



Vocation Reflections

August 2022



School Sisters of Notre Dame

Jesus reminds us:

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who live in me and I in them will bear abundant fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5

St. Paul reminds us:

“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Colossians 3:17

What We’ve Read: Stewardship and Vocation

One of the most crucial questions we ponder in our lives is that of vocation.

Who are you, and what are you called to do? In a fundamental way, we share a common vocation as Christian disciples. To be a disciple is our vocation. But there is a personal vocation that must be considered as well. What shape will this discipleship take in your life?

All of these questions of vocation are given clarity when we recall the root of the word “vocation” is the Latin *vocare*, which means to call. Christ calls each of us personally.

Beyond the call to a particular state of life – priesthood, religious life, married or committed single life – there are calls that we discern and live throughout our lives. In this sense, there is no singular, once-and-for-all calling. Rather, your entire life as a steward is a process of recognizing and responding to God’s grace. You do this most profoundly when you acknowledge the gifts you have been given and discern what work or service most needs what you have to give. *From 30 Days on Stewardship by Leisa Anslinger; Twenty-Third Publications, Copyright 2018. Used with Permission.*

Discernment Steps* PART TWO

(as developed by Sister Sandra Weinke, SSND; commentary by Sister Bridget Waldorf, SSND)

**Prayer is integrated into each step. (See July 2022 issue for PART ONE – 1. Look; 2. Listen)*

3. LEARN

How do you understand your role in the future? What could you give or share?



Be curious. Ask questions. Take advantage of invitations from individuals or communities who invite you to come and see or experience them more closely. It’s okay – we want to help you. Clarify. For example, ask the question, “When you say you pray three times a day, what does that look like?” Ask questions about mission or ministry or educational debt or family visits or community life or material goods. Learn why a particular group wears what it does. Read. Weigh the pros and cons as you understand them. Take notes. Do the practical research. What is a community saying? What is it not saying? What is the history of the congregation? Is it an international congregation or diocesan?

Imagine yourself with a particular congregation – how do you see your gifts being shared? What interests you about a congregation’s ministerial focus or mission?

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.

Much of learning is necessarily practical, but it is only one part of discernment. We bring both our heads and hearts to discernment.

4. LEAN INTO IT

Lean into your discernment. Embrace it. Surrender to it. Be intentional.



Talk to someone - because even before he or she says anything, it's really helpful for you to say out loud what your hopes and fears are. Use your imagination – imagine taking the next step and then reflect on what it feels like to do so. Imagine yourself as a consecrated woman with a particular mission being done in the midst of a community of other women doing the same. “Wade in the water” of life as a married person or one who offers her life as a single person. What does that look like? How does that feel? Take little next steps or make a decision. Make the phone call. Tell one person what you’re thinking.

Lean into prayer too. Embrace opportunities to pray. Break open scripture with another person or two. Read the stories of God calling individuals in scripture. What were the responses? How might those stories lead you in prayer? Up the number of times you go to Mass during a week; spend time in adoration; sit quietly with God in the beauty of nature, journal your conversation with God; participate in liturgy of the hours. Be honest and specific with God. Ask Jesus to befriend you in ways that will be of support. Pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance.

I recall listening to a panel of sisters speak about their own vocational stories - sacred stories of women who had discerned God’s will. Stories that were human and authentic and touching and joyful. We heard words like call, prayer, following God’s will and phrases like, “if you’re open, you’ll hear” and “I entered and found things I didn’t know about.” It made me grateful to be in that space to listen. I was also thinking of Galatians 5:22 – the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – and that is what was experienced – women who had leaned into their discernment and came to know love and joy and peace. That’s the promise when we welcome the Holy Spirit into our discernment.

Next issue: **Discernment Steps PART THREE: LOVE**

This month’s vocation resource:

Sister Mary Pellegrino, CSJ, shares her stories of vocational discernment and perspective on religious life today in this episode of “[In Good Faith](#),” a podcast of [A Nun’s Life Ministry](#): <https://anunslife.org/podcasts/in-good-faith/igf054-mary-pellegrino>

Did you know?

Back issues of Vocation Reflections are available [online](#).

You can stay up-to-date with SSND Vocations at flowpage.com/ssnd or scan the code below:



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