



In the context of community

by Sister Bridget Waldorf, SSND

What is the context in which you are called to follow Christ? For me, the *call* to follow Christ is certain; the *context* is something I had to discover.

When I think about religious life, the word 'community' is not far behind. As School Sisters of Notre Dame we profess vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience similar to other congregations, and we also add two words to our vow formula: "in community:"

I vow to live forever consecrated celibacy, gospel poverty, and apostolic obedience, in community, according to the constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

What that means is, as I live out these vows I promise to do so shoulder-to-shoulder alongside my sisters. We affirm that "life in our faith community is a giving and a receiving of love and respect, a living together in trust, openness, sincerity, and forgiveness."¹ We also recognize that forming community is a life-long process - all the while saying "yes to the joys and inevitable tensions of creating and recreating community each day."²

Community is a choice - one that is not always easy. And yet, it is community that is modeled by the Trinity (God/Spirit/Christ), and it is community that teaches me about how to be in relationship with others. "We are called and sent to deepen communion with God and among people wherever we are - in every place, in every time, in every situation."³ I am buoyed by my experience of living with sisters as I walk into my daily ministry, something for which I have their support and prayers. I am lifted by the conversations and prayer we share in community to help navigate my understanding of the world and God's place in it. I am challenged to be self-aware in community because what I choose to do or how I choose to be affects others. What I know is that the space that I share with others *in community* moves me to be more intentional in following Christ's mission - it defined the context of my call - and for that, I am grateful.

¹ *You Are Sent*, Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, par. C7

² *Ibid.*

³ *You Are Sent*, Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, par. C9



Let us live together in harmony and love⁴

Jesus,
You have said,
"By this all will know
that you are My disciples,
if you love one another." (John 13:35)
Is love really the sign that distinguishes us?
We love one another
when we listen as carefully
as when we speak openly to one another;
when we have eyes for one another
and can, when necessary, close our eyes;
when we speak the truth with love
and keep silence about failings;
when we give with as much joy
as we receive with gratitude;
when we can sincerely ask pardon
and can just as uprightly forgive;
when we have our own opinion
and still respect the opinions of others;
when we are happy to hear a kind word
and are not stingy
in expressing praise and gratitude;
when we want to do justice to all
and are able to waive our own rights;
when we humbly allow ourselves
to be assisted by others
and help them to bear their burden;
then, Jesus,
we truly love one another
as You love us.

⁴ From "You, God; Prayer-Meditations on Words of Mother M. Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger" by Theo Schmidkonz, S.J. Translated by Sister Anne Winkelmann, SSND, 1992. p.26.

For reflection

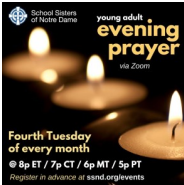
- What is the context in which you are called to follow Christ? What has been modeled for you? How can you learn more? Or how can you grow closer to Christ through a particular context?
- What is your prayer for today?



Scan for
back issues
and more
from SSND

Looking ahead

Click each event title to learn more or visit ssnd.org/events.



Young Adult Evening Prayer

For young adults ages 18+

January 28, 2025

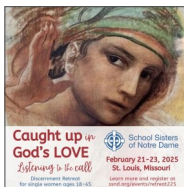
8 p.m. ET / 7 p.m. CT

Please register in advance for the Zoom link.

World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life

February 2, 2025

Engage your local faith community!

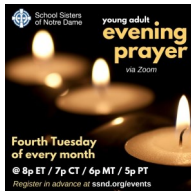


Discernment Retreat for Single Women

February 21-23, 2025

St. Louis, MO

Registration requested by February 7.



Young Adult Evening Prayer

For young adults ages 18+

February 25, 2025

8 p.m. ET / 7 p.m. CT

Ash Wednesday (Lent begins)

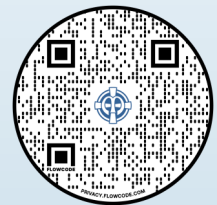
March 5, 2025

Catholic Sisters Week

March 8-14, 2025



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



Scan for
event links
and more
from SSND