

FIRST CHAPTER SAMPLE

# GOD'S ONES

*Living in the Lord*

*so-what* ponderings for the

# BAPTIZED

including the folks in the  
Generous Single Vocation



Stephen Joseph Wolf

[idjc.org](http://idjc.org)

## ***God's Ones***

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Stephen Joseph Wolf

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# GOD's ONES: *Living in the Lord*

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including the folks in the Generous Single Vocation

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## How to use *God's Ones*

### ① an Individual Seeker

wanting to ponder the generous single vocation:

Wherever you find yourself drawn,  
linger for pondering, perhaps breathing  
with a particular word or phrase,  
but keep it simple.

### ② Two Friends

reflecting on how God is at work in your vocations:

Take the time to go slowly,  
and keep it simple.

### ③ a Faith Sharing Group

perhaps meeting over six weeks:

Be sure to include couples, widows and divorced  
who often have much to add about the single life.

Use what is helpful and ignore the rest;  
keep it simple.

If someone in the group knows the song,  
you have a song leader.

Group members can take turns being the *Leader*  
week to week, but it works best if there is only  
one *Leader* of each session.

Within each session, group members can take  
turns being the *Reader*, though no one should  
be compelled to be a *Reader*.

But keep it simple.

## The Generous Single Vocation

*God's Ones* is intended for all baptized followers of Jesus, but with some emphasis on God's singles.

We all begin life as single people in the world. Single adults include some still open to marriage or a religious vocation, some gay, some straight, some with the charism of celibacy, widows and widowers, separated, divorced, abandoned, unsure, upset, and many who have embraced the *generous single vocation*.

Fr. Bill Bevington, who had baptized me, spoke at the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination about his vocation and vocations in general, calling the single vocation the *dedicated single life*. Having been a single adult for fifteen years before entering seminary, I could not name anything to which I had been dedicated except for family, friends, an addiction to work, and being a lector. There was however an awareness of freedom allowing me an easier generosity than my brothers with small children in the time and energy it took to volunteer at places like the West Nashville homeless shelter. So Fr. Bevington led me to begin thinking of it as *the generous single vocation*.

The *Catechism* in paragraph 2231 states perhaps bluntly that *some forgo marriage in order to care for their parents or brothers and sisters, to give themselves more completely to a profession, or to serve other honorable ends. They can contribute greatly to the good of the human family*. It seems to me there is much more to be said, most of which is relevant to every baptized disciple of Jesus Christ, for singles are more than *forgoers*.

**Lord, your al-migh\ -ty Word**

Cha-os and dark/\ -ness heard,  
And took their flight;

Hear us we hum-bly pray,  
And where the gos-pel day

Sheds not its glo-rious ray, Let there be light!

**Sa-vior**, you came\ to give

Those who in shad/\ -ows live

Heal-ing and sight,

Health to the sick in mind,

Sight to the in-ly blind,

Now to all hu-man-kind Let there be light!

**Spir-it** of truth\ and love,

Life-giv-ing, ho/\ -ly dove,

Speed forth your flight!

Move on the wa-ter's face

Bear-ing the lamp of grace,

And in earth's sad-dest place, Let there be light!

**Ho-ly** and bless\ -ed Three,

Glo-rious Trin/\ -i-ty, Wis-dom, love, might;

Bound-less as o-cean tide,

Roll-ing in full-est pride,

Through the world far and wide,

Let there be light!

Text: Based on Genesis 1:3, *Thou Whose Almighty Word*, John Marriott, 1813, alt.

Music: 664 6664, ITALIAN HYMN (MOSCOW), Felice de Giardini, 1769

# 1

## One Baptized Into Christ

*warrior, king, shaman, lover,  
priest, prophet, royal*

← SONG (from page 6), all together

A member of the group reads **Jeremiah 18:1-6**  
while others read along in their Bibles.

A member of the group reads **Matthew 3:13-17**  
while others read along in their Bibles.

