



Vocare Guided Meditations

For personal or corporate use

Vocare is an ongoing spiritual practice designed to help you discern and embrace your various callings so that you can more intentionally live life on purpose for the common good. Through guided reflection on personal life experiences via the lenses of values, openness, call, attentiveness, regrets, and experiences of God's presence, the vocare practice nourishes discernment of three primary questions. Who am I called to be? What am I called to do? Why am I here?

Vocare guided meditations are designed for either personal or corporate use.

For personal use, choose a quiet time and space, free of distractions to allow ample time for reflection and meditation. Your time of reflection may be enhanced by lighting a candle, playing meditative background music of your choice, journaling or drawing your responses, or choosing a particular, designated time or place for your meditation. Begin and end each time of meditation with moments of quiet, deep, intentional breathing.

For corporate use, choose the setting and the physical environment with care. If vocare is incorporated into worship, introduce the practice and encourage people to make sure they are sitting comfortably. Basic instruction about spiritual practices in general and guided meditation in particular may be helpful. For communities unfamiliar with extended periods of silence, background music will enhance the experience. If your setting allows, you may want to provide materials for people to draw or journal their responses. When appropriate, following the guided meditation with small group sharing may enhance the experience. If sharing is included, boundaries and expectations for confidentiality and safety must be established and agreed to prior to the experience.

Called by God to live life on purpose for the common good, vocare is a practice to nourish you amid the unfinished, in the space between no longer and not yet. Blessings on the journey!

Vocare – Renewal

Ash Wednesday - Matt 6:1-6; 16-21

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Focus

You are invited to focus on God's call to **renewal** for you. Renewal comes in host of different forms and through a variety of times and experiences in our lives. Sometimes, renewal comes through unexpected, unplanned, or even undesired circumstances. At other times, renewal is a conscientious and intentional choice. Either way, seasons of renewal are "between no longer and not yet." In these "in between times," we are changed. Use the time between the following guided questions for your own reflection and meditation. Bring to mind an experience from your own life when you **experienced renewal**. Is this an experience of renewal that is in the past, or is it an experience of renewal that is ongoing? How has this experience of renewal shaped your life and its horizons?

Opening Prayer

Guide me, O God, in the in between times of my life, to a renewed and valuable sense of purpose. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

What life **values** are present for you in this experience of renewal? Are they your most important values?

How does this experience of renewal invite or compel you to be **open**? How easy is it for you to be open to this?

What voices are **calling** to you through this experience of renewal? Are these voices that you want to listen to? Why or why not?

As you consider this experience of renewal, what holds your **attention**? Is this where you want your attention to be?

What **regrets** does this experience of renewal bring to mind for you? What do you do with these regrets?

Where and how in this experience of renewal do you **experience God's presence**?

In light of this reflection, what do you need to lean into who you are called to be and what you are called to do?

Closing Prayer

I hear you calling me to return to you with all my heart, O God.

Renew in me a right spirit.

Turn me toward you through Lenten practices that call me from death to life.

In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

Vocare - Values

Lent 1 - Matthew 4:1-11

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Focus

You are invited to focus on your own **values**. Values are the things that we most hold dear, those principles or commitments that guide how we think, what we believe, and how we act. Values can be both tangible and intangible. They can be consciously present in our actions, and they can contribute unconscious influence upon our choices. Considering personal values with intention helps us to name what our values really are and to determine if what we aspire to value is actually demonstrated in our everyday lives. Use the time between the following guided questions for your own reflection and meditation. Bring to mind an experience from your own life when you had to **choose between conflicting values**. Is this a value-centered choice that has been resolved, or is it a value-centered choice that is unresolved? How has this particular experience of value-centeredness shaped your life and its horizons?

Opening prayer

Help me, O God, to value what matters and to live my life reflecting those values. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

What life **values** are present for you in this experience? Are they your most important values?

How does this value-centered choice invite or compel you to be **open**? How easy is it for you to be open to this?

What voices are **calling** to you through this value-centered choice? Are these voices that you want to listen to? Why or why not?

As you consider this value-centered choice, what holds your **attention**? Is this where you want your attention to be?

What **regrets** does this value-centered choice bring to mind for you? What do you do with these regrets?

Where and how in this value-centered choice do you **experience God's presence**?

In light of this reflection, what do you need to lean into who you are called to be and what you are called to do?

