specific purposes and a way of life. In the broadest sense, as stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "*Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being*" (CCC 2392). More specifically, in the [Orthodox](#) and [Catholic Churches](#), this idea of vocation is especially associated with a divine call to service to the Church and humanity through particular vocational life commitments such as marriage to a particular person, consecration as a religious, ordination to priestly ministry in the Church and even a holy life as a single person. In the broader sense, Christian vocation includes the use of one's gifts in their profession, family life, church and civic commitments for the sake of the greater common good.

Universal call to holiness

Universal Call to Holiness and Apostolate is a teaching of the [Roman Catholic Church](#) that all people are called to be [holy](#). (See [Lumen Gentium](#), Chapter V) ^[1] This Church teaching states that all within the church should live holy lives.

Living a holy life, as defined by the Catholic church, has little to do with perfection (see the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition, Chapter Two.) Rather, it is a lifelong process of seeking God himself, through the person of Jesus Christ.

God's holy people are simply those who love God and live in Him.

The universal call to holiness in the Roman Catholic Church is rooted in [baptism](#), a [sacrament](#) which configures a person to Jesus Christ who is God and man, thus uniting a person with the Second Person of the [Blessed Trinity](#), bringing him in communion with intra-trinitarian life.

[John Paul II](#) states in his apostolic Letter [Novo Millennio Ineunte](#),^[2] his master plan for the new millennium, a "program for all times", that holiness is not only a state but a task, whereby Christians should strive for a full Christian life, imitating Christ, the Son of God, who gave his life for God and for his neighbor. This entails a "training in the art of [prayer](#)". According to the Pope, all pastoral initiatives have to be set in relation to holiness, as this has to be the topmost priority of the Church. The universal call to holiness is explained as more fundamental than the [vocational discernment](#) to particular ways of life such as [priesthood](#), [marriage](#), or [virginity](#).