

3. SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON VOCATION BY F. BRUNO ESPOSITO¹⁵, O.P. (ANNEX WORKING GROUP 1)

Preamble

In any human action, i.e. in any action freely and voluntarily taken by a responsible individual, the goal of the relevant decisions is important and essential. If we had no goal (whether immediate, short-term or ultimate), we would be paralysed and incapable of living the extraordinary gift of our existence.

This common sense principle runs the risk of being forgotten, with the further risk of feeling one's way along, losing orientation and taking the wrong ways that don't allow us to reach our objective or will at least delay our reaching it, which means wasting some of that precious good called time. I think that this is particularly true for the matter I have been asked to introduce during our meeting: vocation.

Before speaking about religious vocation, getting ready to help others or ourselves in discerning our own religious vocation, or remaining faithful after a positive answer, it is important to understand well the meaning of the term 'vocation'.

Vocation, as we will try to comprehend, is first of all an appeal to something (i.e. to a goal) by God. Therefore, speaking about vocation means first of all speaking about God. At first glance, this decision could appear to be out of place and out of context, considering that we are all

¹⁵ These considerations are meant exclusively for the participants in the Seminar; they have no scientific aspiration and are in no way original. They just wish to be a guide, meant above all to support personal reflection, and are based on the following texts: article « Vocazione », in *Dizionario di teologia biblica*, Turin 1982, col. 1399-1402; G. BIFFI, *Il primo comandamento. Riflessioni teologico-pastorali*, Bologna 1997; article « Vocazione », in A. DE PEDRO, *Dizionario di termini religiosi e affini*, Vatican City 2000, p. 564-565; article « Vocazione », in G. RAVASI, *500 curiosità della fede*, Milan 2009, p. 315-316; article « Vocazione », in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, vol. X, Rome 2003, col. 476-533; SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA, *Constitutional Charter and Code* (1997) and *Regulations and Commentary* (2011); FRANCIS, *Enc. Lumen fidei on the faith*, Vatican City 2013.

practising Catholics. Alas, it is not so. Taking something for granted is always dangerous (cf. friendship, marriage)! A call from God is a fascinating issue. Every single day it turns up in my mind like a dilemma: If God exists, it is him (and not me) who decides what is right and what is not.¹⁶

If God exists, my whole being, my existence, and each of my actions find their meaning only and exclusively in Him and for Him. When we are tempted to think or behave as if God didn't exist (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, Nr. 35-36), we have to honestly choose between mystery and the absurd. Now, I cannot but choose mystery, because the absurd is by definition something that cannot exist, while mystery in this case stands for something through which I could not reasonably exist.

It is only in this context of faith that I can pay attention to the call of the One who says: "I am the Lord, your God", the One who has revealed himself as Father and Creator in Christ. Only the experience of God's love in Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Jn 4) is the source of our knowledge of vocation.¹⁷

In today's religious language, the term 'vocation' is used especially to denote an invitation to a certain form of life within the Church, reducing the subject matter of any such invitation to a mere ecclesiastic office or pastoral service. This way of speaking and thinking eventually leads to a serious misconception of one of the essential categories of Christian identity.

In the Holy Scriptures, personal vocation is a part of a larger vocation: before being a call for something, vocation is a call to something; before being a requirement, it is a promise. So there is a connection between the call to life, the call to Christian life and the call to consecrated life, and

¹⁶ «When we buy a Fiat car, we receive an "instruction manual" telling us, among other things, which type of gas we have to use and when to make and oil change. ... This does not mean that Mr. Agnelli restricts our sovereignty as car owners. ... The Decalogue is nothing else than the "instruction manual" that accompanies the Creator's work through His kindness. If we wish to benefit from the human nature conferred on us smoothly and positively, it is advisable that we do what He wants us do to. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the commandments - which are imprinted on the heart of each man and woman in the same way as the instructions for use of a car - are an objective element of the mechanism before being a printed text...» (Biffi, p. 10-11).

¹⁷ Cf. Biffi, p. 7-9 ; *Lumen fidei*, n. 2-3; 28-29.

this connection needs to be clarified right away in order to rightly understand the specific aspect of the vocation to consecrated life.

