

# VALUES PRIORITY TEST FOR PRIESTS AND CONSECRATED (VPT)

## I. Introduction

Human life is always guided by values. Whether we are aware of it or not, our choices, relationships, and commitments are shaped by what we consider important. In formation, therefore, the central question is not simply what we know or what we do, but more deeply: what truly matters to us and what ultimately guides our life.

Values are not merely ideas or preferences. They are enduring and objective realities that invite a response from us. They engage the whole person—our mind, our heart, and our actions. When a value is truly internalized, it becomes a source of energy and direction, shaping not only decisions but the very orientation of life.

At the heart of human existence lies what Viktor Frankl describes as the “will to meaning.” The human person is not driven primarily by pleasure or power, but by the search for meaning. This meaning is discovered through values—through what we freely choose, love, and live for.

In the context of Christian and consecrated life, not all values are equal. There exists a hierarchy of values. Some are natural values, such as comfort, success, or recognition, which are legitimate but limited. Others are self-transcendent values, such as truth, justice, love, faith, and union with God, which engage the whole person and orient life beyond oneself. True vocation unfolds when life is progressively ordered toward these higher values.

This Values Priority Test is therefore a simple but powerful tool to help formandi and formators become aware of the actual value system guiding one’s life, to examine whether these values correspond to one’s vocation, and to take responsibility for re-ordering one’s priorities in the light of the Gospel. It is not a test of knowledge, but a tool for truth, discernment, and growth.

## II. Purpose of the Test

This test aims to help the person discover the values that truly guide his life, to compare them with the values proper to Christian and consecrated life, and to identify areas of alignment and misalignment. It enables a deeper awareness of inner motivations and invites a conscious re-orientation toward values that lead to greater freedom, integration, and fidelity to vocation.

## III. Instructions

The test begins by inviting the participant to carefully read the list of values provided. Each value represents something meaningful and worthy in itself. The task is not to judge the values, but to examine their relative importance in one’s own life.

Each value is to be rated on a scale from 1 to 10 according to its importance, with 1 indicating very little importance and 10 indicating very high importance. This step requires honesty and interior clarity, as it reveals the implicit hierarchy of one’s life.

After rating all the values, the participant is asked to identify and organize them into four groups: the ten most important values, the next ten in importance, the ten least important values, and the next ten least important. This process helps to concretize one’s value hierarchy and makes visible the underlying structure of one’s priorities.

Each value is then classified into its corresponding category: priestly or consecrated values, Christian values, social or better-world values, character-strength values, and self-oriented values. This classification allows the person to see not only individual preferences, but broader patterns in the way life is oriented.

## In Summary

Rate each value (1–10), then:

- Select **Top 10 values**
- Select **Next 10 values**
- Select **10 least important values**
- Select **Next 10 least important values**

Then classify each value using:

- a = Consecrated values
- b = Christian values
- c = Social values
- d = Character values
- e = Self-oriented values

## IV. MASTER LIST OF VALUES

*Use this list for all the worksheets that follow. Rate each value (1–10) in Worksheet 1 and later classify according to the category given.*

### Legend of Categories

- **a** – Priestly / Consecrated Values
- **b** – Christian (Gospel) Values
- **c** – Social / Better-World Values
- **d** – Character Strength Values
- **e** – Self-Oriented Values

### Values Table

| No. | Value         | Description                                            | Category |
|-----|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 1   | Achievement   | To have important accomplishments                      | d, e     |
| 2   | Adventure     | To have new and exciting experiences                   | e        |
| 3   | Art           | To appreciate or express myself in art                 | e        |
| 4   | Authority     | To be in charge of others                              | d        |
| 5   | Autonomy      | To be self-determined and independent                  | d        |
| 6   | Belonging     | To have a sense of being part of                       | a, c, e  |
| 7   | Caring        | To take care of others                                 | b, c     |
| 8   | Challenge     | To take on difficult tasks and problems                | d        |
| 9   | Chastity      | To abstain from sexual expressions and maintain purity | a        |
| 10  | Cleanliness   | To be clean, neat and orderly                          | d        |
| 11  | Comfort       | To have a pleasant and comfortable life                | e        |
| 12  | Commitment    | To make enduring, meaningful commitments               | a, c     |
| 13  | Community     | To have a happy, loving community                      | c, e     |
| 14  | Compassion    | To feel and act on concern for others                  | b        |
| 15  | Compromise    | To be willing to give and take in reaching agreements  | c        |
| 16  | Contribution  | To make a lasting contribution in the world            | c        |
| 17  | Cooperation   | To work collaboratively with others                    | c        |
| 18  | Courage       | To be brave and strong in the face of adversity        | d        |
| 19  | Courtesy      | To be considerate and polite towards others            | c        |
| 20  | Creativity    | To create new things or ideas                          | d        |
| 21  | Curiosity     | To seek out, experience, and learn new things          | e        |
| 22  | Dependability | To be reliable and trustworthy                         | d        |
| 23  | Determination | To achieve what one sets the heart on                  | d        |

