

YEAR LEVEL	11&12
TITLE	Living as a Christian Today
STRAND	SACRAMENTS
SUGGESTED DURATION	40 hours (1 semester)
ENDURING QUESTIONS	How can sacraments lead to an encounter with God? How can the sacraments shape my view of life and the world?



## Unit Focus

In this unit students will explore vocation, what it means to live and work as a Christian in today's world, in the light of Sacred Scripture and the Catholic Tradition. They will investigate the issues arising from the right to meaningful work and leisure. They will become familiar with the sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Orders, a single way of life, and ordained and non-ordained ministries, as expressions of mission in the service of the Church.

## Achievement Standards

By the end of Year 12:

**Students analyse and evaluate the sacramental nature of Christian lives.**

## Unit Outcomes

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. Recognise the understanding of work, leisure, ministry and service that is affirmed in the Scriptures and Catholic Tradition.
2. Critically reflect on issues that arise out of the human right to engage in meaningful work and leisure.
3. Articulate the history and nature of the sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Orders.
4. Understand that the variety of states in life provide opportunities to be of service to others.

## Key Understandings for Students

- Work, leisure and ministry are affirmed in Scripture and Tradition. Each person has the right to a life that upholds and promotes human dignity. As such, work and leisure are of major importance in the lives of individuals and form part of the purpose and meaning of human life;
- In recognising the value of each person's vocation, the Church stresses the importance of the Sacraments - Matrimony and Holy Orders, to celebrate the Christian vocation of service.
- The married and single states in life and the ordained and non-ordained ministries within the Church are expressions of service to God and to each other in relationship.

## Student Context

The major issues facing school leavers include finding a job, or making the best choice for future education. Many of these same school leavers would regard the pursuit of their chosen leisure activities as important to them.

As work and leisure are of major importance in the lives of individuals and form part of the fabric of the purpose and meaning of human life, these issues can be considered as religious issues. Most students will seek meaning and fulfilment through relationships, work and leisure. The notions of vocation, work and leisure will not be unfamiliar to students who have been exposed to the average range of subjects, including careers guidance, PE/Health courses, and so on.

The areas of Marriage and Holy Orders will generally capture the feelings, imagination and interest of students in senior years. Students need the opportunity to explore the positive value of married commitment as well as be exposed to the commitment of persons who chose the single, religious or ordained life styles. Some students may participate in ministry as baptised members of their local church.

In presenting the Church's teachings on vocation, states of life and the sacraments of Matrimony and Ordination, the teacher should honestly present the alternatives to their students in an informed and open manner.

## Theological Background for Teachers

The Christian Tradition has preserved the biblical concept of human beings sharing in the creative activity of God. Women and men, made in God's image and likeness, are engaged in transforming creation through their labour. From this act of transformation both the intrinsic dignity of work and the value of the products of human labour can be established. The setting aside of the Sabbath, the seventh day, for 'rest' allowed the members of the community to participate in all that would promote a fully human life.

- **EXAMPLE OF JESUS**

Jesus lived his vocation of promoting God's reign of reconciliation, compassion and justice. At times he drew apart to rest and pray.

The Church is the visible community through which Jesus Christ continues his mission of announcing and bringing about the reign of God among human beings until it is brought forth at the end of history. In imitation of Jesus Christ, who came to serve rather than be served, the Church is called to service. (*Matt. 20:25-28, Mk. 10:42-45, Lk. 22:24-27*).

- **EARLY CHURCH**

During his earthly life and ministry, Jesus gathered many disciples around himself, some of whom he also called "apostles," sending them out to preach, teach, and heal others. Soon after the death and resurrection of Jesus the early Christians also began using a variety of other titles for those who led and served the community of believers, as seen in various texts of the New Testament. Some of these titles were used for itinerant preachers who spread the Christian message throughout the Roman empire, while others designated the resident leaders of local communities. At first, the most prominent leaders seem to have been called **apostles**, **prophets**, and **teachers**, among various other titles. Yet by the mid-second century, the church had developed a fairly uniform structure of leadership, consisting of three different "orders" called **bishops** (overseers), **presbyters** (elders), and **deacons** (ministers), despite some ongoing regional variations. In all of this, however, the emphasis was not on the authority or status of the leaders as rulers, but remained on their responsibilities to serve and care for the people in their communities.

