

# Vocation Reflections

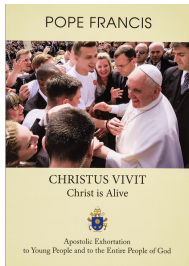
October 2022

 School Sisters of Notre Dame

## Blessed Theresa, foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, reminds us:

“The sun, the light of the world, shines kindly and quietly; it warms so benignly\*;  
it is so rich in blessing; my way of life, my example should do that too.”

\*benignly = Someone or something that is benign is gentle, kind, mild, or unharmed: a benign soul wouldn't hurt a fly.  
Benign describes a range of qualities, all of them positive.



## What We've Read:

Pope Francis shared his insights on the accompaniment, engagement, and vocational mission of youth and young adults in [CHRISTUS VIVIT \(Christ Lives\)](#) his 2019 post-synodal apostolic exhortation written “to young people and to the entire people of God.” There is much here to contemplate – nine chapters and 299 paragraphs! In these few paragraphs that follow below, Pope Francis presents some questions specific to your discernment – “certain questions we ought to ask.” [May our Holy Father's words and questions give helpful insight into next steps on your journey...](#)

### *Discerning your vocation*

283. A particular form of discernment involves the effort to discover our own vocation. Since this is a very personal decision that others cannot make for us, it requires a certain degree of solitude and silence. “The Lord speaks to us in a variety of ways, at work, through others and at every moment. Yet we simply cannot do without the silence of prolonged prayer, which enables us better to perceive God's language, to interpret the real meaning of the inspirations we believe we have received, to calm our anxieties and to see the whole of our existence afresh in his own light”. [157]

284. Yet this silence does not make us close in on ourselves. “We must remember that prayerful discernment has to be born of an openness to listening – to the Lord and to others, and to reality itself, which always challenges us in new ways. Only if we are prepared to listen, do we have the freedom to set aside our own partial or insufficient ideas... In this way, we become truly open to accepting a call that can shatter our security but lead us to a better life. It is not enough that everything be calm and peaceful. God may be offering us something more, but in our comfortable inadvertence, we do not recognize it”. [158]

285. When seeking to discern our own vocation, there are certain questions we ought to ask. We should not start with wondering where we could make more money or achieve greater recognition and social status. Nor even by asking what kind of work would be most pleasing to us. If we are not to go astray, we need a different starting point. We need to ask:

- **Do I know myself, quite apart from my illusions and emotions?**
- **Do I know what brings joy or sorrow to my heart?**
- **What are my strengths and weaknesses?**

These questions immediately give rise to others:

- **How can I serve people better and prove most helpful to our world and to the Church?**
- **What is my real place in this world?**
- **What can I offer to society?**

Even more realistic questions then follow:

- **Do I have the abilities needed to offer this kind of service?**
- **Could I develop those abilities?**

286. These questions should be centered less on ourselves and our own inclinations, but on others, so that our discernment leads us to see our life in relation to their lives. That is why I would remind you of the most important question of all. "So often in life, we waste time asking ourselves: 'Who am I?' You can keep asking, 'Who am I?' for the rest of your lives. But the real question is: 'For whom am I?'" [159] Of course, you are for God. But he has decided that you should also be for others, and he has given you many qualities, inclinations, gifts and charisms that are not for you, but to share with those around you.

### ***This month's vocation resource:***

Sister Barb Smith, OSB, explains how she went from being a competitive field hockey athlete to becoming a nun: <https://bit.ly/3C6SwDz>.

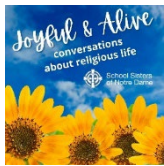
### **Did you know?**

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

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

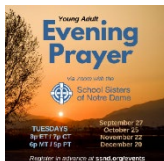
## **Looking ahead**

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



### **Joyful & Alive Conversation**

October 20, 2022  
8 p.m. ET / 7 p.m. CT



### **Online Evening Prayer**

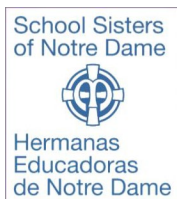
October 25, 2022  
November 22, 2022  
8 p.m. ET / 7 p.m. CT

## **National Vocation Awareness Week / Meet Our Sisters Tour**

November 6-12, 2022

## **SSND Discernment Weekend (details TBA)**

February 17-19, 2023  
St. Louis, MO



God's cause  
is the *only* concern of  
our hearts



*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).*