

Lord,
You have the biblical reputation
of taking people places
they never wanted to go.
Witness Jonah
delivered by whale to Nineveh
and Habakkuk
flown by angel to Babylon.
Also I have heard
You do not consult.
Abraham is suddenly ordered from Haran
and Moses called out of retirement
for the Egypt assignment.
Furthermore
Paul says
You take a chiropodist's delight
in Achilles heels,
spurn eloquence for the stutter,
and reveal yourself
in the thorns of the flesh.
and what was this unpleasantness
with your Son shortly before
his appointment at the Right Hand?
So it is that to You
my most resounding "yes"
is a "maybe"
and it is with one eye on the door
that I say
"Behold, Lord, your servant waiteth!"

Did you ever think of yourself as having a ministry?

What are the main needs in our area?

How can we know what Jesus wants of us?

How can we help others to understand and know how important faith is?

Have you got a ministry ?



we've got need

We are so aware of the ministry of priests and religious women and men. At the same time we have become increasingly aware of the fact that numbers to these vocations have fallen dramatically. What perhaps has not been fully realised is that every Christian is called to ministry. In the past it was seen as the sole domain of ordained and consecrated people. What lay people did was not referred to as 'ministry'. We have been forced to re-examine the roles of people, priests and religious. One of the benefits is the realisation that we have overlooked the ministry of every Christian wherein lies a great treasure that can now be appreciated.

Where do we start?

So, if every Christian has a ministry, that means me, too! Now that I know what should I do? Should I become a reader, join a society or what? Perhaps we should remember that the disciples spent three years listening and talking to Jesus before they were let loose. And today a man has to train for up to six years before he can become a priest. As we have already seen, this mostly involves listening to God and learning. So we can see that before we can **give** we must first of all have **received**.

Conversion

Conversion means to “turn towards”. In a religious sense it means to turn our heart, mind and soul towards Christ. We all need conversion - a deep faith that will not be uprooted when we face the world and worldly values.



This comes about first of all by doing what the disciples did; by listening and talking to the Lord. This is simply what we mean by prayer. Prayer must be the rock on which the ministry of every Christian is built. That means that everything we then do is founded on God’s love for us and “nothing can come between us and the love of God”. This is so important, because if we are not open to God’s love then there is much that can come between us and our ministry. Before we can convert others we must be completely converted ourselves.

What next?

Family – the people around us. This means our immediate family and the family of our parish. There is something wrong if someone is going around the community performing great acts of charity but neglecting the needs of their children/parents; or someone helping the aged in Botswana but ignoring older people in Kingstanding. We belong to a community, a parish in which everyone has needs. Our ministry must begin here. It means looking and listening at home, at work, at Church, in the street and then, if it is possible, responding to a need that arises. Most people know

their rights. Christian community means being aware of our responsibilities as well. Only then will community really work.

What is my Ministry?

To discover what my ministry is I must not only look at people’s needs but also at what I can do. I could start by asking myself how much time I am prepared to give to the community each week (this can vary so much). Then I should look at what I’m good at. Is my strength working with children, elderly, handicapped; am I an artist, electrician, carpenter, typist We all have talents or skills that have been given so that we can serve others. This is what ministry is; using what we have been given for the service of others, in the name of Christ. Jesus tells us that to use our talents is a very serious obligation. In one parable he condemns the man who buries his gift in the sand (Matt. 25:14-30). Of course, the greatest gift that we all have is love.

Ministries in the Church

Ministry, for some, can take place within the Church’s liturgy. Some men and women read the Word of God or are Ministers of the Eucharist. This is a constant reminder to all of us that in lay men and women; people can encounter God through them as well as through the priests. The priest does have a different role but all men and women are called to share in his work of spreading the Good News. All men and women are called to a life of service – the service of mankind. So we can see that our ministry is a continuation of the ministry of Christ.

The Power of the Spirit

The Spirit is given to each person as an individual, but for the benefit of all. The Spirit was given to the first disciples of Jesus, just when they were all together and of one mind in prayer and love (Acts 1.14; 2.1). It is He who binds us together and when maybe we feel lost and afraid it is the Spirit who inspires us and encourages us to carry on. It is also the Spirit who gives us vision. He enables us to see the needs of our brothers and sisters. When we are full of the Spirit, we see our own position in the Church and society more clearly too. So it is good that we pray to the Spirit when we need guidance and vision in our ministry.