Closing Prayer

Lead me by your Spirit, O God, to value what you value.
Shepherd my commitments,
that they may reflect your purposes in and through my life.
Show me when my values are misguided,
and move me to correct my ways.
In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

Vocare - Openness

Lent 2 - John 3:1-17

Vocare is an ongoing spiritual practice designed to help you discern and embrace your various callings so that you can more intentionally live life on purpose for the common good.

Focus

You are invited to focus on your own experiences of **openness**. Openness summons us to dwell in “holy indifference,” focusing our hearts and minds not on outcomes or results, but rather concentrating on being sustained in every present moment by God who works all things for good. Use the time between the following guided questions for your own reflection and meditation. Bring to mind an experience from your own life when **you needed to be open to something**. Is this an experience of openness that has reached a conclusion, or is it an experience of openness that is still unfolding? How has this particular experience of openness shaped your life and its horizons?

Opening prayer

Open the eyes of my heart, O God, that I might see the hope to which you have called me. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

What life **values** are present for you in this experience of openness? Are they your most important values?

To what does this experience invite or compel you to be **open**? How easy is it for you to be open to this?

What voices are calling to you through this invitation to **openness**? Are these voices that you want to listen to? Why or why not?

As you consider this experience of openness, what holds your **attention**? Is this where you want your attention to be?

What **regrets** does this invitation to openness bring to mind for you? What do you do with these regrets?

Where and how in this invitation to openness do you **experience God’s presence**?

In light of this reflection, what do you need to lean into who you are called to be and what you are called to do?

Closing Prayer

Open my heart, O God, to the mysteries of your saving love.
Give me ears to hear and eyes to see your unfolding vision for me and for your world.
Accompany me on my seeking journey,
And lead me to where you would have me go.
In the name of Jesus, +Amen.

Vocare – Call

Lent 3 - John 4:5-42

Vocare is an ongoing spiritual practice designed to help you discern and embrace your various callings so that you can more intentionally live life on purpose for the common good.

Focus

You are invited to focus on the **many and varied voices that call** to you each and every day. Some of those voices are literal. Others are metaphorical. Some are external, and some are internal. Some of the voices that call to us are life-giving, and while others are life-draining. Some are worthy of our attention. Others distract us and merit being silenced. Reflecting upon the voices that call to us helps us understand which voices we listen to and why. Likewise, it helps us consider which voices we would do well to preference and which it would be wise to dismiss or ignore. Use the time between the following guided questions for your own reflection and meditation. Bring to mind a **one of the voices** that speaks loudly to you. Is this a voice that builds you up, or is it a voice that tears you down? How has this voice shaped your life and its horizons?

Opening prayer

Help me, O God, to discern which voices to listen to in my daily life. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

What life **values** are present in this voice that calls to you? Are they your values?

How does this voice invite or compel you to be **open**? How easy is it for you to be open to this?

Who or what is this voice that **calls** to you? Is this a voice that you want or need to listen to? Why or why not?

As you consider this particular voice, what actually holds your **attention**? Is this where you want or need your attention to be?

What **regrets** does voice bring to mind for you? What do you do with these regrets?

Where and how does this voice draw you into an **experience God's presence**?

In light of this reflection, what do you need to lean into who you are called to be and what you are called to do?

Closing Prayer

Tune my heart to listen to your voice, O God.
Meet me in my places of need and longing,
And inspire me to trust in your call upon my life.
In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

Vocare – Attentiveness

Lent 4 - John 9:1-41

Vocare is an ongoing spiritual practice designed to help you discern and embrace your various callings so that you can more intentionally live life on purpose for the common good.

Focus

You are invited to focus on where you regularly invest your **attention** by considering what captures your time, energy, thoughts, and imagination in everyday life. By so considering, you are invited to nourish in a particular way, God's present-tense call in and through daily living. Use the time between the following guided questions for your own reflection and meditation. Bring to mind a **specific day, or season in your own life**. Is this day or season fairly typical for you, or is it an anomaly in the rhythm of your life? How has your attention in this specific day or season shaped your life and its horizons?

Opening prayer

When I am distracted by things that cause me to lose track of your call, O God, turn my attention back to you. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

What life **values** are present for you in where you invested your attention during this day or season? Are they your most important values?

How does your investment of attention in this day or season invite or compel you to be **open**? How easy is it for you to be open to this?

What voices are **calling** to you through your investment of attention in this day or season? Are these voices that you want or need to listen to? Why or why not?

