

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger:

Focus your eyes and your heart steadily on Jesus.

- Letter 3520, March 6, 1863



Focus: *verb*

1. (of a person or their eyes) adapt to the prevailing level of light and become able to see clearly.
2. pay particular attention to.

How does God guide us and help us discern? Part 1

Recently someone said that if we are discerning a choice or call, we simply needed to “*pay attention to what you pay attention to*”. When discerning a vocation and “paying attention,” perhaps you will see some patterns emerge and sense that you are being drawn in a particular direction. The following from Fr. Stephen Wang¹ are some indicators that may be helpful:

- **Desire and attraction:** what do you care about? What do you love? What do you feel passionate about? What would you love to commit yourself to? What do you feel pulled towards – even if you can’t explain why?
- **Admiration:** which people do you admire the most? Is it because of who they are or what they stand for or what they do? What is it about them or their vocation that you have been attracted to? What does it stir up in your own heart? Which person, alive now, would you most like to be? Which saints, from the past, inspire you most? Why?
- **Enjoyment:** What do you like doing; not just for leisure or fun – but what kind of work and activities do you enjoy most? Which bring the best out of you and gives you satisfaction at the end of a hard day?
- **Skills:** what are you good at? What are your gifts and skills and aptitudes? Not just your qualifications (although these are often relevant) but your gifts of character and personality too. How could you best use all that God has given you and make a difference?
- **Values:** of the many projects and careers you are interested in, which of them are really worthwhile? Which allow you to contribute to something of value? What do you actually believe in and want to promote?
- **Events and Circumstances:** Sometimes an opportunity opens up unexpectedly and you want to make the most of it. The Lord opens doors, and closes them, through ordinary events of your life, through the decisions that others make, and through the concrete situation you are in. You can trust that God is guiding all these circumstances and leading you to where you are meant to be. God is more powerful than all the other forces that seem to be shaping your life.
- **Other people:** Sometimes others can see your own potential more clearly than you can see yourself. You might be afraid or lacking confidence, but they can see the possibilities, and encourage you to go in one direction or discourage you from going in another direction. It is good to talk to **people that know you well** – friends, family, teachers, priests – and see what they think about your ideas for the future. They might have another perspective that helps you.

*** Next month we'll look at additional indicators of how God guides us: *Inner Conviction; Ordinary Prayer; Holy Scripture; Extraordinary Experiences; and Realism.*

Reflection: God “speaks” to us in all kinds of different ways. Spend some time reflecting on the questions above. What are you learning about yourself as it relates to discernment?

Looking Ahead: On-line Opportunities



- **Youth in Theology and Ministry: A Sunday night Virtual Prayer, Faith-Sharing Experience.** Sunday nights from 8-9p CDT through the end of June. What is the format for “United in Love?” Music - Fun Activity - Evangelization Talk (Scripture will be from Sunday Gospels) - Short teaching on prayer - Prayer Experience - Optional Small Groups beginning afterwards (approximately 9 PM)

Register online: We are using a system where people register and then we will send them the zoom link. Registration Link: <https://www.csbsju.edu/forms/5GGD6JWFC9>

If you'd like more information about YTM, check it out: <https://www.csbsju.edu/sot/ymt>

- **Women's Discernment Group:** Chicago Archdiocese Vocation website: <https://www.vocationscava.org/online-discernment-group/>
- **SSND Day of Prayer – At-Home Day of Prayer: Encountering Christ in Uncertain Times – watch for email details forthcoming**

Did you know?

Each of our *Vocation Reflections* is available on-line at our website: <https://ssnd.org/become-sister/vocation-resources/>

This month's resource: Perhaps one of the best ways to learn about the lives of religious sisters is to *teach about the lives of religious sisters*. The National Catholic Sisters Project is offering a FREE 3-day on-line workshop entitled, “Teaching the Lives of Sisters” - June 23-25, 2020. Here's more information: <https://www.alverno.edu/ncsp.php>

- Featuring Called and Consecrated/Llamadas y Consagradas, a free, online curriculum for grades 6-12 that explores the lives and works of women religious
- Keynote: Katie Gordon of Nuns and Nones
- Learn how to use 21st Century tools in the religious education classroom
- Meet catechists from across the nation
- Registration is FREE. Participants will receive a free gift as well.

¹ Adapted from :*How to Discover Your Vocation* by Fr. Stephen Wang distributed by Ignatius Press.

Vocation Reflections is a monthly newsletter for those interested in learning more about discernment, prayer, and other topics related to the consecrated/vowed life. For questions, comments and [subscription information, please contact sisters@ssnd.org](mailto:sisters@ssnd.org)