

## RESPONDING TO OUR CALL TO HOLINESS AS LAITY

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As we commemorate Laity Sunday on June 27, 2021, let us reflect on our key mission and vocation as laity in the Church today, especially against the backdrop of the pandemic.

These have indeed been challenging times. In his book, *Life After the Pandemic*, Pope Francis says that just like the apostles who found themselves in the midst of a storm, we too are in the midst of a storm. *"Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes by..."* and yet Pope Francis goes on to say that like the disciples, we too will experience that with Jesus on board with us, there will be no ship wreck!

While we as lay faithful have made constant efforts to be involved in various ministries of the Church, be it the SCCs, Saint Vincent de Paul, Legion of Mary, CCR, etc., one might wonder how do we fulfil our role and mission as Laity in the current scenario, where we don't even have an opportunity to attend the Eucharist in our parishes, let alone participate in, or conduct, parish activities.

The Synodal document '*Christifideles Laici*' tells us more about our key role as laity - *The faithful are called to fulfil their mission as 'salt of the earth' and 'light of the world'. By our baptism, we are called to participate in the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King.*

*'To respond to their vocation, the lay faithful must see their daily activities as an occasion to join themselves to God, fulfil his will, serve other people and lead them to communion with God in Christ.'*

If this is then our true call or vocation, let us ask ourselves how can we (in our own little ways) serve others and lead them to Christ within our communities. Maybe we could be inspired by the early Christians and welcome this moment of trial to find new ways and means to reach out in our communities rather than our traditional ways of interacting.

Some possible ways we can respond as lay faithful to our mission are:

- Reach out to COVID-affected families in our communities to see how we could support them in terms of basic facilities/provisions, or to simply check how they are doing
- Check in on those who are living alone, especially the elderly, and volunteer for any errands/ to order rations online
- Use our networks to help connect those looking for employment opportunities
- Help out senior citizens unfamiliar with the online world with their banking or other needs
- Rosary, novenas and intercessory prayers in our communities, (even if it's) through virtual or social media
- Volunteer in any way we can to reach out to the poor and marginalised, or sponsor NGOs/ CCOs doing outreach services
- Sharing information on availability of medical or counselling services
- Conduct activities online where our community can come together and feel a sense of belonging.

Let's not feel discouraged and isolated in this pandemic, but instead respond to our true vocation as laity to be the salt of the earth and light of the world in whatever way we can. Let's make our Small Christian Communities truly a community that extends the much-needed support and sense of belonging to our parishioners and others who need someone to show they care and assure them that they are not alone in this pandemic.

### Questions for reflection:

1. What aspect of the paper struck me especially?
2. As part of my vocation and call to holiness, what can I do in my own personal capacity to reach out to others in my community right now?
3. What are one or two practices that we can start doing in our SCCs right now to create a sense of belonging and togetherness in the current situation when everyone feels isolated?