- **DOCUMENTS OF VATICAN II**

Vatican II states that Jesus instituted a variety of ministries for the good of the whole Church community (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, #18*). In the light of Vatican II, then, ministry is clearly a broad term applicable to both ordained and lay members (non-ordained) of the Church. Ministry may be a term describing a general call to the whole Church to serve, or the particular offices and persons in the Church who have

responsibility of preaching, teaching, proclaiming the Gospel, celebrating the Sacraments, and serving many diverse groups within the community. Every Christian is called to ministry in the broad sense; not every Christian is called to ministry in the formal sense. Thus individuals may be called to ministry within the home and family, and/or in the parish and community. The change in the Church's understanding of ministry does not make particular ministries any less important; rather, it influences the way these ministries are inter-related and exercised.

### ● THE SACRAMENTS

Through the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, all Christians have a vocation to live holy lives and to give witness to Christ by the example of their lives. Baptism and Confirmation give all Catholics the right to participate in the life and mission of the Church by taking up those forms of ministry for which their talents and personality are suited. People are called to a vocation of loving service to others and intimacy with God through prayer. Those called to the ordained ministries of bishop, priest, and deacon are called to serve the Church through teaching, leadership, and presiding over celebration of the sacraments.

Each sacrament has a personal element (the individual), a community element (others) and a divine element (God). The Church always understands sacraments to be, not private functions, but celebrations of the Church, the sacrament of unity among all the believers. Matrimony joins two people in marriage for a lifetime of dedication to each other's well-being and the well-being of their children and the community. Ordination integrates men into the holy orders of bishops, priests and deacons, empowering them for a lifetime of leadership and service in the Church.

Preparation for marriage involves an exploration of commitment, responsibility, communication and fidelity required for a permanent relationship with one other person. The Church teaches that a genuine marriage is a life-long commitment. The Church teaching on sex in marriage stresses the importance of both the unitive dimension promoting the unity of the couple, and the pro-creative dimension leading to the couple cooperating with the creative activity of God by welcoming and rearing children, and by extending their love into the wider community.

Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, a priest is empowered to preach the Gospel, celebrate and administer the Sacraments and exercise spiritual leadership in close collaboration with the bishop of the diocese. The Catholic Church teaches that there is a continuity between the ministry of the apostles and that of bishops and priests today.

Religious Life, in all its forms and life-styles, calls primarily for witness to the love and mercy of God in the world. Religious freely choose to commit themselves to a life-style characterised by charity, prayer, service and community, through the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, undertaken to bring about the Reign of God.

## Scripture

### **Matthew 25: 14-30 (Parable of the Talents)**

Jesus said "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did

not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

### **1 Cor 12:4-13**

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of the same Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.

### **1 Pet 4:10**

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

## **Major Assessment Task**

1. Reflect on the input of two guest speakers in light of the following questions: you may answer in paragraph form, or as a letter to the person). (100 words each)

- I. How did the person see their life as being "of service" to others?
- II. What was their understanding/explanation of "vocation"?
- III. How has the person experienced dignity and purpose from their vocation?
- IV. What, for this person, is "meaningful leisure"? How does it assist in the living of their vocation?
- V. What did you find affirming for your own life journey from what the person shared?
- VI. What did you find challenging about what they said?
- VII. What one "piece of wisdom" will you take from this person's presentation in terms of your own life journey?