|    |                 |                                                     |      |
|----|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------|
| 24 | Dialogue        | To communicate and sort out differences             | c    |
| 25 | Diligence       | To be conscientious in whatever I do                | d    |
| 26 | Discipline      | To order life according to rules and structure      | d    |
| 27 | Dutifulness     | To carry out duties and obligations                 | d    |
| 28 | Ecology         | To live in harmony with the environment             | c    |
| 29 | Empathy         | To be aware of another's feelings and share in them | c    |
| 30 | Enthusiasm      | To do things cheerfully and with interest           | d    |
| 31 | Excitement      | To have a life full of thrills and stimulation      | e    |
| 32 | Faith           | To believe in God and His revelation                | b    |
| 33 | Faithfulness    | To be loyal and true in relationships               | d    |
| 34 | Fame            | To be known and recognized                          | e    |
| 35 | Fitness         | To be physically fit and strong                     | e    |
| 36 | Flexibility     | To adjust to new circumstances easily               | d    |
| 37 | Forgiveness     | To be forgiving of others                           | b    |
| 38 | Freedom         | To be free from undue restrictions                  | d    |
| 39 | Friendship      | To have close, supportive friends                   | e    |
| 40 | Fun             | To be playful and enjoy life                        | d    |
| 41 | Generosity      | To give what I have to others                       | c    |
| 42 | God's Will      | To seek and follow God's will                       | a, b |
| 43 | Gratitude       | To be thankful and appreciative                     | d    |
| 44 | Health          | To be physically well and healthy                   | e    |
| 45 | Honesty         | To be truthful and sincere                          | d    |
| 46 | Hope            | To maintain a positive outlook                      | b, d |
| 47 | Humility        | To be modest and unassuming                         | b    |
| 48 | Humour          | To appreciate and express joy                       | d    |
| 49 | Industry        | To work hard and diligently                         | d    |
| 50 | Integrity       | To live consistently with values                    | d    |
| 51 | Intelligence    | To keep the mind active and sharp                   | d    |
| 52 | Interdependence | To meet each other's needs                          | d    |
| 53 | Intimacy        | To share deep personal experiences                  | d    |
| 54 | Justice         | To promote fairness and equality                    | c    |
| 55 | Kindness        | To be friendly and considerate                      | b    |
| 56 | Knowledge       | To learn and contribute knowledge                   | e    |
| 57 | Leadership      | To guide and inspire others                         | d    |
| 58 | Loving          | To give love to others                              | b    |
| 59 | Mercy           | To show compassion beyond merit                     | b    |
| 60 | Mindfulness     | To be aware of the present moment                   | d    |
| 61 | Moderation      | To avoid excess and find balance                    | d    |
| 62 | Novelty         | To seek variety and change                          | e    |
| 63 | Nurturance      | To support and encourage others                     | c    |
| 64 | Obedience       | To follow God's will or authority                   | a    |
| 65 | Openness        | To be open to ideas and feedback                    | d    |
| 66 | Order           | To live in an organized way                         | d    |
| 67 | Passion         | To feel deeply about life and mission               | c    |
| 68 | Patience        | To endure difficulty calmly                         | b    |
| 69 | Peace           | To promote harmony and non-violence                 | c    |
| 70 | Perseverance    | To continue despite difficulty                      | d    |
| 71 | Personal Growth | To develop oneself                                  | e    |
| 72 | Piety           | To show reverence to God                            | a, b |
| 73 | Pleasure        | To feel good                                        | e    |

|     |                    |                                   |         |
|-----|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| 74  | Poverty            | To live simply and detached       | a       |
| 75  | Prayer             | To seek God in relationship       | a, b    |
| 76  | Promptness         | To be punctual and efficient      | d       |
| 77  | Purpose            | To have meaning and direction     | a, b, c |
| 78  | Recreation         | To have time for rest and renewal | e       |
| 79  | Responsibility     | To take ownership of actions      | d       |
| 80  | Renunciation       | To sacrifice for a higher good    | a       |
| 81  | Risk-taking        | To take bold initiatives          | d       |
| 82  | Safety             | To feel secure and protected      | e       |
| 83  | Self-acceptance    | To accept oneself                 | e       |
| 84  | Self-actualization | To fulfil one's potential         | e       |
| 85  | Self-assertion     | To express oneself appropriately  | d, e    |
| 86  | Self-control       | To regulate one's behaviour       | d       |
| 87  | Self-esteem        | To feel good about oneself        | d, e    |
| 88  | Self-knowledge     | To understand oneself deeply      | d, e    |
| 89  | Self-reliance      | To depend on oneself              | d       |
| 90  | Service            | To help and serve others          | a, b, c |
| 91  | Simplicity         | To live with minimal needs        | a       |
| 92  | Solitude           | To have time alone                | a       |
| 93  | Spontaneity        | To act freely and naturally       | d       |
| 94  | Sportsmanship      | To be fair and respectful         | d       |
| 95  | Suffering          | To bear pain meaningfully         | a, b    |
| 96  | Temperance         | To moderate desires               | b       |
| 97  | Truthfulness       | To speak the truth                | d       |
| 98  | Tolerance          | To respect differences            | c, d    |
| 99  | Tradition          | To respect inherited values       | c       |
| 100 | World Peace        | To promote peace globally         | c       |