The Bible tells us that before everything else there is a divine call to existence of all things and of man (cf. Genesis 1:1-2, 4a); thereafter, we find God's calls to a familiar dialogue with our ancestors (cf. Genesis, 2-3), resumed with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-2), Moses (Exodus 3) and then with all the Prophets. This dialogue finds its accomplishment in Christ and its conclusion in the vocation of all those who have lived and are called to the wedding feast of the lamp (Revelation 19:9) in Heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9-10). This is the definitive imprint of the path both of those who respond to the call and of those who do not.

This call (vocation) expresses God's outspoken will to encounter man in order to establish his covenant with him (cf. Genesis 2; 9:8,17; Exodus 19-24; Luke 14;15-24), and this covenant is marital in nature (Hosea 1-3; Matthew 22;1-14). In the Holy Scriptures, various terms are used to describe the action by which God *calls*. The following are most frequently used: call (*kalein*), choose (*eklegomai*), sanctify (*hagiazerein*), love (*agapein*), take (*lambanein*).

Each of the above highlights one aspect of God's action when calling a person, as well as the mission given by God to things (cf. Baruch 3:35) and persons (Cf. Isaiah 48:15) or to the people of the covenant (cf. Isaiah 42:6). While the verbs choose, sanctify, love emphasise God's action reserving a place, a person or a people for himself, the verbs call, take, take by the hand refer especially to that special moment when God calls things, an individual or a people into existence to implement a plan of salvation in them.

The history of salvation - in its preparation (the time of the people of Israel: cf. Acts 13:16-22), its implementation (the time of Christ: cf. Acts 13:23-31), and its actualisation through the ages (the time of the Church: cf. Acts 13:32-43) - is presented to us in the Holy Scriptures as the action of God who wants man to know Him so that man may live in communion (*koinonia*) with the Triune God (cf 1 John 1:1-4).

Thus, at the beginning of Creation we have the 'vocation' of the world and of man (cf. Genesis 1:1-2; 4a); at the beginning of the vocation of the people of Israel we have the calling of Abraham and Moses (cf. Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 3); at the beginning of the vocation of the new People of God, the Church, we have the calling of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Twelve (cf. Luke 1:26-38; Mark 3:13-15), the firstlings of the vocations for the new covenant (cf. John 2:1-11; 19:25-27).

For each kind of vocation, the Bible makes out two stages:

- 1) The plan of God, which is eternity (= election: cf. 1 Tim 1:9b);
- 2) Its actualisation through the ages (= call; 1 Tim 1:9a).

When the called person becomes aware of God's plan, which may happen in the most diverse and unthought-of ways, and embraces it with faith, he implements his vocation (cf. Jeremiah 1:5; Romans 1:1; Ephesians 1:4-10). The essential element of any kind of vocation is the Word of God (cf. Isaiah 55:10-11), which is at once dynamic and dialogical.

It is dynamic to the extent it infallibly implements its declarations (cf. Psalms 33:6; 9); it is dialogical because it is an appeal awaiting a response (cf. Baruch 3:35; Isaiah 48:12-15). It is really through the creative power of the Word of God, who "calls", that the non-existing comes into existence and presents itself before God, from whom it receives everything, like a partner (Me-You) in view of a dialogue and a mission.

Vocation to life

Life is the first and foremost vocation without which no other vocation can occur. For the Holy Scriptures, nothing is left to chance in creation, and nothing is left to 'chaos'. Everything has its existence through the power of God who called things by their names and takes care of every single thing in creation (cf. Genesis 1:3-13; Isaiah 40:26). Therefore, nothing can exist unless God called it into existence, and everything he created is good (cf. Wisdom 1:14; 11, 25; 1 Tim 4:4). The whole creation has its *raison d'être* in God (cf. Colossians 1:17; Wisdom 1:7; 7:27).

Calling things into existence, God gives them a mission to accomplish: praise the glory of God and reveal his existence and his attributes (cf. Psalms 19:2-5; Wisdom 13:1-9; Romans 1:19-20). Life is too precious a gift to be wasted by dedicating oneself to something that has no future.¹⁸

Vocation to the covenant and to Christian life

Created in the likeness and image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26) for immortality (cf. Wisdom 3:6) and incorruptibility (cf. Wisdom 3:6), man is called to fulfil himself at a personal and community level in communion with God (cf. Genesis 2-3).