2. Write a summative paragraph expressing your understanding of "vocation" in the modern world and what you think your vocation in life might involve (on the understanding that it may change in the future!). Include at least two references to scripture or Church teaching. (200 words)

## **Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences**

**Outcome 1 Recognise the understanding of work, leisure, ministry and service that is affirmed in the Scriptures and Catholic Tradition.**

- Students maintain a journal for the duration of this unit. Include reflections on the content of guest speakers' presentations, and their reflections on the validity of various vocations or calls to particular states in life.

- Read 1 Cor 12:4-13 (see <https://sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/1-corinthians-123-13/> for commentary). Students are invited to respond to the scripture in their journals. Appropriate prompts include:

Highlight elements, phrases or words that connect or resonate with you. Why?

Collect or chunk these together as you deem appropriate.

What are the gifts that you have been given?

What challenge does this passage present in terms of using your gifts?

Think Pair Share: What meaning are you getting out of this text?

Rewrite it in your own words.

- Explore an organisation eg; school, sporting club. Look at the different roles within this group. Explore what would happen if one of the people in this organisation wasn't able to play their role? What would happen?
- One of the Words of the Year in 2020 (resulting from the impact of the coronavirus) was "key / essential worker". Who were the new-found "essential workers" as the world dealt with COVID-19? Which groups of workers were they elevated above? Students could devise their own list of essential workers OR write a thank you card or letter to an essential worker (real or imaginary).
- Individually or in pairs students develop a case study of a person involved in a particular ministry.

Possible Focus Questions include:

Describe the ministry in which this person is involved.

What were the circumstances that led this person to their involvement/commitment?

How much freedom does the person feel they have in exercising their ministry within the particular tradition?

Does the person experience between the ministry, the religious tradition and living in Australian society?

What insights have you (students) gained into the relationship between commitment and ministry?

## **Outcome 2 Critically reflect on issues that arise out of the human right to engage in meaningful work and leisure.**

- Class brainstorm issues connected with the concept of "work", for example instability in the workforce; unemployment; underemployment; unemployment benefits (the "dole"); sweatshops; modern slavery.
- Explore media (print and electronic) connected to these issues.
- Ask "In what ways may the human right to engage in meaningful work and leisure be compromised?" Consider "What is the Christian response to these issues?"
- Look at what Pope Francis and the Australian Bishops have said about the rights of people to engage in meaningful work (consider what "meaningful" means in this context; see Theological Background).
- What does it mean to talk about a "Christian work ethic"? (see **Appendix 1** "A Christian's Work Ethic") Complete a PMI on this concept. What are some of the ways an employee can demonstrate a good work ethic? What are the drivers behind such an attitude? Debate whether this concept is outdated.
- Discuss career paths that students are currently exploring. View Indi Addlem interview from the Ablaze 2020 resource (see <https://vimeo.com/448403512> at 30:34 minutes). Emphasise how students' intended vocations may / may not align with what they most value or believe and why this is important.
- Explore non paid work or volunteering as ways of service. Class discussion about any nonpaid work that they may be involved in. Explore examples of people locally who are involved in nonpaid work or volunteering.
- Explore idea of work-life balance and access to leisure. Debate whether people should "work to live" or "live to work." Find stories of individuals whose work and leisure time is out of balance. Consider the impact of such situations on family, workmates, friends, etc.
- Invite past students or other young people who have demonstrated commitment to a particular cause (e.g. community, work, sport, study) as guest speakers. Have students write reviews using the following questions:
  - What was the achievement?
  - What motivated the person?
  - What was the process that they followed to achieve their goal?
  - From what this person has said how might you interpret commitment?
  - What insights have you gained into the concept of commitment?

Alternatively, choose articles from various sources that demonstrate different types of commitment and apply the above set of questions.