As you consider this particular day or season, what actually held your **attention**? Is this where you want or need your attention to be?

What **regrets** does your investment of attention during this particular day or season bring to mind for you? What do you do with these regrets?

Where and how in this investment of attention do you **experience God's presence**?

In light of this reflection, what do you need to lean into who you are called to be and what you are called to do?

Closing Prayer

Turn my attention to you, O God, that I might recognize you at work in my life.
Direct the ponderings of my heart toward where you call me to pay attention.
Teach me to regard your work in all creation and to be attentive to what you are doing.
In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

Vocare - Regret

Lent 5 - John 11:1-45

Vocare is an ongoing spiritual practice designed to help you discern and embrace your various callings so that you can more intentionally live life on purpose for the common good.

Focus

You are invited to focus on your personal **regrets** by both naming and reframing them, and by so doing, nourish in a particular way, God's call for both your present and your future. When carefully tended to so that hindsight becomes insight, our regrets can be powerful and lifegiving voices of call for us. Use the time between the following guided questions for your own reflection and meditation. Bring to mind a **circumstance or experience of regret** from your own life. Is this a regret that still has you dwelling in hindsight, or is it a regret from which you now have gained insight? How has this regret shaped your life and its horizons?

Opening prayer

Help me, O God, to give my regrets to you and to go forward today, confident in your mercy. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

What life **values** are present for you in this regret? Are they your most important values?

How does this regret invite or compel you to be **open**? How easy is it for you to be open to this?

What voices are **calling** to you through this regret? Are these voices that you want or need to listen to? Why or why not?

As you consider this regret what holds your **attention**? Is this where you want or need your attention to be?

What insights does this **regret** bring to mind for you? What do you do with these insights?

Where and how in this regret do you **experience God's presence**?

In light of this reflection, what do you need to lean into who you are called to be and what you are called to do?

Closing Prayer

Bind up the wounds of my mistakes, O God.

Help me to learn from my regrets so that I might live more faithfully in each tomorrow.

Forgive me my sins, and raise me to new life today.

In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

Vocare – Experiences of God’s Presence

Holy Week

Vocare is an ongoing spiritual practice designed to help you discern and embrace your various callings so that you can more intentionally live life on purpose for the common good.

Focus

Holy Week is a profound “in between” time. It is the time of Jesus’ passion, between his ministry and his resurrection. But God is not absent. In this “in between week,” you are invited to focus on when, where, and how you **experience God’s presence**. God is not confined to prescribed religious contexts. As Barbara Brown Taylor says in her book, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*, “earth is so thick with divine possibility that it is a wonder we can walk anywhere without cracking our shins on altars.”¹ Use the time between the following guided questions for your own reflection and meditation. Bring to mind a time when you **experienced God’s presence in everyday life**. Is this an experience of God’s presence that was a one-time occurrence, or is it ongoing or repeated? How has this particular experience of God’s presence in everyday life shaped your life and its horizons?

Opening prayer

Help me, O God, amid all that is unfinished, to meet you in the ordinary experiences of my everyday life. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

What life **values** are present for you in this experience of God’s presence? Are they your most important values?

How does this experience God’s presence invite or compel you to be **open**? How easy is it for you to be open to this?

What voices are **calling** to you through this experience of God’s presence? Are these voices that you want or need to listen to? Why or why not?

As you consider this experience of God’s presence what holds your **attention**? Is this where you want or need your attention to be?

What **regrets** does this experience of God’s presence bring to mind for you? What do you do with these regrets?

Where and how in this particular experience do you **experience God’s presence**?

In light of this reflection, what do you need to lean into who you are called to be and what you are called to do?

Closing Prayer

Still my heart in this in between, O God, that I might recognize you where I least expect to find you.

Help me to believe that nothing is too insignificant to make your presence known.

Reveal yourself to me in the everyday experiences of my life. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

¹ Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith* (New York: Harperone, 2009), 15.

Vocare – Resurrection

Easter

Vocare is an ongoing spiritual practice designed to help you discern and embrace your various callings so that you can more intentionally live life on purpose for the common good.