As a matter of fact, the election of the people of Israel and God's covenant with it (cf. Exodus 19-24) have no end as such, but they are meant to reveal and prepare the election and covenant of God in Christ with the whole of mankind so that every person may experience God's salvation (cf. *Luke* 3:6; *Acts* 28:28).

The Christian vocation differs from that of the people of Israel because of its all-embracing nature: We are all called to participate in the fest of the Kingdom of God (parable of the wedding feast: cf. Matthew 22:1-10; *1 Thessalonians* 2:12). The Bible emphasises the importance of individual vocations that are at the heart of the universal call to unity and to the communion with God. These vocations are not presented as something that adds to other calls. We must bear in mind that - in God's plan - the vocation to life, man's vocation to unity, and the specific vocation to

¹⁸ "15 Then he said to the crowd, 'Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions.' 16 Then he told them a parable. 'There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. 17 He asked himself, 'What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?' 18 And he said, 'This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods 19 and I shall say to myself, "Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!" 20 But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?' 21 Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God.'" (Lk 12).

become a prophet, or an apostle, or a married person (i.e. to exercise a specific ministry in the Church form an indivisible whole with the person that God, in his love, has thought of and shaped this way (cf. *Jeremiah* 1:5; *Isaiah* 49:1; 5; *Galatians* 1:15; *Mark* 10:21).

The realisation of any individual at the level of his life's vocation and his communion with God cannot be separated from the fidelity to his specific vocation. It is important to note that each individual vocation derives from the specific role that each person is called to play at the service of the People of God in view of the construction of His Kingdom and of the Body of Christ, which is the Church thanks to the gift of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 14). The Bible presents individual vocations as the calling of some people showing their willingness to live a very special relation with God. They accept to become his *messengers* with their fellow men, promoters of union for the community and witnesses of God's love before mankind (cf. 1 John 4).

Christian vocation is always and essential a call from God in Christ (cf. *Acts* 2:47; *Romans* 1:6-7). To dig further into the matter, we can meditate on the following main vocations reported in the New Testament: Mary (*Luke* 1:26-38); Joseph (*Matthew* 1:18-25); the Twelve (*Mark* 1:16-20; 3:13-15; 6:7-13 and parallels); Matthias (*Acts* 1:15-26); the young rich man (*Mark* 10:20-21 and parallels); Paul (*Acts* 9; *Galatians* 1:11-19; *Romans* 1:1).

I believe it may be useful to highlight some aspects of the vocation of the young rich man, in particular in his dialogue with Jesus, and of Saint Paul. [In the parable of the rich young man,] Christ wants to help this man to become aware of the plan God has developed for his life. In the Gospel of Mark, this plan is expressed in the words look and love (Mk 10:21); in the writings of Matthew (19:21) we find the following formula: "If you wish to be perfect (*teleios*)..."

Matthew's interpretation emphasises that the Christian vocation is by its very nature a call to holiness to the extent it corresponds to complete obedience to Christ (cf. *1 Peter* 1:12-21; *1 Thessalonians* 4:3; 7). In the dialogue between Jesus and the young man, the phrase is linked to the

conclusion: “Come and follow me”, meaning obedience to Christ in the manner of the Apostles (cf. Mark 3:13-15) and therefore with the personal and theological identity of the rich young man. This goes beyond God’s commandments or a simple evangelic council regarding poverty, and this interpretation finds its confirmation in the fact that the Septuaginta translate *teleios* with two Hebrew terms: *tamim* and *salem* - and both express the concept of entirety.

According to the Old Testament, *tamim* is the one who complies entirely with God’s will. Therefore, *teleios-tamim* is the one who has reached the *telos* (goal, end), i.e. the one who has found self-fulfilment in compliance with God’s plan for him. The vocation of the rich young man remains a point of reference and a paradigm for anyone who feels some sort of unrest going beyond the requirement of any normal human commitment (i.e. vocation of life) or Christian commitment (i.e. vocation to unity), and who feels called by Christ to remain with him (= communion of life) to preach (= participation in Christ’s mission: cf. Mark 3:13-15).