### **Outcome 3 Articulate the history and nature of the sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Orders.**

- Today couples may choose to live in different situations (eg married or de facto). Identify the possible benefits and disadvantages of living together as individuals or as a married couple. Research the legal requirements for de facto relationships in various situations (eg Centrelink, immigration, family law).
- Watch the Busted Halo video <http://bustedhalo.com/video/matrimony-why-make-it-catholic>. According to the video:

Why is a Catholic marriage more than a contract? What does the “sacrament” of marriage mean?

Why does the Catholic Church emphasise a period of marriage preparation for the couple? Why are children and finances important parts of this preparation?

Who administers the sacrament of marriage?

What are the 2 fundamental purposes of Catholic marriage?

- In groups, work on organising a course preparing people for the Sacrament of Marriage. Outline what needs to be included in the program. Compare student work with a program already used in the parish-based marriage preparation program.
- Invite a guest speaker from Centacare or the local parish to speak on the courses and services offered in preparation for marriage.
- Further explore the differences between the civil and religious requirements of marriage – what are they? For example Pope Francis distinguished between the two in Oct 2020 when he said, in relation to same-sex couples, “What we have to create is a civil union law.” Go to <https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/catholic-news-agency-what-did-pope-francis-say-about-civil-unions/> and read more about what Pope Francis said. What are the implications of his words (i) for couples, and (ii) for the Church?
- Examine the Rite of Marriage. Consider questions about the significance of the presence of the priest, the joining of hands, the promises made, the exchange of rings, ie what do they symbolise? What is the importance of the people in the church, the signing of the register and the wedding reception respectively?
- Watch the Busted Halo video <http://bustedhalo.com/video/holy-orders-what-ordination-means>. Ask: What does it mean to say all Catholics are priests? What are some simple examples of lay people acting in a priestly way?

What does it mean to say that priesthood is an “apostolic” order?

Why is priesthood reserved for men? (Research the arguments for and against the ordination of women, including in other Christian religions, eg Anglican)

What are the differences between deacons, priests and bishops?

Why do priests take a vow of celibacy?

- Watch “All or Nothing” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0LKZm2BqZo> the story of Sr Clare Crockett.  
Ask: What do you think the title means?  
Do you think it is possible to give everything to the Lord?  
Where do you think Sr. Clare got the strength from to give everything?  
What is the most impressive thing for you about Sr Clare’s life as a Sister?  
Sr. Clare understood that she had to place all of the gifts that she had received from the Lord, eg her sense of humour, at the service of the Lord and others. What gifts do you possess? How can you place them at the service of God and others?  
Sr Clare said to the Lord that she signed a “blank cheque” every day so that He could ask of her whatever He wanted. Do you realize that the idea of signing a “blank cheque” is not just for



religious, but is also for people in any state of life? In what ways can you do this? To what extent are you willing to do this?

- Check out the Diocese of Sandhurst Vocations webpage including Fr Rob Galea's Vocation Story. What does Fr Rob treasure about being a priest? Invite your parish priest to speak about their vocation story.
- Find out how many Sandhurst seminarians are currently studying at Corpus Christi College.
- Research/conduct a media survey or a case study on an issue related to the future of marriage, priesthood and/or ministry (e.g. women in ministry, priestly celibacy, communities without a priest, the future of priesthood, divorce, changing patterns of marriage). Given the results of the research/survey/case study, what are the implications for future understandings of commitment and ministry? In light of the evidence, clarify the Church's stance as you come to your own position in relation to one of the issues.

#### **Outcome 4 Understand that the variety of states in life provide opportunities to be of service to others.**

- In the early church six ways to participate in God's mission were identified: worship (leitourgia), communion (koinonia), proclamation (kerygma), service (diakonia), witness (martyria) and teaching (didache). Distinguish between these activities. Find modern-day words derived from the original Greek, eg leitourgia = liturgy. Do these add to the students' understanding of the original ministries?
- The Greek word "diakonia" translates to Latin as "ministerium" (in English "service"). A variety of ministries existed in the early Church (see Theological Background) including "apostle", "prophet", "teacher", "bishop", "presbyter", "deacon". Define these six terms and find their modern-day equivalents. Have any of these ministries changed? If so, how? St Paul lists a substantial number of examples of different ministries 1 Cor 12:4-31 – what others can you find?

