



The Entrepreneurial Vocation

Fr. Roger J. Landry
Acton University
June 24-26, 2025



The Entrepreneurial Vocation

- A sacred calling or an exaltation of the exploitative?
- Jesus' words about God and mammon, rich and poor
- The new situation of appreciation
- Purpose of the Talk
 - To nourish the understanding of those engaged in business so that they may live out their vocation more ardently;
 - To help those in ministry or future ministry support those in business better and strengthen them to live out their vocation
 - To assist everyone to see that there's supposed to be an entrepreneurial dimension to every Christian vocation.



The Entrepreneurial Vocation

- Structure of the Talk
 - The universal call to holiness
 - The universal vocation of every person to work
 - Characteristics of the specific vocation of the entrepreneur.
 - Some practical considerations about how to live out the entrepreneurial vocation faithfully.



The Universal Call to Holiness

- The Vocation to Holiness
 - A vocation is a calling from God
 - The fundamental vocation every Christian has received through Baptism is be holy
 - “This is the will of God, your sanctification” (1Ths. 4:3)
 - “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2)
 - “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48)
 - Holiness is to become more and more God-like.



The Universal Call to Work

- God's plan for work in the beginning, before and after the Fall
- To increase and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, and exercise dominion (Gen 1)
- The consequences of the Fall: pangs, sweat, and toil, but the vocation to work remains and becomes part of God's plans for our redemptive healing.
- The two dimensions of work:
 - objective/subjective;
 - transitive/intransitive;
 - *facere/agere*
- Spirituality of Work



The Universal Call to Work

- St. John Paul II and the “Gospel of Work”
 - “The description of creation that we find in the very first chapter of the Book of Genesis, is also in a sense the first ‘Gospel of work.’ For it shows what the dignity of work consists of: It teaches that man ought to imitate God, his Creator, in working and in resting, because man alone has the unique characteristic of likeness to God.”
- Jesus incarnates that Gospel of Work as a *tekton* for most of his life.
- In his preaching, Jesus constantly refers to human work, to shepherds, farmers, doctors, sowers, householders, servants, stewards, fishermen, merchants, laborers, to cooking, sewing, baking. He compares the work of the kingdom to that of harvesters or fishermen. He also refers to the work of scholars.



The Entrepreneurial Vocation to Holiness

- Some of the marks of the entrepreneurial vocation to holiness:
 - *Vocation of the Business Leader:*
 - acceptance of risk
 - persistence in offering beneficial goods
 - creative planning combining resources
 - Adaptation
 - St. Bernardine of Siena (1380-1444)
 - efficiency
 - responsibility
 - hard work
 - risk-taking



The Entrepreneurial Vocation to Holiness

- Some of the marks of the entrepreneurial vocation to holiness:
 - Participation in God's creative work
 - Participation in God's providence
 - Good stewardship
 - Innovative service of others' needs
 - Inventive
 - Mentorship of others



Light from Sacred Scripture

- Several Scriptural Passages that talk about the virtues of those who are rich:
 - Zacchaeus (Lk 19)
 - Joseph of Arimathea (Mt 27)
 - Good Samaritan (Lk 10)
 - Apostles
 - Parable of the Talents (Mt 25)



Parable of the Talents

- The entrepreneur is the one who precisely “invests” the “talents” God has given him
- God gives us talents to create, build up, multiply, invest
- The wealth is always the Master’s. We are called to use it for the Kingdom.
- The Master carefully assesses the natural abilities of each servant, but he is very generous to each.
- It is not immoral to profit from the resources, wit, time and work God has given us
- God’s joy at and the extraordinary reward for those who develop their talents:
 - “Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your Lord.”



Parable of the Talents

- The Problem with the Third Servant
 - Timidity
 - Wasting of the Gift given
 - Idleness
 - Security over reasonable risk-taking. Out of fear of failure, he has refused even to try to succeed.
 - “Wicked and slothful”
 - No contrition
 - He actually blames the Master
 - He didn’t even try.