### Note for Use

Use this table as the **reference point** for:

- Worksheet 1 (Rating)
- Worksheet 2 (Sorting)
- Worksheet 3 (Category totals)

## V. WORKSHEETS

### Worksheet 1: Personal Rating of Values

(Use the original list. Write your rating 1–10)

| Value                | Rating (1–10) |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Example: Faith       | _____         |
| Example: Achievement | _____         |
| ...                  | ...           |

(Continue for all values)

### Worksheet 2: Value Priority Sorting

#### A. Top 10 Most Important Values

| No. | Value | Category (a–e) |
|-----|-------|----------------|
| 1   |       |                |
| 2   |       |                |
| 3   |       |                |
| 4   |       |                |

|    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 5  |  |  |
| 6  |  |  |
| 7  |  |  |
| 8  |  |  |
| 9  |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |

**B. Next 10 Important Values**

| No. | Value | Category (a–e) |
|-----|-------|----------------|
| 11  |       |                |
| 12  |       |                |
| 13  |       |                |
| 14  |       |                |
| 15  |       |                |
| 16  |       |                |
| 17  |       |                |
| 18  |       |                |
| 19  |       |                |
| 20  |       |                |

**C. 10 Least Important Values**

| No. | Value | Category (a–e) |
|-----|-------|----------------|
| 1   |       |                |
| 2   |       |                |
| 3   |       |                |
| 4   |       |                |
| 5   |       |                |
| 6   |       |                |
| 7   |       |                |
| 8   |       |                |
| 9   |       |                |
| 10  |       |                |

**D. Next 10 Least Important Values**

| No. | Value | Category (a–e) |
|-----|-------|----------------|
| 11  |       |                |
| 12  |       |                |
| 13  |       |                |
| 14  |       |                |
| 15  |       |                |
| 16  |       |                |
| 17  |       |                |
| 18  |       |                |
| 19  |       |                |
| 20  |       |                |

**Worksheet 3: Category Totals**

**A. Your 20 MOST IMPORTANT Values (A + B)**

| Category        | Total |
|-----------------|-------|
| a (Consecrated) | _____ |
| b (Christian)   | _____ |

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| c (Social)        | _____ |
| d (Character)     | _____ |
| e (Self-oriented) | _____ |

### B. Your 20 LEAST IMPORTANT Values (C + D)

| Category          | Total |
|-------------------|-------|
| a (Consecrated)   | _____ |
| b (Christian)     | _____ |
| c (Social)        | _____ |
| d (Character)     | _____ |
| e (Self-oriented) | _____ |

### Worksheet 4: Value Balance Interpretation

#### Key Reflection Grid

| Observation             | What it Means                        |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| High a & b in Top 20    | Good vocational alignment            |
| Low a & b in Top 20     | Need reorientation                   |
| High a & b in Least 20  | Serious misalignment                 |
| High e values in Top 20 | Possible self-centred orientation    |
| Balanced c & d          | Healthy human and social integration |

### Worksheet 5: Category Score Calculation (Advanced)

*(Optional deeper analysis based on original tool)*

| Category | Total Score | Divide by | ×10 | Final Score |
|----------|-------------|-----------|-----|-------------|
| a        | _____       | 12        | ×10 | _____       |
| b        | _____       | 16        | ×10 | _____       |
| c        | _____       | 21        | ×10 | _____       |
| d        | _____       | 44        | ×10 | _____       |
| e        | _____       | 23        | ×10 | _____       |

### Worksheet 6: Value Hierarchy Mapping

Arrange from **lowest to highest (foundation at bottom)**:

Top Level (Least dominant): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Bottom Level (Core foundation): \_\_\_\_\_

### Worksheet 7: Visual Representation

#### Chart 1: Priority Order

Rank categories:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Chart 2: Strength of Each Category**

| Category | Strength (Low–High) |
|----------|---------------------|
| a        | □□□□□               |
| b        | □□□□□               |
| c        | □□□□□               |
| d        | □□□□□               |
| e        | □□□□□               |

### Worksheet 8: Personal Reflection

Write your answers:

1. The values that most guide my life are:  
→ \_\_\_\_\_
2. What surprises me in this result:  
→ \_\_\_\_\_
3. Values I need to strengthen:  
→ \_\_\_\_\_
4. Values I need to reorder:  
→ \_\_\_\_\_
5. What I feel God is inviting me to:  
→ \_\_\_\_\_

## VI. Analysis and Interpretation

Once the values are organized and classified, the next step is to examine the overall distribution of priorities. The participant calculates the total number of values from each category within the most important and least important groups.