A similar paradigm, albeit of another kind, is the vocation of Saint Paul. The Apostle of Nations himself described it as a revelation (*Galatians* 1 :12; 16), enlightenment (*2 Corinthians* 4 :6), grace (*Galatians* 2:9), and it is the source of his vocation as Apostle of God (cf. *1 Corinthians* 1:1). Paul’s whole life is under the sign of the so-called conversion, which in the end is nothing else but a vocation transforming his existence, makes him a new person and forces him to dedicate his whole life to preaching the Gospel (cf. *1 Corinthians* 4:9).

Examining the use of the terms *klesis* (vocation) and *kletos* (called), we come to the conclusion that the Christian vocation is first of all an invitation to enter in a gift of grace. Christian vocation is God’s invitation to mankind in Christ, so that the men and women answer “Yes” to his plan of salvation and love, to his divine call to embrace salvation in the Kingdom of God (cf. *Ephesians* 1:17-18; 4:1-4; and in particular *Philippians* 3:14: “I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus”).

On account of the above, it is clear from the study of the Word of God that the Christian vocation is mainly a call addressed to everybody (cf. *Matthew* 9:13; *Mark* 2:17; *Luke* 5:32) to enter a special grace, to enter the communion of the glory of God, which is the typical feature of eternal life (cf. *1 Timothy* 6:12; *John* 17:3; *1 Corinthians* 15:25-28; 51-56). In other words: Man can truly be himself only with God, who is not only Creator, Providence or Rewarder, but in fact "God-with-Man" - just as much as the latter's destiny becomes an adventure with God.

The essential aspect of Christian life is not the concept of 'salvation', but that of 'covenant'. God's initial plan was not to save man, but to associate with him: "Man is called first of all to be an 'adorer' rather than the bearer of a mission".¹⁹

The prophets of the Old Covenant and Christ himself strongly reminded that God wants a humanity of justice and peace, in which the poor and the little ones are honoured and respected for the greatness vested in them. We have to tear the roots of misery out of our societies, but without forgetting that the poor possess riches that the others must possess as well. There is a reason why God loves them: In them, he sees the features of mankind as he wishes it to be - open to others, ready to always give thanks to the extent people are aware that everything is a gift. In their sad condition, the poor are bearers of positive values that contribute to the progress of humanity much more than the values rich people can boast of. It is thus clear that the required effort to fertilise the world with the power of the Gospel cannot be restricted to some vague commitment in favour of the poor: it must also translate into the will to completely take over the values expressed by the poor. It's them who free society from its heaviness, from the egoistic and destructive drowsiness in affluence, in the cult of power, in the satisfaction of success.

¹⁹ J.- M.- R. TILLARD, « Vocazione cristiana e vocazione religiosa », in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, vol. X, Rome 2003, col. 491.

In the face of our world's values (such as power, success, money), the Gospel proposes another hierarchy of values placing the love for God and the neighbour in first place (cf. Luke 10:27), and as Christians we are positive that only this kind of life can give our world the humanity that God wishes. For this reason, Christian vocation requires the faithful to work in that direction and that the commitment of the religious be integrated by the service to man.

To the extent it puts the search for God and the familiarity with Him in first place, this evangelical accent placed on love building up humanity is in fact a commitment to conversion. This is the only way of hope for any Christian - a revolutionary way, the only real revolution that the world will ever see, since it doesn't produce casualties but living beings. It's the way of the Beatitudes: a permanent call to forget one's own interests, when they are fostered for egoistic reasons, in view of implementing the Kingdom of God in history, refusing the outlook of mundane joy to embrace that of the Beatitudes.

If we are in the world because we have been 'called' to enter a relation with God, this implies continuous conversion: our existence is beautiful and justified since its very origin, and one cannot do or leave out anything, and this is just the way God wanted it to be.

We do not receive faith as something that's merely useful, but because it enlightens the sense of our existence (meaning the Why and not just the How: v. science), and this opens us to the practice of the Beatitudes. Any form of Christian life, from matrimonial life to religious life, has the task of announcing the sense of humanity's destiny, just like the vocation to a close relationship with the Triune God.

