

# Awakening VOCATIONS

Awakening the  
vocational culture  
of parishes.

October-December 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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### PARISH-BASED VOCATIONAL RESOURCES

#### Two books now available in parish retreat and workshop formats

Awakening Vocations is pleased to offer parish-based adult and family faith formation resources that reinforce vocation discernment with simple processes and practical actions for high-impact outcomes.

"Touching the Reign of God," a weekend retreat based on essays in the book of the same title by Awakening Vocations director Mary Sharon Moore, helps adults to recognize patterns of God's movement in their own lives through a guided process of theological reflection. In the unrushed retreat setting participants receive ample opportunity to reflect, journal, and converse on the deeper work of God's calling even through loss, failures, grieving, and seemingly fruitless efforts.

"Daily life and unexpected circumstances all offer surprising and rich opportunities to discover God's calling in your life," notes Moore. Discerning God's willing for your life "is not rocket science," Moore maintains. "God has too much to accomplish to play

(see back page, "Resources")

### ONE-TO-ONE VOCATION DISCERNMENT SUPPORT

#### Spiritual and vocational direction takes on tough issues of vocational lifestyle

Vocational lifestyle continues to be the area of vocation discernment most perplexing to men and women who are seeking God's intent for their life. The Church, notes vocation consultant Mary Sharon Moore, distinguishes three lifestyle pathways to holiness: Christian marriage, celibacy, and singlehood.

"These lifestyles are not something we choose," notes Moore; "rather, these lifestyles choose us. We are chosen within God's perfect design." Apart from God, she notes, (see back page, "One-to-One")

"FREE" REMAINS A  
VERY GOOD PRICE

#### Free shipping on all Awakening Vocations Resources

With free shipping, Awakening Vocations makes it easy for you to access good materials to help you discover God's good purposes for your life, your family's life, or the life of your parish.

Download an order form under "Quick Links" at our website, www.awakeningvocations.com, fill it out, put it in an envelope with your check, and your order will be shipped, usually within two working days.

AV

May  
your love  
make us  
what you have  
called us  
to be.

Roman Missal

At Mass on a recent Sunday, during the Preparation of the Gifts, the priest caringly poured the red wine from the crystal flask into the handcrafted silver chalices, a graceful gesture as he prepared the sacrifice.

In that moment, in that familiar gesture, I finally had a context for all the news I had heard in the past seven days—of war, genocide, unthinkable acts of greed, injustice, and abuse against the common good, innocent lives wasted in the endless madness of evil running rampant in our world. Week by week the details may change but the news remains the same. What I understood now is that the sacrifice of human lives and of the life of God's creation is integral to the sacrifice of Christ Jesus.

As the priest poured the wine from the flask into the chalices, he gently shook the flask to get that last little drop. Nothing wasted, all poured out for the sacrifice.

***This is what it means to be a priest, to offer the sacrifice of the world.***

The wine poured into these cups at this Mass became for me the blood of humanity poured out in the past week, this very same past week when I prayed my little prayers, did my little work, and slept my little sleep. As the priest lifted the chalice in thanksgiving, I thought to myself: So this is what it means to be a priest, to offer the sacrifice not just of our own little lives, but to offer to God the sacrifice of the world.

Later, at the Fraction Rite, when the priest broke the sacred Host, I recalled those haunting words of Jesus: "Unless the grain of wheat fall and die, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it will yield a great harvest" (see John 12:24). In the past week some lives became that grain of wheat that dies, so that God can reap the harvest. In this Mass I offered to God what I had not suffered.

As I processed forward to receive the body and blood of Christ, I realized that the anguish of our world is not at all separate from the One in whom we are in communion. "Become what you receive," St. Augustine said, "the body of Christ." These are vocational words, to which I say, "Amen."

#### THE VOICE OF GOD CALLING IN SCRIPTURE

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Jesus offers a teaching about treasures, about the things we possess—or the things that can easily possess us.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth," Jesus says, "but store up treasures in heaven" (see Matthew 6:19-20). Do not invest your money or your spirit in what will decay and rot, he would say, nor in what can be here today and gone tomorrow. Your IRA might be an apt example.

And then Jesus offers us this exquisite phrase: "For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be" (v. 21). As I thought about that phrase, somehow the words got rearranged, and I found myself thinking, "Where your heart is, there also will your treasure be."

From the desk of . . .

Mary Sharon



#### A Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus,  
awaken your  
compassion  
within our lives,  
our communities,  
our nation, and  
our world.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

Well, yes, of course! Where your heart is, there is your treasure. Your heart is your intentional presence. Your treasure is authentic vocation. Even in the midst of overwhelming and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, the treasure is there, waiting to be claimed.

People often confide in me, "I just don't know what God has in mind for my life. I just can't figure out God's will." *Where is your joy?* I ask in reply.

