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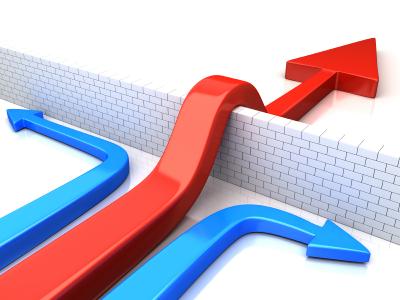
Vocation, in the deepest sense of the word, is the person’s choice to live according to certain values or beliefs. It is not a role, profession or job, nor is it temporary or transitory. It becomes the all-embracing and full-hearted orientation of our life. According to this view, vocation is a *fundamental option* coloring and orienting every dimension of our being, an all-encompassing life approach, which becomes concrete through specific options expressing our central reference values.

Therefore, each of us has and fulfils a particular vocation, a different mission in the world and in history. This distinctive mission is a source of identity. It expresses the unique character of our actual or potential contribution to humanity. Vocation has to do with each person’s desires and inspirations. It should normally agree with our [tastes](http://www.microsofttranslator.com/bv.aspx?from=es&to=en&a=http%3A%2F%2Fdefinicion.de%2Fgusto), interests and skills.

Vocation develops as a process throughout life and ispermanently under construction. It involves discovering who I am, how I am, and where I want to go. The answer to these questions will shape our vocation and the path we will follow. Vocation should be an experience of fullness, bringing an unsurpassed sensation of joy to every cell of our body, a fulfilling endeavor that makes us realize we need nothing else.

The notion of vocation depends on the Christian belief that God has created each person with gifts and talents that are oriented toward specific purposes and to a particular life style. *Christian vocation*, in its broadest sense, implies using our skills in favor of the greater common good in the areas of work, family life, Church experience, and civic commitments.

Creation is the first loving and generous gesture of God, his first call to us, our first vocation: God is calling us to life and life in abundance! It is a project of love for every man and woman, a project of fullness and happiness, in which God calls us by name. This is our vocation, an answer to God who is inviting us to life, happiness and fullness[[1]](#footnote-1).



This vocational dimension does not override the human processes mentioned above, but rather sheds new light on them, making them take root in the experience of God’s love manifested in Jesus. It enables us to accept his invitation to full happiness for us and for others in our day-to-day life, to partake in the construction of the Kingdom, living in such a way that serving others becomes the basic and decisive attitude in life[[2]](#footnote-2).

Vocation obviously ‘takes flesh’ in a profession, a relational network linking us to other people, and a set of values, all of which takes place in a community context as disciples of Jesus[[3]](#footnote-3). The Church is both the ‘atmosphere’ that makes our Christian option possible, and the place where we express it in a concrete way. Lay life, marriage, missionary life, priesthood, contemplative life, religious life, and celibacy are just some of the many vocations we find in the Church. They are different ways of answering the call to construct the Kingdom within the Church and through the Church.

How can we achieve the fullness of this faith experience? The first step is to accept the gift of faith and share it with a group, community, movement or parish. As our faith develops, with the help of other believers’ testimony, the vocational question *par excellence* arises: *What does God want from me?* A number of experiences slowly help us find the answer: reading the Gospel on a regular basis; serving the poor and the sick; committing to justice; leading a life of prayer; living a community, ecclesial and missionary life; spending time in personal reflection; and participating in the spiritual exercises[[4]](#footnote-4).

Within this framework, we speak of *Marist vocation* as a call to live the Gospel according to the Marist charism. Marist vocation always has a personal and community dimension. It is an invitation to share in a charism belonging to us all, laity and brothers. It entails a life style that is colored by our specific family traits (Marist simplicity, love for Mary, fraternity, dedication to work), by our Marist spirituality (which is Marian and Apostolic), and by our particular mission (evangelizing children and young people, especially the most abandoned)[[5]](#footnote-5). Marist vocation is a personal call to a unique way of being disciples of Jesus.

Vocation certainly implies fidelity, but also involves courageous *creativity.* God is unceasingly calling us. The continuous challenge of his call brings about new situations, options and decisions. Project and process are synonyms of vocation. It is a personalized and dynamic invitation, which can progressively evolve towards a better and deeper understanding, which can mature forever[[6]](#footnote-6).

1. Gathered around the Same Table 13: *“The initiative for our vocation comes from God. He loves us and wants our fulfillment, which is why he invites each one to follow a unique path”.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Water from the Rock 59: *“Our true identity is a gift, given in the form of an unfolding invitation, a call, a vocation. It is God’s work in us”.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Vocation reaches its full meaning within the community. We understand it as a multiple dynamic interaction – among ourselves, between God and us, between us and the world – through which we construct the Kingdom of God together. We are not isolated individuals, but part of the People who is called by God to live and promote life. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. New Vocations for a New Europe 26: *“Vocation is not only the existential project, but rather all the individual calls of God are, evidently always related in a fundamental life plan, spread over the whole of one’s existence. Authentic pastoral work makes the creature vigilant, attentive to the many calls of the Lord, ready to hear His voice and respond to it”.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. GAST 12-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The beautiful document *Sowing the Gospel of Vocation - Marist Vocation Ministry Guidelines for the Americas* splendidly expresses these concepts. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)