- McBrien (1988) outlines various levels of ministry (p.11ff) for example:

General ministry (any service rendered to another person or group of people)

Specific ministry (service to others from people called to serve others in the helping/service professions)

Universal Christian ministry (ministry rooted in Baptism to which all Christians are called)

Specific Christian ministry (service rendered to others in the name of the Church and for the sake of helping the Church fulfil its mission – designated ministry).

Ask students to construct a table with the above four headings and to list at least 3 examples in each column

- O'Meara (1983) (see **Appendix 2**) outlines six characteristics that constitute a definition of ministry in a Christian sense. For each characteristic identify an activity that (i) matches, and (ii) does not match. What does the quote underneath the heading mean? Consider why the examples listed in Appendix 2 do not fit with O'Meara's definition.
- The contemporary understanding of ministry in the Church changed significantly at Vatican 2 particularly regarding the involvement of lay people. Speak to an older member of the parish, eg your parish priest, about the changes in ministry at this time. What changed? How? Why?
- Interview or invite a guest speaker / panel of lay speakers who are active in a variety of ministries to give their perspective on the details of their ministry today, future challenges and some idea of their own spiritual journey.
- Using an Inside-Outside Circle, respond to the guest speaker(s), in terms of what impressed you and what was helpful to your understanding of vocation, life style and call to service.
- Students study scripture text Matthew 25: 14-30 (Parable of the Talents) or 1 Pet 4:10 (see <http://johnmckinnon.org/index.php/matthew25v14-30> and <https://www.bibleref.com/1-Peter/4/1-Peter-4-10.html> respectively for commentaries)

They consider what their gifts are, how they currently use them in the service of others and how they might further serve their community in the future.

- Research/conduct a media survey or a case study on an issue related to the future of marriage, priesthood and/or ministry (e.g. women in ministry, priestly celibacy, divorce, changing patterns of marriage). Given the results of the research/survey/case study, what are the implications for the future understanding of commitment and ministry? In light of the evidence, clarify the Church's stance as you come to your own position in relation to one of the issues.

## Liturgical Connections

Invite a member of a religious order to come to the class and talk about the design and intention of the liturgy that celebrated their religious Profession.

Have the students prepare appropriate questions prior to the visit.

After the visit the students could discuss and nominate any aspects of liturgical celebration they learned about which could be incorporated into their own liturgical celebration.

## Resources

### Community Resources

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Local clergy, religious, and laity both married and single.

Local workers, sporting and leisure clubs – their advertising and promotional materials.

### Teacher Resources

Elliott, P. et al. (2006). Catholic Studies for Senior Secondary Students. Melbourne: James Goold House Publications (especially Chapters 5 & 6)

McBrien, R. (1988). Ministry. San Francisco: Harper

O'Meara, T. (1983). Theology of Ministry. New York: Paulist Press

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### Church Documents

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Catholic Church. (1994). Catechism of the Catholic Church. Sydney: St. Paul's Publications.

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et spes). (1984). In H. Costello & A.

Flannery (Eds.). Documents of Vatican II (pp. 183-316). Sydney: St. Paul's Publications.

### World Wide Web / Internet

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Religious orders

<http://www.mercy.org.au>

<http://www.goodsams.org.au/>

<http://www.sosj.org.au/>

<http://www.edmundrice.org.au/CBOceania/home>

<http://www.delasalle.org.au/>

<http://www.maristbrothers.org.au/>

Seminaries

<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/vocations-sand>

<https://www.corpuschristicollege.org.au/>

## Appendices

Appendix 1: A Christian's Work Ethic

Appendix 2: The 6 Characteristics of Ministry - Fr Thomas O'Meara