

Awakening VOCATIONS

Awakening the
vocational culture
of parishes.

July-September 2009

Imagine vocation discernment
the norm in every parish.

NEWS & VIEWS

www.awakeningvocations.com



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Our Mission

AWAKENING VOCATIONS, formed in the Roman Catholic tradition, is dedicated to *awakening the vocational culture of parishes* with a theology of vocation that ignites personal response, and a process of vocational discernment to move that response toward fruitful ministry in the Church or mission in the world.

Our Commitment

Awakening Vocations will donate 10% of its fees from your parish's multiphase contract to support the education of your diocese's seminarians.



NEWS & VIEWS is a quarterly publication of
AWAKENING VOCATIONS,
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VOCATIONAL SERIES SET FOR CATHOLIC RADIO

13-Part Awakening Vocations radio series ready for fall broadcast

A fresh exploration of vocation discernment in today's Church and world is available for fall broadcast on Catholic radio stations nationwide. Titled "Awakening Vocations with Mary Sharon Moore," this free series, consisting of 13 half-hour interviews, examines some of the challenges, opportunities, and new dimensions of vocation discernment in the Church today.

Awakening Vocations' unique four-step parish-based formation process addresses moral, social, and personal dimensions of God's calling and the individual's response. "While prayer and recruitment are twin pillars of traditional vocation work," notes Moore in the series, "prayer and recruitment will never be enough. Actual parish-level formation must be the foundation of vocational awakening, giving prayer and recruitment a meaningful context."

Series topics include developments in vocation discernment; distinctive elements of the Awakening Vocations process; skills for theological reflection in the

(see back page, "Series")

CALL FOR STORIES

Looking for God's grace in uncertain times

If you've had to adjust your lifestyle, habits, or spending patterns in the economic downturn, and in the process found God's grace and provision in unexpected ways, Awakening Vocations wants to hear from you!

God's calling often comes in unique and unimagined ways in times of crisis. Some people find their life "downsized," discovering that their life has really become "rightsized." We welcome your thoughts. Send your stories to info@awakeningvocations.com, or call toll-free 1-888/687-2046.

AV

NEW FAMILY RESOURCE NOW AVAILABLE . . .

Tired of the old economy? Try *Living in God's Economy*

While many households spin with anxiety in the downturned economy, Christ-centered families now have a tool to sort through household excess, find a better way, and share with those in need. *Living in God's Economy*, an easy-to-use 155-page workbook from Awakening Vocations, walks families through a step-by-step process to

(see back page,
"Living in God's Economy")

God's
dream for
my life
is the
hardest
dream
to throw
away.

I keep coming across the following story, and find that it evokes the vocational challenge in an unsettling way. Here's the story . . .

From the desk of . . .

The young disciple seeks counsel—let's say vocational counsel—from Abbot Joseph. "I keep my little rule as best I can, my fasting and prayer and meditation and holy silence. I cleanse my heart of wayward thoughts. What more should I do?"

Mary Sharon

This sounds a lot like the rich young man who seeks counsel—let's say vocational counsel—from Jesus. And Jesus gently but clearly tells the rich young man, "Go, sell what you have, and give the money to the poor. Then come, follow me." Likewise, Abbot Joseph, the story goes, rises up and stretches out his hands toward heaven, and his fingertips become like little burning lamps. "Why not be changed totally into fire?"



Why not, indeed! Did you think you were anointed in the Holy Spirit just to settle for your small vision for your life? I ask myself this question often. Why not be changed totally into fire? Why not become all flame? And how do you *do* that, anyway?

**Why not
become all
flame, be
changed
totally
into fire?**

That's the vocational challenge unique to each of us. Whatever you do, leave a pint of blood, I heard someone say. Pour yourself out like a libation, St. Paul would say. Be like God; be like Christ. Be mercy poured out for the world.

And how do you do *that*? I can't answer that question for you. I can't even coherently answer that question for myself. But to be like God, to be like Christ, to be mercy poured out for the world, to become all flame, means to yield to the movement of the Holy Spirit in all circumstances. I'm not speaking here of emoting your way through life, but living gently enough, mindfully enough, to be aware of the still small stirring of the Holy Spirit, and then boldly acting on it.

