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Showcase Talk – “Our Faith: Growing Vocation”
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When I first started college here at Northwestern vocation was a word I had heard about, but I didn't really fully understand. To me it was finding a career that was well suited to your skills, with bonus points if it “improved” the world. I knew I wanted to go into engineering and figured the rest was something for “future me” to figure out when I had finished my degree and had a real job. As someone who was very confident in their major selection, it wasn't something I should focus on or even think about at that point in time. I knew what my “calling” was and that was that. If you couldn't tell, freshman me had a bit of a selfish worldview. I thought I needed to get through school with good grades so I could get a good job and only then should I worry about giving back and helping others. I was so wholly focused on getting to the next stage of life, that I sometimes forgot to enjoy it, let alone think about my vocation.

As I got involved with LCMNU my freshman year and even more my sophomore year these views began to shift. I was convinced to join the leadership board as fundraising leader. As fundraising leader, I really realized that I didn't have to wait: I could give back now. Through LCMNU I helped run fundraisers that helped disaster victims through Lutheran Disaster Response, local homeless shelters, and local food pantries, and I helped make meals for those in need. Fundraisers also included cookie sales and trivia nights which also helped raise awareness and build our community. And of course, I've also helped to plan and run this event, which is key in our ministries survival. I saw that I didn't need to have a degree and a “real job” in order to help and support others.

As we talked about vocation this quarter in 21theo I realized that with all the things I was doing through LCMNU I was fulfilling my vocation, answering God's call. This realization shifted my view on other parts of my life as well. My work on my robotics team mentoring younger engineers was part of my vocation as well. Vocation isn't just about your career path. It's about answering God's call in every aspect of your life. Another thing I have realized in my four years here is that there will always be that next step in life. Getting a degree, then getting a job, then getting a promotion, then buying a house, etc. etc. There will always be something else, and if you keep telling yourself you will worry about your vocation after that next step, you never will. You'll never live your life either.

As I am about to move into the next step in my life and leave Northwestern, I will again have to resist that urge to only focus on myself and use what I have learned here at LCMNU to continue living out my vocation. I will be looking for a new church when I move (it will be very difficult to replace LCMNU) where I hope I can use my talents to help others as I have here.