Parable of the Talents

- The importance of subsidiarity, solidarity and trust
 - Trust: The Master allows his servants to decide upon the best manner of investment. He doesn't micromanage, but unleashes the gift
 - Subsidiarity: the flourishing of human beings entails the best use of their intelligence and freedom.
 - Solidarity: In a workplace, the more participatory it, the more likely workers will develop.
 - God has exercised subsidiarity, solidarity and trust in making human beings co-creators with God
 - Business leaders should seek to model a similar subsidiarity, solidarity and trust to uphold the full human dignity of employees



Parable of the Talents

- Other Lessons
 - An unequal distribution of wealth as such is not unjust
 - Making a profit cannot be equated with greed, but can and should be a proper use of the gift
 - What we see about the “reallocation of resources”:
 - A moral system doesn’t try to make everyone the same but recognizes and tries to assist each person to use his or her talents to the fullest.
 - Macroeconomic lesson:
 - 8 talents entrusted became 15
 - One person’s gain is not at another’s expense.
 - In a genuine free market economy, the success of the rich does not come at the expense of the poor.



Living Well the Entrepreneurial Vocation

- Entrepreneurs are called to sanctity in business, to be good stewards of the Master.
- Entrepreneurs must depend on God, receiving His gifts and responding to them.
- Entrepreneurs must beware of all greed
- Entrepreneurs must strive to maintain a unity of life
- Entrepreneurs must strive to form a community of persons
- Entrepreneurs must seek true solidarity with the poor
- Entrepreneurs are called to be charitable in their work and as a result of their work
- Entrepreneurs ought not facilitate the cancer of consumerism
- Entrepreneurs must properly value rest and take it.



Conclusion

- “The vocation of the businessperson is a genuine human and Christian calling. Its importance in the life of the Church and in the world economy can hardly be overstated” (*The Vocation of the Business Leader*).
- Every vocation requires a free and responsible answer.
- “Much will be required of the person entrusted with much” (Lk 12:48)
- The Vocation of the Entrepreneur is to become a living commentary of the first two servants in the Parable of the Talents



Bibliography

- John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html
- John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html
- John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html
- John Paul II, Speech to the Members of the Christian Union of Entrepreneurs and Directors, December 14, 1985, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1985/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19851214_membri-ucid.html
- John Paul II, Speech to Entrepreneurs and Economic Agents, May 22, 1983, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1983/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19830522_imprenditori-milano.html
- Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html
- Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html
- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
- Pope Francis, *Speech to the Joint Session of the Congress of the United States*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150924_usa-us-congress.html
- *The Vocation of the Business Leader*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, https://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/ryan/publications/publicationpdfs/vocationofthebusinessleaderpdf/PontificalCouncil_4.pdf
- Fr. Robert Sirico, *The Entrepreneurial Vocation*, <http://www.marketsandmorality.com/index.php/mandm/article/view/608/598>
- Fr. Robert Sirico, "The Entrepreneurial Vocation," <http://www.acton.org/public-policy/business-society/entrepreneurship/entrepreneurial-vocation>
- Fr. Robert Sirico, "The Biblical Case for Entrepreneurship" <http://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-11-number-1/biblical-case-entrepreneurship>
- Fr. Robert Sirico, "The Entrepreneur as Servant," <http://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-6-number-2/entrepreneur-servant>
- Fr. Robert Sirico, "A Worthy Calling," <http://www.acton.org/public-policy/business-society/entrepreneurial-voc/worthy-calling>
- Fr. Robert Sirico, "Saint Businessman," <http://www.acton.org/public-policy/business-society/entrepreneurial-voc/saint-businessman>
- William J. Toth, *The Entrepreneurial Calling: Perspectives from Rahner*, <https://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/documents/businessasacallingpdf/04Toth.pdf>
- Rob Tribken, *The Image of God and the Entrepreneurial Vocation*, <http://fieldnotesmagazine.depre.org/the-image-of-god-and-the-entrepreneurial-vocation/>