Focus

We are people of resurrection. We trust and believe that as Christ was raised from the dead, so we too shall walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). With conviction we wait for the day of resurrection when death will finally be no more. But until that time, we live in the sure and certain hope that through water and the Word, God raises us to new life, each and every day. As people cross-marked and Spirit-sealed, we live in this unfinished time between the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and the fulfillment of all that God has promised, practicing resurrection in our daily lives. Use the time between the following guided questions for your own reflection and meditation. Bring to mind **an experience of resurrection** in your life. Is this an experience of resurrection that was a one-time occurrence, or is it ongoing or repeated? How has this particular experience of resurrection shaped your life and its horizons?

Opening prayer

Cross-marked and Spirit-sealed, raise me, O God, to new life today. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

What life **values** are present for you in this experience of resurrection? Are they your most important values?

How does this experience of resurrection invite or compel you to be **open**? How easy is it for you to be open to this?

What voices are **calling** to you through this experience of resurrection? Are these voices that you want or need to listen to? Why or why not?

As you consider this experience of resurrection what holds your **attention**? Is this where you want or need your attention to be?

What **regrets** does this experience of resurrection bring to mind for you? What do you do with these regrets?

Where and how in this experience of resurrection do you **experience God's presence**?

In light of this reflection, what do you need to lean into who you are called to be and what you are called to do?

Closing Prayer

Your steadfast love endures forever, O God.

My life is hidden with Christ in you.

Give me courage to practice resurrection every day of my life.

In the name of +Jesus, Amen.



Vocare weekly reflection questions

Lent 2023

Ash Wednesday - Called to Renewal

Vocare Practice – Reflect upon how God is calling you to renewal in this season

- Who am I called to be – in this “not yet” time?
- What am I called to do – in this “not yet” time?
- Why am I here – in this “not yet” time?
- What do I need for this “not yet” time?

Prayer: Turn me toward you, O God, to Lenten practices that call me from death to life. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

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Lent 1 - Called to Values

Vocare Practice – Reflect upon your values

- What do I value?
- How have I lived my values today?
- How have my values been in conflict today?
- What do I need for tomorrow?

Prayer: Lead me by your Spirit, O God, to value what you value. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

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Lent 2 - Called to Openness

Vocare Practice – Reflect upon your openness

- How do I typically respond to invitations or expectations to be open?
- To what was I asked to be open today?
- To what did I say “yes?”
- To what did I say “no?”
- What do I need for tomorrow?

Prayer: Open my heart, O God, to the mysteries of your saving love. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

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The *Vocare* Spiritual Practice is designed by Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox as part of the Nourishing Vocation Project through the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community at St. Olaf College.



Lent 3 - Called by God

Vocare Practice – Reflect upon the voices that call to you

- How do I typically decide which voices I listen to?
- What voices called to me today?
- Which ones did I listen to?
- Which ones did I not listen to?
- What do I need for tomorrow?

Prayer: Inspire me, O God, to trust in your call upon my life. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

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Lent 4 - Called to Attentiveness

Vocare Practice – Reflect upon your attentiveness

- How do I typically decide where I invest my attention?
- What captured and held my attention today?
- Where do I wish I could have invested my attention today?
- Did my attention align with my values?
- What do I need for tomorrow?

Prayer: Turn my attention to you, O God, that I might recognize you at work in my life. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

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Lent 5 - Called to Regret

Vocare Practice – Reflect upon your regrets

- How easy it is for me to name and learn from my regrets?
- What are my regrets from today?
- What insight do I gain from them?
- What do I need for tomorrow?

Prayer: Help me, O God, to learn from my regrets so that I might live more faithfully in each tomorrow. In +Jesus name, Amen.

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Palm/Passion - Called to Experience God's Presence

Vocare Practice – Reflect upon your experiences of God's presence

- When, where, and how have I encountered or experienced the presence of God today?
- What surprised me about where I encountered or experienced the presence of God today?
- What do I need for tomorrow?

Prayer: Reveal yourself to me, O God, in the everyday experiences of my life. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

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Feast of the Resurrection - Called to Resurrection

Vocare Practice – Reflect upon how God is calling you to practice resurrection

- How do my values inform how I practice resurrection?
- How does practicing resurrection invite, encourage, or challenge me to be open?
- In what ways am I called to practice resurrection?
- How does practicing resurrection inform my attentiveness?
- In what ways does practicing resurrection impact my regrets?
- How does practicing resurrection influence where and how I experience God's presence in everyday life?
- Who am I called to be? What am I called to do? Why am I here?
- What do I need for this season?

Prayer: Give me courage to practice resurrection every day of my life. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

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