

# Vocation Reflections

April 2024



School Sisters of Notre Dame

**“Have patience with yourself concerning the growth of the reign of God within you . . . and go ahead step by step - not all at once. ‘The reign of God grows,’ says Jesus.”**  
*Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, Foundress, School Sisters of Notre Dame*

## Discerning next steps

Sometimes in the process of discernment, we can get stuck in “analysis paralysis!” There comes a point at which we have learned what we can, we have discerned to the best of our ability, and yet we find ourselves still unable to take a next step. We may feel we don’t yet have all the information needed, or maybe the timing just doesn’t feel right. It’s important to pay attention to those nudges, and to keep praying and discerning. But it’s also important to remember God’s faithfulness, and consider whether perhaps taking a next step might help to bring more clarity and give us what is needed to continue a good discernment.

Following is a reflection by Sister Kathy Knipper, OSF, from a booklet by LCWR, entitled: *Embracing a Traveler’s Heart*. May her reflection (slightly adapted) be a source of inspiration for your own faith journey, especially when struggling with a “next step!”

## Love the Questions<sup>1</sup>



For years I have treasured Rilke’s wisdom: “*Love the questions...slowly you will live your way into the answers.*”

It takes a mountain of courage to journey through the unknown while believing God accompanies us in the gradual unfolding.

Trusting that God is in our questions, we make the path by walking with our sisters, learning and sharing insights as we discern the way forward. If we could see the whole journey, we might never undertake it. We dare the first step that takes us from the place we have known toward the place we do not know. There is nothing, but to truly be present, go for it, and be faithful.

We are called to heed the signposts of faith, intuition, and wisdom. Together with our sisters, we stay on the path and live ... with integrity and hope. When we risk ... God takes us to where we need to go – we live our way into answers.

Again and again, as I learn to trust the questions, the unfolding process for answers gradually evolves.

### Reflection:

- How are you inspired to take first steps?
- What signposts have you experienced?
- What is gradually unfolding in you?

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from “Love the Questions” by Sister Kathy Knipper, OSF. [Embracing a Traveler’s Heart](#). LCWR. © 2023

## Prayer<sup>2</sup>

My God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it... I will not fear, for you are ever with me... Amen.

~Thomas Merton

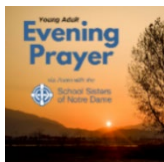
<sup>2</sup> Quoted from: [Thoughts in Solitude](#) by Thomas Merton. New York, N.Y: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1956

### This month's vocation resources

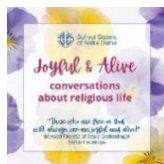
Did you know the phrase "do not be afraid" shows up more than 30 times in the New Testament alone? Search your favorite online bible for passages about courage, trust, faith, call, and more. One such website: [Bible Gateway](#)

Krista Tippett offers this great reflection on [Living the Questions | The On Being Project](#). She says in part: "If you are faithful to living a question, that question will be faithful back to you."

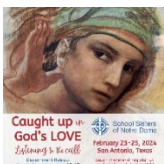
### Looking ahead (Click the event title to learn more.)



**[Online Evening Prayer](#)**  
For young adults ages 18+  
Fourth Tuesday each month  
8 p.m. ET / 7 p.m. CT



**[Joyful & Alive Conversation](#)**  
For single women ages 18-45  
April 13, 2024  
11:30 a.m. ET / 10:30 a.m. CT



**[Discernment Retreat for Single Women](#)**  
For single women ages 18-45  
April 26-28, 2024 - in Baltimore, MD



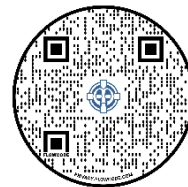
**[Summer Service Week 2024](#)**  
For any women ages 18-45  
July 10-14, 2024  
Whole Kids Outreach in Ellington, MO



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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).