



Awakening Vocations Workshop

A theology and process
to awaken and sustain the
vocational culture of your parish.

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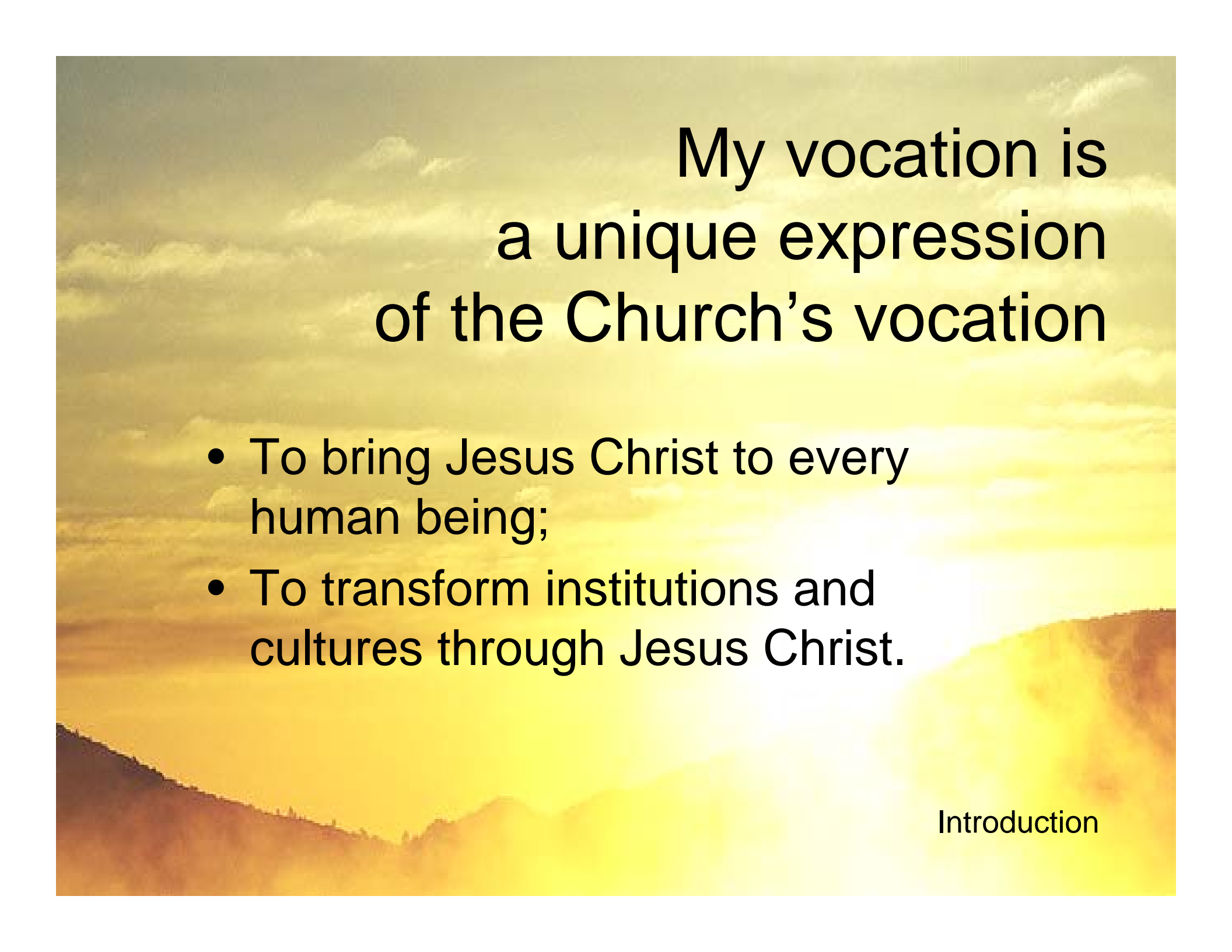
Workshop Overview

Introduction: Basics of Christian Vocation

- I. The Vocational Life of the Parish
- II. The Vocational Life of the Anointed
- III. Elements of Vocational Discernment
- IV. Process and Practical Steps to Discern God's Calling

What do we mean by “vocation”?

