You could not ask for, or select, three better readings to underscore today’s theme. Peter and the Eleven stand up on the day of Pentecost, electrified by the Holy Spirit.

It says Peter raised his voice and addressed them: “Let the whole house of Israel know beyond any doubt, that God has made both Lord and Messiah this Jesus whom you crucified.” That fact is the only reason we are gathered here today, 2,000 years later.

Then in his first letter, Peter writes, “it was for this you were called, since Christ suffered for you in just this way and left you an example, to have you follow in his footsteps.” Finally John write in his gospel, Jesus said, “I came that they might have life, and have it to the full.”

So, Jesus revealed as Christ and Lord; an example we are to follow; and life to the fullest. What can the underlying theme be? Today is worldwide vocation awareness Sunday. Now, in my view, everyday should be worldwide vocation awareness day, but to highlight one Sunday is not a bad thing.

What is a vocation, in simple terms. It is when you discover your life’s calling, in Christ, and enter into it. If, by grace, you discover your vocation and live it, your whole life can be in harmony, whatever the challenges and obstacles.

But if you choose the wrong vocation, for the wrong reason, or choose nothing at all, just go along, at least part of your life will always be out of balance, or unfulfilled.

What else do we mean by vocation. It’s not just a job. It is becoming what and who, God intended you to be. And above all, God intends for you to be happy, to experience the fullness of life, to love and to be loved. That’s everyone’s primary vocation. That’s what we are created for.

And just as each of us is a unique and individual human being, each of has a unique vocation….a special way that we will fulfill God’s plan for us, whether through marriage and a family, or as a single person of faith and charity, or through vowed religious life, and possibly the priesthood.

I think the reason so many people are unfulfilled or lonely in life, even the reason divorce is so common, is that they never really thought about their true vocation when they were young. They never really thought about all the possibilities.

They only focused in on one, or did what everyone else was doing…..or what was expected. I know there are many people, young and old, that have vocations to be sisters, brothers, priests, who never discover what God has called them to be, and so are never fully satisfied, either single or married.

Just as there are some priests who are never satisfied, and should have remained single, or been married. That’s what discernment is all about. Thinking deeply…..praying deeply…..about all the possibilities for our life’s work, our vocation….and then following the path you believe God has
prepared for you.
One of my favorite authors, Thomas Merton, said that a true vocation is the blending of two wills, ours, and God’s. It can never be simply, what do I want from the world. Alone, isolated….we rarely know what’s best for us.

Neither is it simply whatever we think God wants from us. We’re His children, not his servants, and he gave us a free will, and expects us to learn to use that will in order to choose wisely.

And to choose wisely is to combine what we know about God’s will through our faith, with our own gifts, and interests, and abilities. A Christian vocation is always an unselfish vocation, whether in marriage, as a caring single person, or in vowed religious life.

Those are the three basic ways of being or living in the world. It’s not like we have a hundred choices to make. But the three that we have, all deserve equal consideration. We should never assume we belong in one, until we have truly considered the other two.

If you feel that you aren’t called to a vowed religious vocation, or to the priesthood, that’s fine. We all need to be authentic. But no one should dismiss the idea out of hand.

Every faithful Catholic who is nourished at God’s table, has an obligation to consider how God is calling them to service, to achieve fullness of life, especially with the present need for priests and religious. I finally realized I could no longer offer a convincing reason, not to serve God’s people as priest, only self-serving excuses. I can hardly be alone in that.

It took me many years of living, to finally and fully embrace the Christian faith. And by that I mean to accept the truth of the gospel narrative, that God the Son became human as Jesus Christ, and finally was put to death, for our sake and our salvation.

He didn’t have to do that. He could have enjoyed a nice life making cabinets by the sea in Capernaum. He chose to do his Fathers will, whatever the cost. You could say that became His eternal vocation.

If we are to be his disciples, if we are to call ourselves Christian and receive His sacraments, we, at very least, must consider our vocations…..our purpose in life…..in light of his own.

Once we accept and understand the truth of what God has done for us, and the goodness that He wills for us……it’s a little hard….or it should be….to say thanks anyway, I’ve got may own agenda…..I’ve got my life to live…..I’ll do it my way.

If we are to be happy, and fulfilled in this world, to know and live our vocation, then we need to find away to say yes to God…..and yes to others in our lives, and yes to ourselves.

We especially need to encourage and support those we know who may have a religious vocation, without realizing it. The current media would make you think that no one could reasonably accept the structure of religious life, or the priesthood, until it undergoes some change. Excuse me. What nonsense.
The challenge and reward of vowed life is the same as it’s been for a thousand years. It’s neither more difficult, nor any easier, in the present age. It is a powerful blend of radical freedom and profound commitment.

The two rarely come together in quite this way. It is the very thing so many are looking for, and can never ever find in our spiritless culture of pop and hype.

I welcome and invite anyone to speak with me about their vocation in the Church ….about answering God’s call….about seeing Christ’s example, and following in his footsteps, as Peter calls us to do. But especially about living life to the fullest, which is the mark of every true vocation.