A member of the group reads **Mark 1:9-11**  
while others read along in their Bibles.

Then group members take turns reading the following:

In the winter and spring of 2001, the growing parish where I served as pastor buried several wonderful women and men, including a very unusual number of young men. Funerals and grieving families filled my heart, mind, soul and strength with wonder about what it is to be a Christian, in particular awareness of myself as one Christian man. Pivotal seasons can bring the gift of a deeper walk in the mystery of who God is and who we are called to be.

In the midst of funeral celebrations of life and new life I was working with several Nashville priests and lay faithful around some questions about a Church with fewer priests:

1. What seems to not be attractive about priesthood?  
Are priests being called into some kind of renewal?
2. What will a Church with fewer priests look like?  
How will people experience it in parishes?
3. What would a serious vocation campaign look like?

Three: one, two, three. A happy trinity of three questions was comfortable territory. Father, Son, and Spirit. My own baptismal identity in Jesus Christ I saw as **priest, prophet and king**, from the prayers at the Rite of Baptism.

Pope Saint John Paul II had given us some grounding in his hope-filled work on priestly formation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (I Will Give You Shepherds, 1992) in which he named levels of formation: **spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, and human**. Four things!

The math confronted me. Four does not equal three. This would not be a great concern for most people. But this priest spent fourteen years as an accountant, bean counter, pinhead, pencil neck, number cruncher, fourteen tax seasons, and good at it. I liked it. But four does not equal three.



Right away I knew this imbalance would find its way into prayer. And in work. And in study. Books on masculine spirituality found their way into my pondering.

I have been most inspired by the heroes of everyday life, but had grown up on knights of the round table, spy novels, and other such. What a gift to watch the real life competition of Hank Aaron and Willie Mays: the things they did with a baseball bat! Teen inspiration came from Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. But the adult image that made a difference was more than an icon: the person Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, God on two legs, priest, prophet and king, a living person in a real relationship.

The little book by Franciscan Richard Rohr and Joseph Martos *The Wild Man's Journey* gives a very helpful Christian view of the archetypes of the soul prominent in masculine spirituality. The language of archetypes (*warrior, king, shaman, lover*) and their shadow tendencies, the collective unconscious memory of the human race, the anima and animus of Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell's take on story and ritual; possible feminine archetypes of *mother, mediatrix, companion, amazon* (sound like someone central to Catholic prayer?); all of this was helpful. Mistake me not as an expert on any of it.

Most profound was the simple notion of living a balanced integrated life in imitation of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. Yes, this rang a bell on my attention. I can see *warrior, king, shaman,* and *lover* in Jesus of Nazareth. But could I see them in his baptized disciple I call me?

Steve as a *warrior*? Sort of, with my sainted mother's temper. With minimum imagination visualize the kinds of fights that would happen in a house full of eight sons (no sisters, so let me say what everyone wants to say: *Your poor mother!* My poor mother indeed).

Steve as a *king*? My delay in saying yes to the priesthood happened on God's time, and one of the blessings of it was the time it took to come to some decent awares of the unique set of gifts God has given me. It seems God used public accounting, of all things, to get me ready.

Steve as a *shaman*? What can I say, except that I am a parish priest?

Steve as a *lover*? I'll grant you, this one is a toughie. One reason I feel called to be celibate is that I know how selfish I am. I'll keep taking this to prayer, along with the holier motivations.

*Warrior, King, Shaman, Lover.*

*Priest, Prophet, and King.*

Here were images looking for balance.

ARCHTYPES OF THE SOUL	BAPTISMAL IDENTITY
Warrior	Priest
Royal	Prophet
Shaman	Royal
Lover	?

What about my accounting homework? The imbalance is still there. Sneer if you wish but show me a better way to make sense of things, and then reflect on what you may have done in your lifework or love life to be taught your best way to arrive at a *model* or *paradigm* that makes sense to you. But what about my accounting homework? Don't let the debits and credits intimidate you.