- *Vocation* = a particular way of fulfilling God’s purpose for my life:
 - Who God desires me to be (my self-identity in God);
 - How I am to become that unique person (my vocational lifestyle);
 - What I am called to do for others (ministry or mission).



My vocation is a unique expression of the Church's vocation

- To bring Jesus Christ to every human being;
- To transform institutions and cultures through Jesus Christ.

The “sales” approach

*“Have you considered priesthood”
(or “religious life”)*

is not the most sustainable strategy
to cultivate “new vocations.”

I. Vocational Life of the Parish

A more helpful approach

“How do we as a parish, or diocese,
identify, shape, animate, and sustain
the vocation of the Christian community
and the vocation of each member?”

I. Vocational Life of the Parish

What do we mean by “vocational culture?”

- “Vocational” = the way God calls us.
- “Culture” = the context for understanding “how the world works” or how God works in us and in the world.
- Culture is the carrier of values.
- Culture helps us connect with each other.

The parish has a vocational self-identity in God

- Called as a people;
- Participating in the Church's birth and baptism (see John 19:34; 20:22);
- Part of the living body of Christ.

I. Vocational Life of the Parish

Reflection Questions: Part 1

1. What efforts at vocational formation are currently in place in our parish?
2. Are these efforts effective? How so?
3. Is vocational formation available and encouraged for everyone? In what ways?

Every vocation flows from God and is fulfilled in God

- It's not about me and what I choose.
- It's about God's plan and desire for my life and for the life of the world.

II. Vocational Life of the Anointed

The challenge: Vocation vs. career

- When my *career* is not grounded in *vocation*:
 1. Relationship with God is peripheral to my life;
 2. What I do dictates my lifestyle;
 3. Vocation = for priests and religious, and therefore not my concern.



Called by God

How does
mature Christian vocation
come about?

II. Vocational Life of the Anointed

Discerning the three elements of vocation

- The unique *self* (the vocational who) I am called to *be* in God;
- The Christian *lifestyle* (the vocational how) I am called to *live*; and
- The *ministry or mission* (the vocational what) I am called to *do*.

III. Elements of Vocational Discernment

The work of vocational discernment is to . . .