This analysis reveals the actual structure of one's value system. For a person in formation, it is expected that priestly or consecrated values and Christian values should occupy a significant place among the most important values. These values reflect a life oriented toward God, mission, and self-gift.

If these values are found to be weak or absent among the top priorities, or if they appear among the least important values, it indicates a lack of alignment between one's life and one's vocation. This does not imply failure, but rather points to an area where growth and re-orientation are needed.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that other values—such as social values, character strengths, and self-oriented values—also have their place. They contribute to human development, mission effectiveness, and personal balance. However, they must be rightly ordered. When lower values dominate, they can displace higher values and lead to fragmentation. When properly integrated, they support the living of higher values.

## VII. Deeper Understanding of Values

Values are not simply subjective preferences that each person creates for himself. They are objective and enduring realities that call for recognition and response. There is a growing tendency today to relativize or personalize values, reducing them to individual choice. However, authentic formation insists that values are discovered rather than invented, and that they possess a validity beyond personal preference.

A key distinction must be made between natural values and self-transcendent values. Natural values relate to the perfection of human nature—such as health, knowledge, relationships, or achievement. While important, they do not fully define the worth of the person. Self-transcendent values, on the other hand, involve the exercise of freedom and responsibility in relation to truth,

goodness, and ultimately God. These include moral values like justice and compassion, and religious values such as faith, prayer, and surrender to God.

In Christian life, the highest values are those that orient the person toward God and enable self-gift. Even important elements like the evangelical counsels are not ends in themselves, but means that lead to the ultimate goal of union with God and configuration to Christ.

Thus, growth in vocation is not simply about acquiring more values, but about ordering them rightly, so that life is centred on what is ultimate and enduring.

## **VIII. Reflection and Discernment**

After completing the test, the participant is invited to enter into a moment of reflection. This is not merely an intellectual exercise, but a process of discernment. The person is encouraged to ask what values truly guide his life, whether these values reflect his vocation, and where he senses a call to grow.

Such reflection helps to uncover hidden motivations, clarify inner tensions, and open the person to transformation. It allows the individual to recognize not only what is already present, but also what is lacking or underdeveloped.

For formators, this stage is particularly important as it opens the possibility for meaningful dialogue and accompaniment. The aim is not to judge or correct, but to help the formandus grow in awareness, responsibility, and freedom.

## **XI. Concluding Insight**

The purpose of this exercise is not simply to classify values, but to enter into a deeper encounter with truth about oneself. Values call the person beyond comfort, preference, and self-interest, inviting a response marked by freedom and responsibility.

Formation, in its deepest sense, is the gradual ordering of one's life according to a true hierarchy of values. When lower values dominate, life becomes fragmented and unstable. But when higher values—especially moral and religious values—take root, the person becomes unified, free, and capable of authentic self-gift.

Christian vocation is a call to move from self-centeredness to self-transcendence, from immediate satisfaction to meaningful commitment, and from external conformity to inner conviction. It is a journey in which the person increasingly lives not for himself, but for God and for others.

This Values Priority Test becomes, therefore, a moment within the broader formative journey—a step in the movement of purification and configuration—where the person allows his life to be aligned more deeply with the Gospel.

Ultimately, the goal is to become a person whose values are clear, whose priorities are rightly ordered, and whose life is centred on God. Such a person grows in freedom, integration, and missionary availability, becoming capable of a generous and faithful response to the call of Christ.

## **Further Reading**

- Frankl, V. E. (2006). *Man's Search for Meaning*. Beacon Press.
- Frankl, V. E. (1988). *The Will to Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy*. Meridian.
- Rokeach, M. (1973). *The Nature of Human Values*. Free Press.
- Benner, D. G. (2004). *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery*. IVP Books.
- Rulla, L. M. (1986). *Anthropology of the Christian Vocation, Vol. I: Interpersonal Relations and Christian Maturity*. Gregorian University Press.

## **Formative Note**

The Values Priority Test is intended to help formandi recognize the values that truly guide their lives and to evaluate these in the light of the Gospel and their vocation. The resources listed above deepen the understanding of human values, moral development, vocational discernment, and Christian anthropology. When studied alongside prayer, spiritual direction, formative accompaniment, and community life, they support the gradual integration of personal values with the values of Christ and the mission of the Church.