OK, some of these line up just fine. Royal = Royal. Shaman and Priest, though not the same thing, share functional similarity. Do either Warrior or Lover match up with Prophet? I went back and forth in my usual slow-thinking way. Prophets generally do not have an easy life, and that corresponds to the life of a Warrior. But if Prophets speak the word that God wants certain people in a particular time and place to hear, then would that not in the end flow out of God's universal love? Maybe. Maybe.

Funerals of good people came, one following another over about six months: a husband and

father of five in his forties, two older women, a forty-one year old son and brother and father, a seventeen year old poet and lover of soccer, another husband and father of five in his forties, a nineteen year old racing through life, and an eleven year old battler of cancer.

Taking a hike in the midst of it all, pausing to ponder on a dry creek bed, this *accountant-turned-priest* saw what is called in the profession a “one-legged” (three syllables) journal entry, which is how to fix books out-of-balance once you figure out why. I needed a credit entry without a debit.

*Name of Account:*

<b><u>Baptismal Identity</u></b>	
<u>Debit</u>	<u>Credit</u>
	<i>Beloved</i>

A one-legged journal entry must have a good explanation. The source for this one is the words from the heavens at the baptism of Jesus,

*This is my Beloved Son,  
with whom I am well pleased*

Matthew 3:17

or the more direct,

*You are my Beloved Son;  
with you I am well pleased.*

Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22

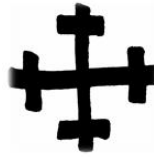
With no corresponding debit, this puts things in balance. After much prayer and reflection, may I suggest a further refinement of our identity in the Baptism of Jesus the Christ, Priest, Prophet, King, and Beloved:

ARCHTYPES OF THE SOUL	JESUS THE CHRIST	OUR BAPTISMAL IDENTITY
Shaman	Priest	Lifegiver Priest
Warrior	Prophet	Soldier Prophet
Royal	Royal	Footwasher Royal
Lover	Beloved	Beloved Lover

Before taking these identities one at a time, let's try to account for them all in a kind of *balance sheet* of language we like to use in the Church. (Laugh with me at how fourteen years as an accountant led me to think in columns and rows.)

All words have layers of meaning, so feel free to dispute my arrangement of the rows. Indeed, to ponder and discuss them is the reason I offer them.

Read each column on page 15, top to bottom, one at a time. Does one column describe you more than the others? Are there any rows you want to edit?



missionary cross

- a from the U.S. Bishop's document on Stewardship, 1992
- b areas of Catechesis (teaching the faith)
- c *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium*, U.S. Bishops, 1995
- d Mark 12:30, our whole being, called to love God
- e 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:13, *but the greatest of these is love...*
- f Hosea 2:21-22; 4:1, what God is looking for
- g Song refrain of *We Are Called*, by David Haas, based on Micah 6:8, GIA Publications, 1988
- h four most-googled topics, per Thomas Friedman
- i *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, priestly formation per Pope John Paul II
- j experience of the early Church (Greek)
- k experience of the early Church (English)
- l Sirach 39:26, necessities of life
- m *The Rule of St. Benedict*, monastic life
- n the Gospel narratives of the Eucharist (see Matthew 26:26)
- o *Called, Formed and Sent*, by Richard Rohr, NADD, 2002
- p the Cardinal Virtues
- q Fullness of the archetypes per Max Oliva, below, pg 138
- r Archetypes of the mature female, ToniWolff, see footnote *The Masculine Spirit*, Oliva, Ave Maria Press, 1997, pg. 152
- s Nicene Creed, the marks of the Church
- t John 14:6, a self-identification of Jesus
- u Luke 14:13, those unable to reciprocate hospitality
- v *The Divine Image*, poem by William Blake
- w the four cultures of the West, John O'Malley, Harvard, 2005
- x Lenten practices
- y *Reclaiming the Body in Christian Spirituality*, T. Ryan, editor
- z Revelation 5:9, from the canticle of Tuesday Evening Prayer
- aa Vocations
- bb The Catherine of Siena Institute [www.siena.org](http://www.siena.org): stages of a Christian life: seeker→ disciple→ minister→ apostle