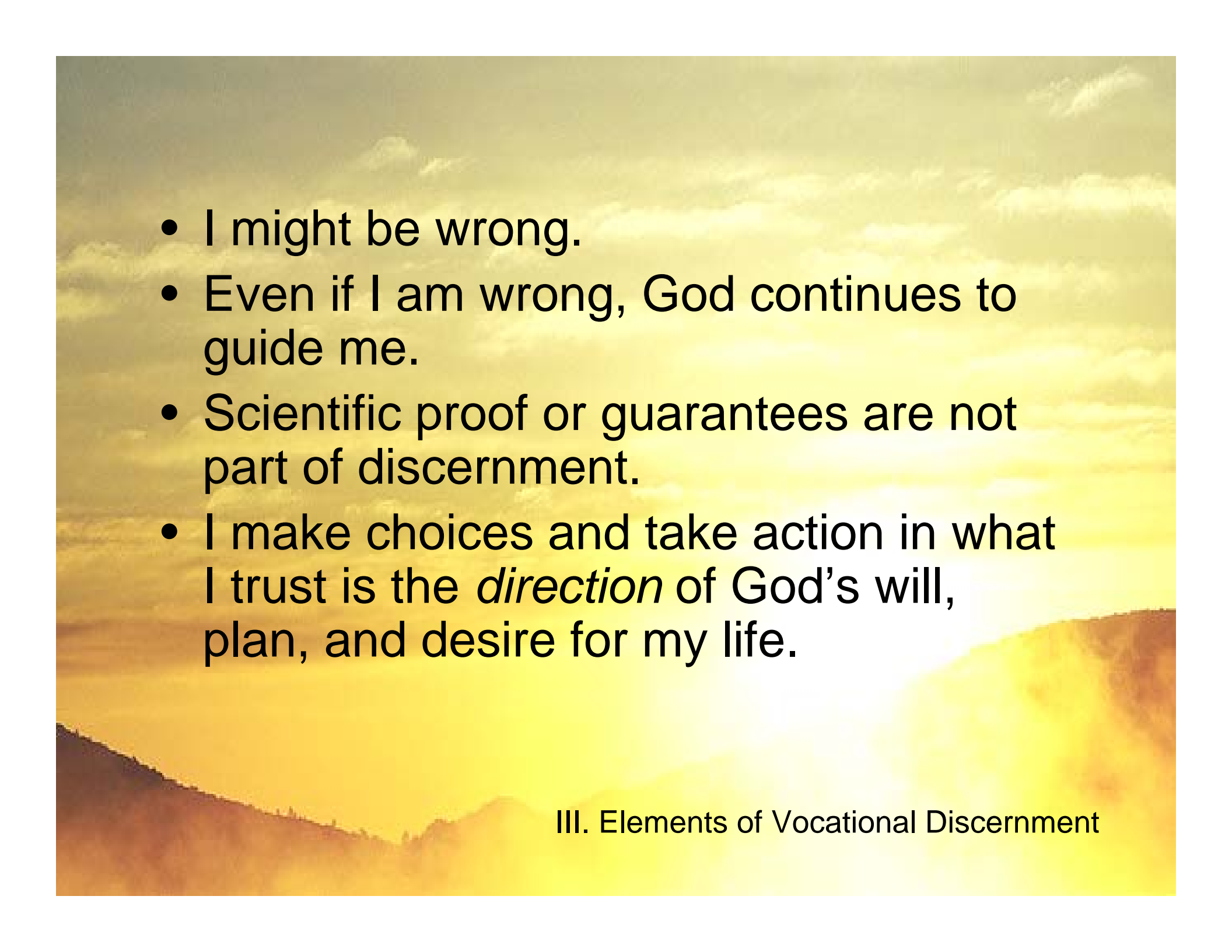
- Sift through experiences and attitudes to discover God's movement and calling; and
- Find ways to lessen the impact of obstacles and negative factors.

III. Elements of Vocational Discernment

Discernment is a faith process in which I . . .

- Prayerfully open myself to God's plan;
- Notice things (circumstances, opportunities, feelings);
- Give it a try; take action;
- Prayerfully examine the results; and
- Take the next obvious step.

III. Elements of Vocational Discernment

- 
- I might be wrong.
 - Even if I am wrong, God continues to guide me.
 - Scientific proof or guarantees are not part of discernment.
 - I make choices and take action in what I trust is the *direction* of God's will, plan, and desire for my life.

III. Elements of Vocational Discernment

Discerning the three vocational lifestyles

- Singlehood;
- Marriage;
- Celibacy.

