

**VOCATION MINISTRY ACTIVITIES  
WITHIN THE  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PROGRAM  
OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**Brother José Sarasa**

The Catholic school is the place for education and orientation to ministry above all through these three great tasks or activities of all forms of vocation ministry: awakening, proposing/suggesting and accompanying.

These tasks are not phases to be rigidly followed, but they are components which, with greater or less intensity, are found in all forms of vocation ministry and they are carried out or they can be carried out in the **process of Christian initiation** proper to the Catholic school.

### 1. Awakening

Vocational awakening within the Catholic school's ministry education program includes the creation of a series of **conditions** and the realization of a series of **activities** which tend to awaken, suggest or express a type of restlessness within the context of the vocational call.

One basic condition for vocational awakening is the realization of the **process for Christian initiation** proper to the Catholic School which:

- presents the Christian proposal as a dialogue between God who calls and the believer, both as an individual and as part of a community, who responds.
- provides the necessary means to those students who accept the Christian proposal so that they can continue deepening and experiencing their faith, introducing them to community life, prayer and the sacraments, commitment and to living out the Gospel, especially through the catechumenate procedures.

A second basic condition is the explicit presentation of the vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life. This explicit vocational presentation can be realized in the Catholic School at different times and within different structures and by various means:

- In the School Religious Education Program: within certain topics of the official curriculum in which can be found explicitly the vocation of priesthood and consecrated life.

- Vocational catechesis programs for special times or important and significant dates: "Vocation weeks", "Vocation or missionary campaigns", World Day for vocations, Seminar Day...
- "Faith celebrations", time for "reflection and prayer"...
- Vocational experiences and moments of testifying to the faith
- Throughout the "catechumenate process in :
  - Christian or catechumenate group meetings.
  - Social gatherings, retreats, spiritual exercises, prayer meetings...
- Youth gathering during Easter time, Summer cursillos-meetings, "work camps"...
- In "personal encounters": personal tutoring, personal guidance, personal interview...

### 2. Proposing

In the measure that a boy or girl responds to "awakening" activities, this will make possible a vocational proposal. The **vocational proposal** in its proper and narrow sense is: a **personal invitation to reflect** on the possibility of a call from the Lord to a specific vocation. Its acceptance presupposes an attitude of openness and vocational discernment (1).

The vocational proposal requires **knowledge of the individual** and its most helpful area is in **personal accompaniment**. Both of these conditions occur or can occur in the **process of Christian initiation** which is proper to the Catholic School.

With respect to **when** one should carry out the vocational proposal it is usually suggested that the age of the individual should be kept in mind as well as significant moments within the process itself. It is clear that the Catholic School can offer great assistance in this area. In effect, with respect to the age it is often recommended make use of "sensitive moments". That is to say, making the **vocational proposal**: at the end of pre-adolescence in a general way; and at the end of adolescence and the beginning of young adulthood in a more direct way.

With regard to **significant times** to carry out the vocational proposal one can point out the following (some of these have been cited in "awakening" activities):

- During the **personal interview**
- During times of **contact with vocation testimonies...**
- During the "**catechumenal process**":
  - in the Christian or catechumenal group meeting: during discussion about some topic referring to a consecrated vocation, the underprivileged, the prophets, witnesses of the Kingdom...
  - during "intense moments" of the catechumenal process: social gatherings, retreats, Easter youth gatherings, prayer and guidance meetings, work camps...

### 3. Accompanying

The task of accompanying begins the moment in which the boy or girl has accepted the vocational proposal. The role of accompaniment includes many areas: animating, supporting, motivating, demanding. But, above all, accompanying means **helping one to discern**. This role of accompaniment is carried out, or can be carried out in the pastoral area of the Catholic School.

As important structures for vocational accompaniment within the Catholic School, especially for the function of discernment, I would like to point out the following items, among others:

— The personal interview: This is important in the entire faith and vocational process, but it is indispensable for a good *vocational discernment*.

— The Christian group and the vocation group. The vocation group does not replace the Christian or catechumenal

group but it complements their efforts in the aspect of vocations.

— Special meetings for vocational discernment.

At the end of our talk and by way of summary/conclusion, let us recall that we have seen how the Ministry of Education Program of the Catholic School, in its process of Christian initiation, explicitly takes on the task of vocational education and guidance, developing a complete vocation ministry program within the school itself. This allows us to affirm with certitude and firmness that *“The Catholic School is the place of vocational education and guidance”*.

---

(1) In this area I am following the content and plan of “The steps of vocational accompaniment”, *Revista de Pastoral Vocacional “Todos Uno”*, number 103, July-September, 1990, pp. 34-35.