## A BAPTIZED BALANCE SHEET

	<b>Lifegiver</b>	<b>Soldier</b>	<b>Footwasher</b>	<b>Beloved</b>
	<b>Priest</b>	<b>Prophet</b>	<b>Royal</b>	<b>Lover</b>
a	MYSTERY	MISSION	CREATION	VOCATION
b	Worship	Word	Service	Community
c	<i>holiness</i>	<i>ministry</i>	<i>maturity</i>	<i>community</i>
d	HEART	MIND	STRENGTH	SOUL
e	hope	faith	charity	love
f	Mercy	Fidelity	Justice	Knowing God
g	<i>walk humbly with God</i>	<i>act in justice</i>	<i>serve one another</i>	<i>love tenderly</i>
h	God	Professional Wrestling	Jobs	Sex
i	<b>spiritual</b>	<b>intellectual</b>	<b>pastoral</b>	<b>human</b>
j	LEITURGIA	MARTYRIA	DIAKONIA	KOINONIA
k	(liturgy)	(witness)	(service)	(communion)
l	water	fire	iron	salt
m	Prayer	Study	Work	Daily Life
n	TAKEN	BROKEN	BLESSED	GIVEN
o	formed	sent	gifted	called
p	PRUDENCE	FORTITUDE	JUSTICE	TEMPERANCE
q	<i>compassionate shaman</i>	<i>honest warrior</i>	<i>good king</i>	<i>responsible lover</i>
r	mediatrix	amazon	mother	companion
s	HOLY	APOSTOLIC	CATHOLIC	ONE
t	<i>I am</i>	<i>the truth</i>	<i>the way</i>	<i>the life</i>
u	poor	blind	crippled	lame
v	mercy	peace	pity	love
w	<i>academic</i>	<i>prophetic</i>	<i>humanistic</i>	<i>artistic</i>
x	prayer	fasting	mercy	charity
y	believers	individual	social	earth
z	tribe	tongue	nation	people
aa	<i>holy-life</i>	<i>true-life</i>	<i>life-work</i>	<i>love-life</i>
bb	Seeker	Disciple	Apostle	Minister

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Most of the words on *A Baptized Balance Sheet* on page 15 can describe Jesus.  
How might *balance* matter to one of his baptized disciples?
  
2. What does our culture say about religious people, truth tellers, power users, and lovers?
  
3. We all begin as single Christians.  
Between the baptism and anointing of an infant, the baptizer prays,  
*God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ  
has freed you from sin, given you  
a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit,  
and welcomed you into his holy people.  
He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation.  
As Christ was anointed **Priest, Prophet, and King**,  
so may you live always as a member of his body,  
sharing everlasting life.*  
  
*Of lifegiver priest, soldier prophet,  
footwasher royal, or beloved lover,  
which might best describe me?*



4. Single people are often left to feel as if they have failed as human beings by being uncoupled.  
What could be done about this?
5. Of *priest, prophet, royal, or lover*, do any seem to least describe me?  
Might there be an invitation in this awareness?
6. The four archetypes have been described as universal. Are feminine archetypes such as *mediatrix, companion, mother, and amazon* also helpful? Have any others come to mind?  
How might these apply to an integrated man?
6. Can I think of a concrete way to seek a *balance* in my baptismal identity?
7. Ponder whether one of these is surfacing:
  - a seed planted
  - a memory provoked
  - a question raised
  - an action prompted

Allow a minute for silent pondering,  
and then the group may discuss the ponderings  
(restraining any urge to *fix* anybody).

*When time is up:*

CLOSING PRAYER  
BLESSING SONS AND DAUGHTERS

LEADER

We read in the gospel of Luke,

Luke 18:15-17

*People were bringing even infants to Jesus that he might touch them, and when the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. Jesus, however, called the children to himself and said, 'Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.'*

The gospel of the Lord.