III. Elements of Vocational Discernment

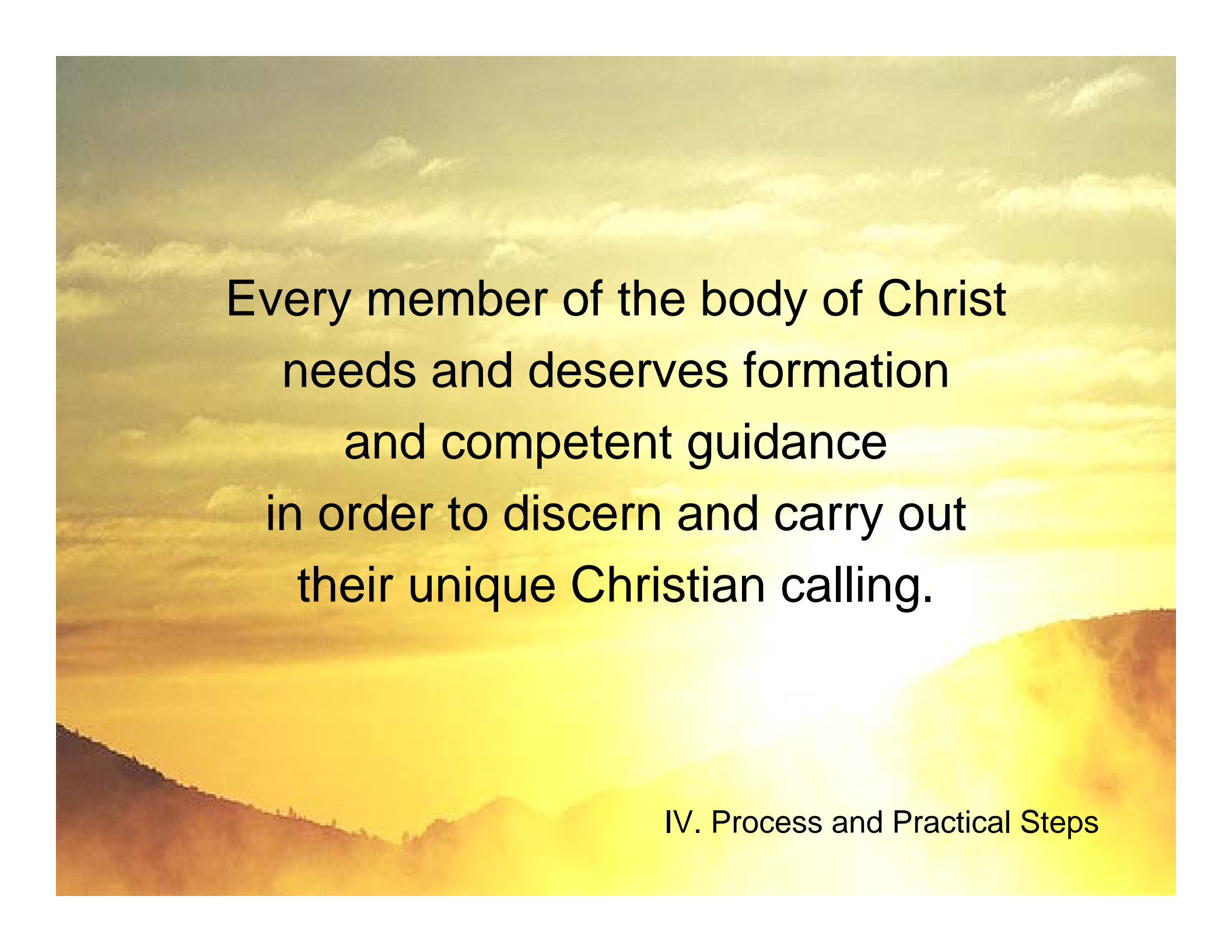
Marriage and celibacy: Vocations in their own right

- Not merely conditions or requirements for parenting or for priesthood or religious life.
- Celibacy must be experienced as a specific vocation, independent of but not separate from, the ministerial dimension of a calling.

Indicators of mature vocational awareness

- An existential inability to be, become, or do otherwise.
- I move from God as “friend” to God as “mystery.”

