

Dear Friends in Christ, something that is often misunderstood by many people concerns the notion of “vocation.” Whenever the word is used at all, many often immediately associate it to the religious life or to the priesthood. However, there is more to it than that. Etymologically, the word ‘vocation’ comes from the Latin word, *vocare* [to call]. Thus, one could say that the literal meaning of the word is a “call.” Yet, an ordinary “call” does not fully do justice to the word either since a vocation is more than that. A vocation should always be seen in relation to God, that is, a call from God. And the first and most important call from God is the **universal call to holiness**. This call, which is rooted in our Baptism, consists of knowing, loving, and serving the Lord more profoundly within our respective life. It is an impulse that draws us toward a deeper union with God. It is an invitation that can be lived out in four very distinct forms - single life, married life, consecrated life or the ordained ministry. Each *vocation*, that is, each way of life, is fundamentally a call to follow Christ more closely.

Like so many other seminarians, Brother Henry, has been asking a simple question: Is God calling me to live this universal call to holiness through the ordained ministry? Through many years of formation, reflection, prayer and discernment at Serra House, Madonna House, St. Augustine Seminary, and most recently at our parish of Our Lady of the Airways, Brother Henry has come to the conclusion that, at this time, God is not calling him to live a life of service in the priesthood. He has decided to leave the formation program at St. Augustine Seminary, and he will be resuming his theological studies and will continue discerning God’s call. Although his stay at our parish has been a brief one, many of you will agree that Brother Henry has made a good contribution to our community through his teaching, reflections, and gentle and kind presence. Please continue to pray for Brother Henry as he seeks to find the will of God.

Pax Christi, *Fr. Thomas*