Notice the stirring of quiet satisfaction in work well done or in an act of kindness or mercy gracefully extended. Notice the tug to act justly in a particular situation; to take initiative. Notice those perfect opportunities to be light, salt, grace, or peace in your world. Give the Holy Spirit the freedom to be the true active agent in your life. Notice, notice, notice, and then act. Pray without ceasing, as St. Paul says; in all things, rejoice.

*A Morning
Prayer*

Lord Jesus,
anoint me
this day
in your
Holy Spirit
for your
Father's
purposes.

**THE VOICE OF GOD CALLING
IN SCRIPTURE**

MARK 7:31-37

Jesus' healings which we find in the Gospels are neither random nor designed to display the full range of his mighty powers. Rather, Jesus' healings reveal some challenge within our own lives and his invitation to wholeness.

In Mark's Gospel Jesus heals a man who is deaf and suffers from a speech impediment—a person who cannot hear and who cannot speak and be understood. He suffers an unfreedom, locked out of human discourse.

What does Jesus do? He touches the man's ears and, spitting, touches the man's tongue. He looks up to heaven and groans one of those deep groans which only his Father can understand (see Romans 8:26-27), and says to the man, "Be opened!"

Be opened. Stop being closed. Be opened. Jesus does not say "Open up," suggesting action on the part of the one who is closed, but rather, "Be opened," suggesting that the one who is closed to human discourse would become opened by the Holy Spirit to active authentic engagement in human discourse.

Apparently being healed and opened to active, authentic engagement in human discourse was of value in Jesus' estimation and worthy of his healing action.

Our vocational challenge may be not to defeat our opponents with dogmatic truths and airtight arguments, but to be opened to enter ever so humbly into active, authentic human discourse where real people wrestle with God's real work of redemption in their lives.

THE OVERLOOKED BUT CRITICAL PIECE

Formation of social conscience essential in discerning God's personal call

Even a quick listen to the news on any given day tells us that God's work of redemption—completed in Jesus' death and resurrection—is still being worked out in fits and starts on the human plane. And that human plane is precisely where God's calling awakens our personal response.

Formation of social conscience stretches our personal horizon to include not only our own path to holiness but the world's path to holiness. Why? Because God created us as social beings, with an innate longing for connection, inclusion, communion. Social conscience stirs me to compassionate care for others, to have the heart of Jesus who was moved with pity for the suffering of others.

As part of the human community and anointed for God's purposes, I discover that relieving human suffering and restoring human dignity and hope is a vital part of God's purposes. In fact, God so cares for the poor and the suffering that Jesus identifies as one of them (see Matthew 25). If I do not hear the cries of those who suffer, I may be hard of hearing—in a troubling spiritual sense.

Formation of social conscience, accepting personal responsibility for social sin, and working for social justice are not someone else's work; they are my work, and a significant way in which I fulfill God's calling—my personal vocation. My mission is not separate from God's mission, which is the healing and redemption and restoration of all of humankind and all of creation.

The starting point for formation of social conscience is listening to the heart where God speaks, and listening to the voice of those who suffer, whether they are visible or invisible to me. A passionate commitment to life, justice, mercy, and peacemaking is more than a concept; it's action based on my being in this particular place at this particular time, anointed for God's purposes and the full revelation of God's reign.

Formation of social conscience means awakening from the sleep of inhumanity which we have come to accept as the norm, and awakening to God's dream for humankind and all of creation. AV

**Three vital ways
AWAKENING VOCATIONS
can animate your parish's
Vocations Committee**

Every person in your parish has been washed and anointed for a particular work of God's love and provision, whether that be ministry in the Church or mission in the world. How can your Vocations Committee awaken every parishioner, regardless of age or state in life, to their unique calling?

1. By offering parish leaders a *clearly defined vocation formation process* that identifies, shapes, animates, and sustains an integrated approach to vocational awareness.
2. By offering parishioners of all ages a *solid theological foundation* and *practical tools* for vocation discernment.
3. By offering a *compelling image and vocabulary of vocation* that breathes renewed direction and meaning into your parish's vocational culture.

For details contact Awakening Vocations in the way most convenient to you: Call : **1-888.687.2046**; or e-mail: **info@awakeningvocations.com**. AV

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*A one-day discovery of God's movement
in the circumstances of life*

**“Restless
for the Lord”**

A mix of good theology, stimulating conversation, time to think and pray, one-to-one with the “vocation experts,” great food, and a chance to meet other interesting men and women in your area who are “restless for the Lord.”

