

## Vocation Reflections September 2021



**Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger**, foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame:  
*"If our dear God wants to call something into life, he also always gives the means for that to happen."* (Letter #778)

### Reflection ~ *Friendship and Discernment*

Have you ever looked back and thought about how you became friends with someone, what it was about a particular person that invited you to continue developing a relationship of friendship, or what continues to nourish that friendship? Take a quiet moment now to think back and reflect on one or more of these questions with your life journey in mind...

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A call to friendship is a very sacred call. It is a gift of God's love becoming tangible in union with another person and being invited into a relationship of mutuality. This sacred call to friendship is also at the core of our being since our very creation, for it is **what God desires with and for each of us**.

St. Augustine expressed it this way: *"You made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you."* (Confessions Bk. I, 1-2)

When we recognize the longing of and for God within ourselves, that searching for an answer to a restlessness, we begin to do what we do with a call into deep friendship – we seek to follow, to develop the friendship even more, reaching out to learn more, listen more, question and share more, “be with” more, and ultimately respond with “yes” to walk and share life together.

The process of discerning a vocational call is a similar process, for one seeks a calming of a restlessness, a peace that comes from knowing how to best use the gifts one has been given. We can find comfort then in those words of Blessed Theresa above: *"If our dear God wants to call something into life, he also always gives the means for that to happen."* How generous! And this is where friendship with God comes into play. Trusting God gives the means, we are then invited to respond, called to develop and nourish a friendship - our God friendship, which will allow us to “see” God our friend more clearly, listen more deeply, share from our heart, and act with commitment ever more fervently.

Some helpful tools or *means* to develop this friendship with God include:

- \* *Reading and reflecting with the Word of God* ... Where have you found new insight, comfort, deeper yearning through a favorite Scripture passage? For example, try reflecting on Mary's own experience of listening to the message of God – Luke 1: 26-38. Mary listened, pondered, even questioned and pondered again. She had already begun her friendship with God, such that in one ordinary moment she became aware of a message, stayed in the conversation about that message, and she found the grace of faithful response.
- \* *Silence of active listening* ... Again, see Mary's active listening. In the quiet of listening she could ponder. Silence offers the space for deeper contemplation, like being with a friend and not having to speak yet knowing in one's heart that the very presence of the other brings assurance and peace, and often the confidence to move forward.
- \* *Attention to ordinary events* ... What has nurtured our friendships is often the experience of being together in very ordinary moments and becoming more deeply aware together, e.g. walking and conversing together about daily happenings, sharing the beauty of nature, recounting stories of our lives or what brought joy or what brought challenge. Developing friendship with God is nurtured also through attention to the ordinary and just pausing to look more deeply. Looking back at the end of one's day to ordinary moments with others can also attune the heart to find how God's grace has been present, offering a chance to be grateful for God's friendship.

- \* *Conversation with a trusted companion or spiritual guide ... As our God is a God of relationship, God is present among and within trusted relationships which seek the good of the other and help us see anew. The best way to see something with clarity is to see it from different perspectives, like standing in the center of a room with all the lights on and turning slowly in full circle until I have looked at all the sides and corners! What a different view than just standing and looking in only one direction.*

*“What drew me closest to my [friend] was the delight of the laughing and chatting together;  
of showing our affection for one another by kindly services;  
of reading together from books that spoke of pleasant things; of joking together amicably;  
of disputing now and then but without resentment, as one is wont to do with [one]self;  
... We loved each other with all our hearts,  
and these marks of our friendship that were shown in our faces, by our voices, in our eyes  
and a thousand other ways were among us like ardent flames  
that fused our souls together and of many made but one.”*

(St. Augustine, Confessions, Bk. IV, vii)

### For Personal Reflection ~

1. Reflect with the Scripture passage of the Annunciation, Luke 1: 26-38.
  - a. What most nourishes or brings light to your present life journey?
  - b. What elements of friendship do you see between Mary and God?
  - c. What does this say for your friendship with God?
2. Walk in nature. Be silent and listen.
  - a. How might God be speaking to you as friend?
  - b. What is in your heart?



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### Did you know?

Each of our Vocation Reflections is available online at:

<https://ssnd.org/become-sister/vocation-resources/>

### Looking Ahead:

#### Evening Prayer with the Vocation Team

Sunday Sept. 26, 2021 or Tuesday Sept. 28, 2021 – 5pm PT / 6pm MT / 7pm CT / 8pm ET

Register for the ZOOM link at [www.ssnd.org/events](http://www.ssnd.org/events).

#### Webinar “Fundamentals: From call to charism to community living”

Thursday Sept. 30, 2021 – 7pm CT / 8pm ET

Sponsored by National Religious Vocation Conference

Register [here](#).