Vocation to consecrated life

The *sequela Christi* [complete obedience to Christ] in consecrated life follows this reasoning. Together with all other forms of Christian life, it is a specific implementation of one's vocation as a call to the covenant and to the

communion with God, but according to a special style that has developed and found different expression through the centuries. The three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience are nothing else but privileged means to implement and give witness on earth to the covenant between God and man, emphasising his ultimate destination and his contemplative dimension.²⁰

I believe it is useful at this point to remind of some characteristics of the term “vocation” and the way it has been used with reference to consecrated life in the Christian tradition.

Generally speaking, during the first centuries of the Church the term was used both to call someone unspecifically to Christian life (baptism) and to call a person specifically to become ordained as a minister of the Church. This type of vocabulary and this conception were applied to the call of any Christian to monastic life by John Cassian (around 430-435) in the Western world. He distinguished three ways of receiving a vocation.

The first consists in a direct call from God, and it is presented by two examples: the first is Abraham; the second is the person who stands at the beginning of monastic life and made it the main aspect of his life: Saint Anthony. Cassian writes about Anthony that he was called in the same way as Abraham and that he understood that God alone was the source of his ‘conversion’. In this framework, he quoted Luke 14:26 (“If any one comes to me without hating his father...”) and Matthew 19:21 (“If you wish to be perfect...”); these two quotations became the reference texts when speaking about religious life.

Cassian wrote in one of his *Conferences*: “And with heartfelt contrition he took this charge (*praeceptum*) of the Lord as if specially aimed at him, and at once gave up everything (*renuntians*) and followed Christi, without any incitement thereto from the advice and teachings of men”.

The second way to receive a vocation is the one aroused by a human intermediary, in the sense that we are inflamed with the desire of salvation, stirred by the example and the teachings of so many saints (cf. Ex 14).

²⁰ Cf. J.- M.- R. TILLARD, *Art. cit.*, col. 492-497.

The third kind of vocation is the one that comes from compulsion, meaning that we are in some way forced to give up the world and search for God, even against our will, under the pressure of circumstances. We find various instances for this compulsory vocation in the Old Testament: Judges 3:15; Psalms 77:34-35; 106:19. According to John Cassian, this third type of vocation is not below the other two, and it can lead to truly laudable fervour of spirit as was the case of Saint Paul. The important thing is to respond to the call with utmost generosity.

According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, any vocation outside of consecrated life becomes effective only with an inner vocation, which consists in the internal inspiration by the Holy Spirit. This inner inclination is undoubtedly the gift of a special grace granted by God, and it's a wholly personal, mysterious and free gift from God to a person in order that such person may have eternal life.

Equally interesting are the conditions/requirements that - according to the Doctor of the Church - one has to bear in mind when entering religious life and for the profession of vows: being able to observe the commandments and having the right intention (cf. *Contra pestiferam doctrinam retrahentium homines a religionis ingressus*, ch. IX).

The Second Vatican Council used the term 'call/vocation' when speaking about the formation of priests, about religious life and about the Church's missionary activity, but also with reference to the universal call to holiness rooted in baptism.

Let us remember at this point what has been stated about religious life. The universal vocation to holiness (to the perfection of charity and to the fullness of Christian life) is given in a concrete manner to each one of us by God according to our specific state and life condition.²¹ These specific

²¹ If we follow the provisions of the current Code of Canon Law (1983), assembling theological and canonical tradition, we have: 1) a double institutional and hierarchical partition between clerics and lay persons based on the sacramental aspect; this is why the Church speaks of two *conditions* (orders), the lay one and the clerical one; 2) a tripartition between and among lay people, clerics and religious based

vocations are the sign and expression of a Christian's essential vocation. Thus, although everybody is called to holiness (cf. *Lumen gentium*, 40), this vocation is expressed "in many ways in individuals, ... in the practice of the counsels, customarily called evangelical" (*Lumen gentium*, 39). "An eminent position among these [counsels] is held by virginity or the celibate state. This is a precious gift of divine grace given by the Father to certain souls, whereby they may devote themselves to God alone the more easily, due to an undivided heart" (*Lumen gentium*, 42). Yet "man must respond to God Who calls, and that in such a way, that without taking counsel with flesh and blood (Gal. 1:16), he devotes himself wholly to the work of the Gospel. This response, however can only be given when the Holy Spirit gives His inspiration and His power" (*Ad gentes*, 24).