Interested? E-mail **info@awakeningvocations.com**
or call: **1.888.687.2046**

THE AWAKENING VOCATIONS PROCESS


The term “workshop” is handy, but part of the process of awakening the vocational culture in a parish or young adult ministry just doesn’t lend itself to “work.” So we use a café environment (see www.theworldcafe.com) for parts of the process.

1. The Culture Café: A half-day gathering, in an inviting café environment, where the parish’s leaders and visionaries explore the meaning, implications, and process to develop an effective “whole cloth” vocational culture within the parish, plus an overview of the process.

2. Awakening Vocations: A one-day PowerPoint workshop for the entire parish, providing a theology of vocation that links baptism, the Church’s mission, and God’s unique call and the individual’s free and gifted response, plus steps for a vocational discernment process.

3. Parish Core Team Immersion: A one-day PowerPoint workshop, based on the U.S. Bishops’ pastoral plan, “Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us,” for those in the parish who shape or touch the spiritual formation of adults and youth in any way.

4. Vocational Guide Formation Workshop: A one-day PowerPoint workshop for those in the parish who are skilled in listening and gifted in wisdom and encouragement, to serve as “in-house” guides for fellow parishioners for lifelong vocational discernment.

5. The Next Step Café: A prayerful, interactive weekend retreat for young adults, with a theology of vocation and discernment process. 

(“Series” continued from page 1)

personal path to holiness; vocation and charism discernment; celibacy as a vocational lifestyle; personal vocation and development of social conscience; mature prayer and vocation discernment; obstacles in vocation discernment, and the maturing of God’s calling in the course of one’s life.

“Awakening Vocations with Mary Sharon Moore,” hosted by Portland-area Catholic layman Terry Amato, was recorded in the studios of KBVM, Catholic radio in the Archdiocese of Portland (Oregon). KBVM also has produced and aired Moore’s seasonal series, *Journey With the Word*.

For details on the radio series, or to receive the audio files for broadcast, call toll-free: 1-888/687-2046, or e-mail info@awakeningvocations.com.

More information on the Awakening Vocations process is available at www.awakeningvocations.com.




(“Living in God’s Economy” from page 1) strengthen their Christian witness in the world while simplifying their home life, all through the lens of Scripture and Jesus’ teachings.

The workbook also includes instructions on “writing your family covenant,” to express how family members will be present for each other and, as a Christ-centered family, for the good of their world.

Living in God’s Economy includes 50 pages of worksheets that accompany each of the eight sessions, plus activities to sustain a household’s process of living more simply in an intentionally “Gospel” way. *Living in God’s Economy* is also available in a one-day workshop format.

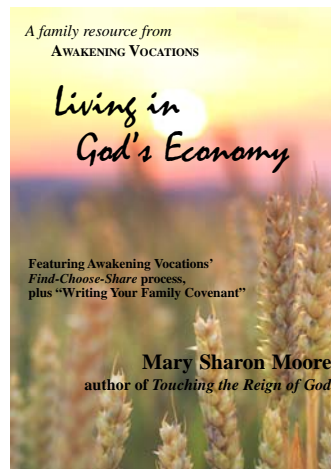
Living in God’s Economy is a timely parish resource as well, and is available from Awakening Vocations (www.awakeningvocations.com). At \$18 each (plus free shipping), price breaks apply for quantity orders.

To order, simply download the order form under “Quick Links” on our home page. Or call toll-free 1-888/687-2046 for an order form or details. 

AWAKENING VOCATIONS RESOURCES



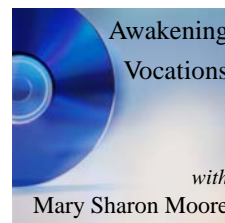
Touching the Reign of God: Bringing theological reflection to daily life. \$13, free shipping.



Living in God’s Economy: A practical guide for Christ-centered households in tough economic times. \$18, free shipping.



Awakening Vocations Four-Workshop Suite: A theology and process to awaken and sustain the vocational culture of the parish.



Awakening Vocations with Mary Sharon Moore: A 13-part radio series. Free to Catholic radio stations.

Visit our website anytime | www.awakeningvocations.com.
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