What do you treasure? What work situations? What specific interactions with people? And interactions with what kinds of people? Where are you most alive? What animates you? Where is your heart? What patterns of effectiveness and joy do you find? Chances are good, that's where your vocational treasure lies.

## THE VOCATIONAL WORD WE TRY TO AVOID

### “Called” in so many directions; anointed in one

I came away from a recent talk feeling a little exhausted. It was a perfectly fine theological talk, full of exhortation to become the people God desires us to be.

But the exhaustion came when I started to add up all the ways the speaker reminded me that I am called: Called to pray, called to take action, called to be a witness; called to give, to share, to listen, to teach, to bind up wounds. Called, in short, to do it all.

We easily feel “called” in many directions, but we are *anointed* in one: To become fully the person whom God has desired for all eternity, working the miracles for which each has been gifted. That anointing began in baptism. Too easily we feel fragmented and overwhelmed, within our Christian role, with all we are “called” to fulfill.

Anointing, however, is actual empowerment in the Holy Spirit, oriented toward action which is focused, effective, healing, and spiritually fruitful. We are anointed not only to be miracle workers but to be a *community* of miracle workers. (Simply put, miracles are those events that would not make sense if God did not exist.) Miracles, Jesus reminds us, are not private events but public, and evoke a public witness to God’s power.

We are the anointed miracle workers today, communities of miracle workers, anointed with particular gifts, or charisms, which enable us to accomplish what could not occur if God did not exist. Imagine your parish being a center of miracle-working, where the reign of God is actually restored, revealed, and celebrated!

You can dance yourself dizzy being “called” to this and “called” to that, and end up exhausted with purpose anxiety. It’s good to slow down and remember that you, personally, have been anointed for one thing within your Christian life.

“Working miracles” is part of your vocational job description. It also should be the silent and understood subtext of your parish’s mission statement. 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

*Awakening Vocations donates 10% of its proceeds from your parish’s multiphase contract to support the education of your diocese’s seminarians.*

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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**

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## 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](http://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. 

(“Resources” continued from page 1)

games with your life, or to let you hang in suspense and frustration as you try to figure out what God has in mind.”

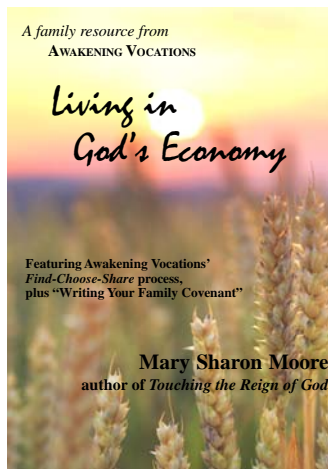
“Living in God’s Economy,” a one-day workshop based on Moore’s recently published workbook of the same title, helps families and small households to identify the excess—in purchasing habits, activities, family celebrations and recreation, and relationship with the environment—that keeps them from encountering Jesus. The workbook’s unique Find-Choose-Share process simplifies the work of editing out the distraction, choosing a simpler, more Christ-centered way of living, and sharing excess with others in need.

To learn how the “Touching the Reign of God” retreat or “Living in God’s Economy” workshop can benefit your parish, call toll-free: 1-888/687-2046, or e-mail [info@awakeningvocations.com](mailto:info@awakeningvocations.com). Check out the Quick Links at [www.awakeningvocations.com](http://www.awakeningvocations.com). 

## AWAKENING VOCATIONS RESOURCES



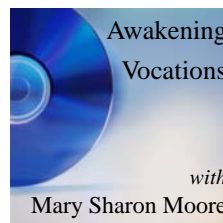
*Touching the Reign of God: Bringing theological reflection to daily life.*  
\$13, free shipping.



*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](http://www.awakeningvocations.com).  
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(“One-to-One” from page 1)

“I cannot choose, say, a married life because it’s expected, or a celibate life because it may be a shorter path to holiness.” Nor, she notes, can we choose a vocational lifestyle for the sake of some perceived greater good. “Honoring, rather than sacrificing, who God has made us to be at the core of our being lies at the heart of vocation discernment.”

With seven years as a spiritual director, Moore notes “a steady and troubling increase in the number of people discovering after years or married life, or even after multiple marriages, or years of celibate life, that what they had committed themselves to was not what God had in mind.” While she does not counsel individuals to leave their commitment, she offers insight into God’s calling that “is always immediately clarifying” for directees. “The heartache is real,” says Moore, “but naming their experience becomes a uniquely clarifying moment.”

Moore offers spiritual and vocational direction in person, and across the U.S. by phone. For more details, call 1-888/687-2046, or e-mail [info@awakeningvocations.com](mailto:info@awakeningvocations.com).