It is important to emphasise (and to think about) the specific aspects and the very essence of the call to religious life in the context of Christian vocation. Paul VI. Wrote on this subject: "We have to take care not to dim the true and authentic concept of religious life, and we must ensure that young people, when they are about to choose a state of life, are not hindered in some way just because they do not clearly understand the specific function and the permanent value of the religious state in the Church anymore"²².

Corollary: on the attraction to religious life

Who and what makes a person consecrate him- or herself to God? The answer to the first part of the question is self-evident in the light of the things we examined already: God and only God!

On the other hand, there are different opinions as to the "Why". There can be no doubt that the inner motion stirred by the Holy Spirit (which makes us feel the attraction to a complete consecration to God in any given form of religious life, i.e. to a well-defined charism), plays an essential role.

on their different life situations and on the different goals corresponding to a specific legal status. This is why the Code speaks of three *states* of life (cf. can. 207).

²² Speech *Magno gaudio* of 23 May 1964, in AAS 56 (1964) 566.

Some authors²³, however, commented that attraction could be too subjective a criterion for access to religious life: On the one hand, it could draw people to this kind of life who do not possess the required characteristics; on the other hand, it could keep away others who do possess the required characteristics, but are not inclined to inner emotions.

The concerned person's discernment with respect to the call felt to consecrate himself to God in religious life is absolutely essential and must be made with utmost honesty towards God, towards oneself and towards the others, in particular towards the members of the Order he wishes to enter.

During this process, the person concerned cannot and must not be left to himself; he must allow someone to guide him, such as a spiritual director (*nemo iudex in res propria*). The discernment must first of all include control of the characteristics required to live religious life, of the motivations and of the right intention.

Further points for discussion

- Everyone has his/her own vocation, and its success depends from the response that each person is able to give: Life is an answer to this vocation. How can we discover our own vocation? By his nature and vocation man is a religious being. He comes from God and returns to God. Man is created to live in communion with God, and it is in Him that he finds his happiness. In the Gospel we see Jesus calling those people to will later be indicated as his disciples: "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you" (John 15:16). Thus, the Lord is the source of any true calling, since it is He who chooses and invites man to obey Him fully and completely. In the diversity and variety of vocations the Church shows the richness of the Spirit who distributes his gifts in

²³ Cf. J. LAHITTON, *La vocation sacerdotale*, Paris 1909 ; ID, *Deux concep*

abundance according to God's plan. This also means that consecrated life is a response to a call from God. As a matter of fact, no person can 'construct' a vocation: it must be received from God. This brings us back to the original meaning of the term 'vocation', i.e. 'calling'. Let's keep this in mind: "Whatever you do, do from the heart, as for the Lord and not for others" (Col 3:23). Only God makes us worthy of his calling (cf. 2 Thess 1:10).

- Vocation > the calling one > the called one > meaning of the call > subject matter of the call.
- What to do to receive a vocation: "He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the labourers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out labourers for his harvest" (Luke 10:2), but let's also not forget the parable of the widow and the judge [cf. *Luke* 11:5-10; *Mark* 7:24-30; *Genesis* 32:24-29; *Isaiah* 62:6-7]: "Then he told them a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary" (Luke 18:1). It is therefore important to pray with the fidelity and witness of one's vocation as consecrated person.
- Means of receiving a vocation: not restrict God's imaginative power in any way; on our part, follow those who already belong to the Order and engage in assistance.
- Possibility of refusing the call: "Many are invited, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14), because the invitation to the Kingdom is a personal call that some people do not want to hear.
- It is important to never lose sight of the fact that any vocation is a gift and not a pretext for an advantage or an opportunity for having greater power; it is above all an encounter with God, a service, a generous gift of oneself to the extent we are aware that what we are and what we have all comes to us through God.

For meditation: "Who confers distinction upon you? What do you possess that you have not received? But if you have received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7).