III. Elements of Vocational Discernment



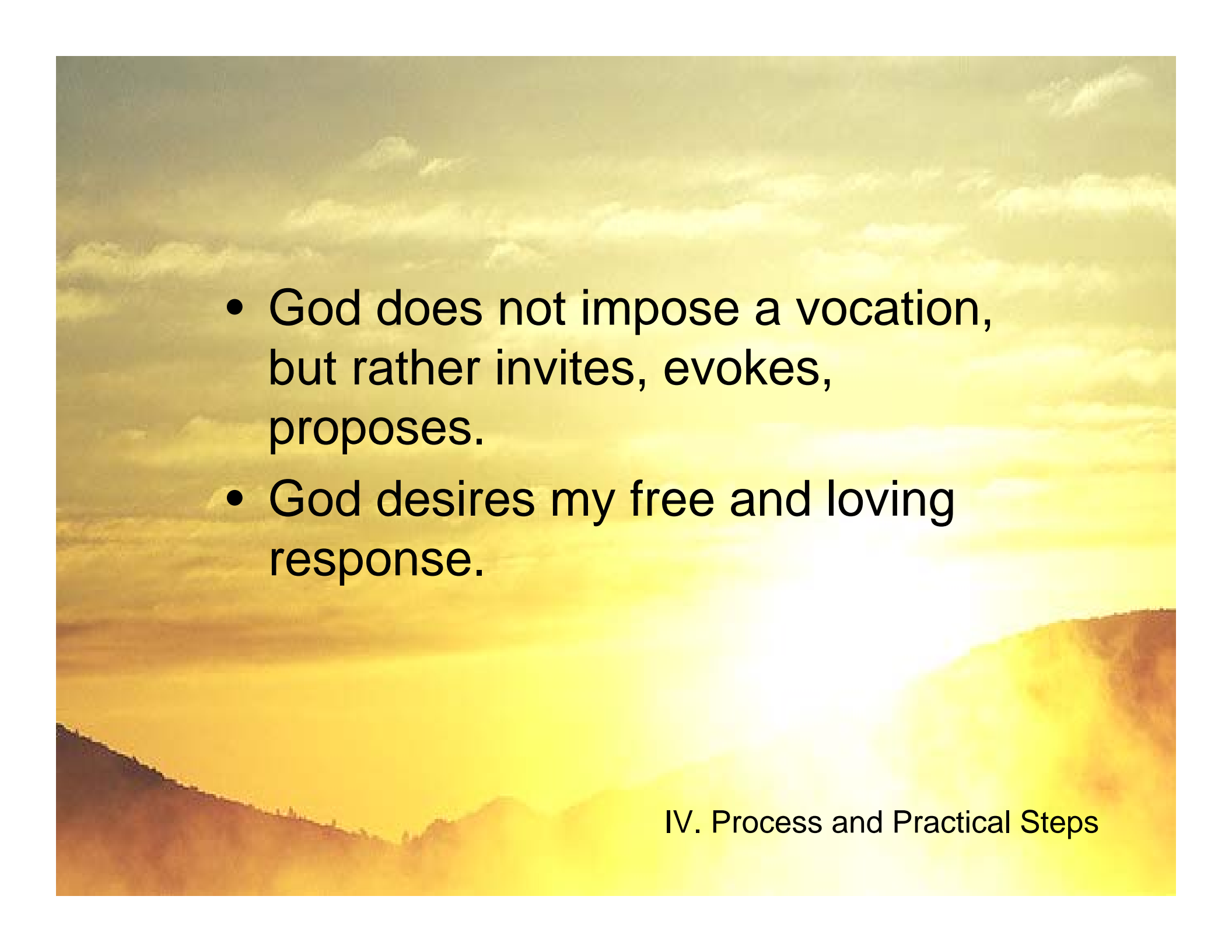
Every member of the body of Christ
needs and deserves formation
and competent guidance
in order to discern and carry out
their unique Christian calling.

IV. Process and Practical Steps

Vocational awakening requires

- Experimenting with possibilities;
- Prayerful reflection on results;
- Noticing the circumstances of my life and increasing evidence of God's movement;
- Eliminating what does not work;
- Pursuing and embracing what does work;
- Support of the Christian community.

IV. Process and Practical Steps

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- God does not impose a vocation, but rather invites, evokes, proposes.
 - God desires my free and loving response.

IV. Process and Practical Steps



Obstacles to vocational discernment

1. Clutter:

- Material clutter;
- Activities clutter;
- Relationship clutter;
- Spiritual clutter.

IV. Process and Practical Steps



Seven steps in vocational discernment

1. Identify the situation I am discerning.
2. Identify where I am with it in process.
3. Identify where I am with it spiritually.

IV. Process and Practical Steps

A few resources

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (1964).

Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium (U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1995).

Called By God. Francis Kelly Nemeck, O.M.I., and Marie Theresa Coombs (Wipf & Stock, 2001).

Discerning Vocations to Marriage, Celibacy and Singlehood. Francis Kelly Nemeck, O.M.I., and Marie Theresa Coombs (Wipf & Stock, 1994).

A Sacred Voice is Calling: Personal vocation and social conscience. John Neafsey (Orbis, 2006).