



# Living the Call: An Introduction to the Lay Vocation

*Michael Novak, William E Simon*

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Since 1965 the number of priests in the United States has fallen by some 30,000. But over that same time period, more than 30,000 laypeople have come into the employ of parishes and other Church institutions. Laypeople have stepped up to serve in a variety of new ministries, and they are relieving their pastors of many administrative burdens, enabling them to focus on their proper priestly duties. Lay teachers now outnumber nuns, brothers, and priests in Catholic schools by at least 19 to 1. In the history of the Church, laypeople have never been asked to do so much.

William E. Simon, Jr. and Michael Novak call attention to this great shift in *Living the Call*. The first part of the book tells the personal stories of nine faithful laypeople now serving the Church in new and diverse ways. Simon and Novak's insight is that more and more who work in the Church feel the need to shape their lives in a new way, matched to their different needs and adjusted to the new base of knowledge about the world with which they begin. In response to this need, the second part of *Living the Call* offers practical examples and reflections on a number of themes, including entering into the presence of God and learning different forms of prayer, reading that refreshes the mind and deepens the soul, and the graces of the sacraments and how being a spouse contributes to holiness.

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