ALL ***Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ***

Brothers and sisters, let us praise our God who has made us children of God by adoption.

GROUP MEMBERS TAKE TURNS READING  
THE INTERCESSIONS

Loving Abba, you so loved the world that you gave your only Son; keep in your loving embrace all your sons and daughters reborn in baptism:

ALL ***Abba, watch over all your children.***

Your favor rested fully on the Son you loved;  
may each one of us successfully carry out the  
responsibilities entrusted to us in the world  
and in the Church:

ALL *Abba, watch over all your children.*

As your Son was to grow in wisdom, age and  
favor, you placed him in the tender care of Mary  
and Joseph; may all your children grow to the  
full maturity of Christ:

ALL *Abba, watch over all your children.*

You show a special love for those who are alone  
and abandoned; through the help of the Christian  
community let all children who are deprived of a  
family's love know that you are their Father:

ALL *Abba, watch over all your children.*

ALL

**Lord Jesus Christ,**  
**you loved children so much that you said,**  
*Whoever welcomes a child welcomes me.*  
**Watch over your brothers and sisters whom**  
**you have blessed with the grace of baptism.**  
**As you were anointed Priest, Prophet and King,**  
**so may we live always as members of your Body**  
**sharing everlasting life.**

**Our Father . . .**

## SOURCES AND FOR MORE

For more, the two best places to go are, be not surprised, Church documents:

**Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity** (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*), Vatican II, November 18, 1965

This is easy-to-read in one sitting, and holds much of the key to what the Second Vatican Council was about.

**The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People**

(*Christifideles Laici*), Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World, Pope St. John Paul II, December 30, 1988

This could reasonably be called the Lay Catholic version of books such as *The Boy Scout Handbook*.

Page 5, *The Catechism...*, **Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**, promulgated by Pope St. John Paul II, 1997, Visit [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

Page 8, *Pope John Paul II had given us...*, **I Will Give You Shepherds** (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*), Pope St. John Paul II, March 25, 1992

Page 9, *Books on masculine spirituality...*, (and other books):

**He: Understanding Masculine Psychology**, Robert A. Johnson, Harper & Row, 1989

**King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine**, Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, Harper Collins, 1990

**The Masculine Spirit: Resources for Reflective Living**, Max Oliva, Ave Maria Press, 1997

**Sacraments: Rites of Passage**, William J. O'Malley, S.J. Thomas More Publishing, 1995

**The Quest for the Male Soul**, Martin Pable, Capuchin, Ave Maria Press, 1996

**Adam's Return: the Five Promises of Male Initiation,**

Richard Rohr, O.F.M. Crossroad Publishing, 2004

**Men and Women: The Journey of Spiritual****Transformation** (Two Talks on Tape), Richard

Rohr, O.F.M., St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1999

**The Holy Longing: the Search for a Christian Spirit-****uality**, Ronald Rohlheiser, O.M.I., Doubleday, 1999**The Rites of Passage**, Arnold Van Gennep, University

of Chicago Press, 1960

Page 9, *the little book...*, **The Wild Man's Journey: Revised Edition**, Richard Rohr, OFM, and Joseph Martos,

St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1996

If you know a man who seems to be floundering, stick this book in next year's Christmas stocking. No kidding.

For a woman? **The Inner Voice of Love** by Henri Nouwen.

Page 16, *As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King...*,

**Rite of Baptism for Children**, ICEL, 1969, Catholic Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1970-1977

Page 18, *Blessing Sons and Daughters...*, adapted from

*Blessing of Sons and Daughters* in **Book of Blessings**, ICEL, 1987, Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1989

The prayer used is appropriate for anyone, but there is another at paragraph 190 which is specially for parents, tracing a cross on their children's forehead:

*Father, inexhaustible source of life and author of all good, we bless you and we thank you for brightening our communion of love by your gift of children. Grant that our children (child) will find in the life of this family such inspiration that they (he/she) will strive always for what is right and good and one day, by your grace, reach their (his/her) home in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*