

“May God, the Son...be the way you walk, the truth you follow, the life you lead!”
Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame
Letter #714, written in 1847

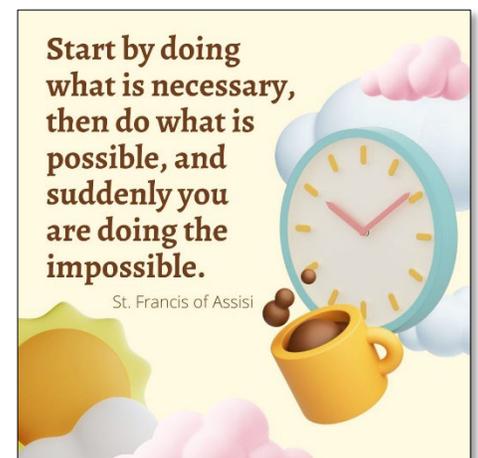
*Last month we shared the following as an introduction to what gets in the way of discerning a vocation.
This month we continue that idea...*

As we continue to discern God’s call to each of us, there are obstacles that can get in the way of us finding and acting on our discernment. Sometimes it’s enough just to name them...but if you meet a real difficulty, pray about it, and talk to someone about it so it doesn’t become insurmountable.

What can get in the way of discerning a vocation? (Part 2)

(adapted from [How to Discover Your Vocation by Fr. Stephen Wang](#))

- **Desire for certainty** – It’s unlikely that you will ever be 100% certain about any significant choice – of course there are doubts and questions. But you *can be sure enough that this is a reasonable step to take*, when things come together and the time is right. Yes, it’s a risk. But it’s also a risk not to make a choice. Life is full of risks. God is always with us, supporting and guiding us – even if we make a decision in good faith and things seem to go wrong.
- **Fear of your own inadequacy** – Perhaps you fear you are not the right person for this vocation, even though you feel attracted to it. You worry that you are not holy enough, not intelligent enough, not qualified enough, not loving enough, too shy, too sociable...perhaps you are right. *But perhaps you are underestimating yourself or underestimating God. God chooses the weak and makes them strong.* Sometimes God invites us to do what seems impossible, and only later gives us the strength to do it. Why not take a step anyway – and let God decide further down the line if it is really not for you.
- **Attachment to personal ambition or lifestyle** – Any lifelong commitment will involve some sacrifice and cost, giving up something you are attached to now, letting go of what could have been. Sometimes we have to move on – it’s inevitable. *Trust that if this is really your vocation, it will be a treasure that will be worth any sacrifice*, and that God will ‘reimburse’ you in other unexpected ways.
- **Fear of failure** – God writes straight with crooked lines. *What matters is not success or failure, but whether you have tried to be faithful to God’s call at each moment...whichever way you are lead.*
- **Age** – If you are pulled towards a certain vocation, whatever your age, then take a step and test that vocation. If God wants you to follow it, God will make things possible.
- **Opposition from the culture and society** – Some vocational choices, even Christian marriage, will sometimes be misunderstood or mocked by contemporary society, and perhaps by friends or colleagues. *Recognize that to be a Christian will involve some misunderstanding and even persecution*, especially if you make a lifelong commitment. Be as loving and kind as you can, and explain your choices gently to people if they ask.



- **Fear of not having a family** – If you are considering consecrated life then you may well be anxious about the idea of not having a family. This is quite understandable. And perhaps you should indeed get married! But this anxiety might stem partly from the fear that a celibate life will be a life without love. You need to believe two things:
 1. First, *the celibate life is a life full of love* – of the intimate love of Christ, and the love of those you will meet and work and live with. And you will, God-willing, discover an aspect of “spiritual motherhood” in your vocation – loving and nurturing those in your care – that will be deeply fulfilling.
 2. But second, there are certainly sacrifices made in a life of celibacy...but there are also huge sacrifices made in marriage. *The cost of loving is high in any Christian vocation.* What matters is that you find what is right for you – and *trust that God will give you all the love you need, through prayer and through others, to sustain you in this vocation.*

Check out this resource:

The notion of a vocation

“We need to learn again the importance of finding one’s vocation and giving oneself over to it.” In this editorial, Father Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, reflects on today’s meaning of vocation.

<https://angelusnews.com/voices/the-notion-of-a-vocation/>

Did you know?

Each of our Vocation Reflections is available online at ssnd.org/become-sister/vocation-resources/.

Looking ahead

The following events are virtual. Click the event title to Learn more and register for the Zoom link.



Evening Prayer with the SSND Vocation Team

Every fourth Tuesday of the month
8 p.m. ET / 7 p.m. CT

- April 26, 2022
- May 24, 2022
- June 28, 2022



Living our Call as SSND: Around the Globe

The final in our three-part series on Transformative Education.
May 3, 2022
8 p.m. ET/7 p.m. CT



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.