

# Vocation and Discernment for the Secular Franciscan

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Our Lady of the Angels Region-North Jersey Cluster

St. Bonaventure Church, Paterson

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# Vocation

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- What is the meaning of Vocation? How do you understand it?
- What is unique about a Franciscan Vocation?



# Viewing of Video and discussion

- Mt. 10:5-15:5<sup>b</sup> Jesus sent out these twelve<sup>\*</sup> after instructing them thus, “Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. 6<sup>c</sup> Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’<sup>d</sup> 8<sup>\*</sup> Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give. 9<sup>e</sup> Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts; 10<sup>f</sup> no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick. The laborer deserves his keep. 11<sup>g</sup> Whatever town or village you enter, look for a worthy person in it, and stay there until you leave. 12As you enter a house, wish it peace. 13If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; if not, let your peace return to you.<sup>\*</sup> 14<sup>\*</sup> <sup>h</sup> Whoever will not receive you or listen to your words—go outside that house or town and shake the dust from your feet. 15Amen, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.<sup>i</sup>

# Franciscan Vocation

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- *How is it possible to live out that Gospel challenge of Mt 10:5-15 in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?*
- The Franciscan, John Duns Scotus said the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, the dogma that states Mary was born untainted by the original sin of Adam and Eve, shows Mary as the God-intended model of the dignity and created goodness of every human being. *When have you witnessed a person whose life or actions sing of the dignity and created goodness of human beings? Share what you saw and why it is noteworthy.*



# Prayer of St. Francis before the Crucifix of San Damiano

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- Most high glorious God! Enlighten the darkness of my heart. And give me, Lord, correct faith, certain hope and perfect charity—give me sense and knowledge, Lord—that I may always observe your holy and true command. Amen.

# Discernment

- God's Will--Fate or a "Godly Dream?"
- Ephesians 1:3-14
- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> just as he chose us in Christ<sup>b</sup> before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup> He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup> In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance,<sup>e</sup> having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup> so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup> this<sup>d</sup> is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.



# God's Dream—His Long-Range Plan

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- Dynamic, Evolving Dream for us
- Eph. 1:3-14 from The Message (scriptural paraphrase)
- How blessed is God! And what a blessing He is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure He took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son...

## (Ephesians 1 continued)

He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in on the plans he took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth.

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.



# Prophetic Reminders

The Dream quickly tarnished—The Fall - Adam and Eve story

God's dream was indomitable!

Covenants----God's intentional relationships

Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob—the dream keepers

By exercising their free will, they would be coworkers with God in making the dream come true by living lives of peace, love and justice

However—chosen people not always faithful to the covenant!

Prophets were raised up to call the people to return to the covenant—to keep the dream alive!



## Mary's Yes—Theotokos Coworker with God

God's voracious enthusiasm and lavish gift-giving erupts in the  
person of Mary's Son, Jesus!

Jesus is the Divine reminder of the DREAM!





# Jesus the Dream Keeper of the Father

He called it, “the Kingdom”

More than 20 gospel stories and parables He reminds his followers

He makes it a reality in the Paschal Mystery

To this day we are back on track to realizing the fulfillment of  
God’s Dream—His Long-Range Plan



# Baptism our covenant commitment to be God's dream keepers

Baptism and commitment to Christ witness to who I am and  
what I am living for

I am God's dream keeper, and my mission is to make God's  
dream present in my own life by living a life of peace, love  
and justice

Following Mary's example of saying YES to being a  
coworker in building the Kingdom of God and promoting  
the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all creation





# Grace and Discernment

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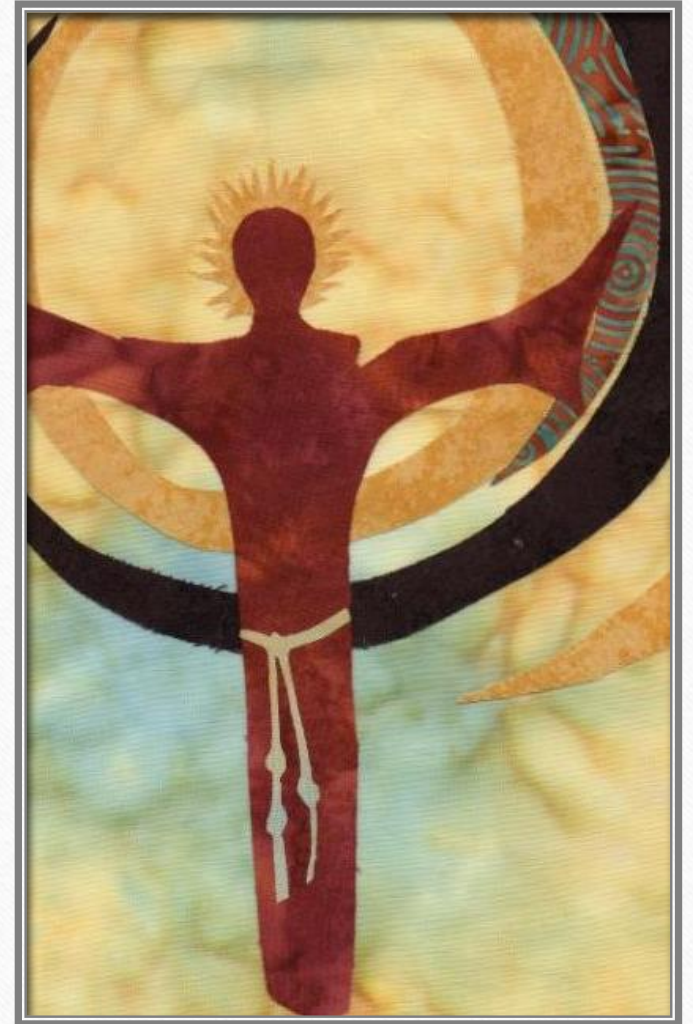
- Discernment is a cooperative venture of discovering my unique contribution—my evolving deeper YES—to being a coworker with Christ in making God's dream of the Kingdom a reality right here, right now.
- Evolving, deeper YES-- because as circumstances change and I grow in understanding of what it means to be a Christian disciple, my perceived contribution as a coworker with Christ changes and evolves.
- As we grow and mature we gradually come to a deeper awareness of who we are as persons and learn to use our gifts and talents as Christian persons
- That growing awareness of our identity is ongoing. The vocational choices we make, and their every day working out, become our contribution to realizing God's long-range plan, the dream of the Kingdom

# Our Franciscan Vocation

Our unique response to realizing God's Dream

A deepening of our Baptismal commitment

God's Dream for us!





# Lamps of Revelation

## Six lamps that teach us about God's Dream:

Sacred Scripture—"the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit" (CCC 81)

The Word of God made flesh—Jesus Christ

Sacred Tradition-God's continuing, on-going Revelation

The Church-the community of believers

The Sacraments—encounters with God reenergizing us for God's mission

Personal Prayer—deeper insights into my Christian identity and my contribution



## Questions for Dialogue

How have your Christian identity and understanding of mission grown over the years? What is the distinguishing hallmark of your current and more mature understanding?

Name three practical ways in which you have been shaped and transformed by Scripture, the teachings of Jesus, Sacred Tradition, your Church affiliation, the celebration of the Sacraments and prayer. Of the six lamps of revelation, which one do you consider the most important? Why?

How do you currently see yourself as a coworker with Christ? In what practical ways are you keeping God's dream alive on a daily basis?

