



A quarterly newsletter on call and discernment published by the
Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

Greetings of Peace and Every Good!

Welcome to the summer issue of **Journey**, a newsletter published for women reflecting on God's call in their lives. The theme for this issue is **Called to Be People of Hope**. Hope sometimes seems in short supply these days. However, the words of St. Peter in this issue's scripture reading reminds us that God has given us a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ---a hope that will never perish, spoil or fade. Let us set our hearts firmly on the hope that is ours through Christ!

Barbara Kwiatkowski, OSF
Vocation Director



REFLECTION

Each issue of Journey features a reflection by one of our Sisters on her own call to religious life. In this issue, Sister Sue Bruno, who presently serves our Congregation in leadership as Councilor for the Membership, shares her vocation story. Prior to her ministry in Congregation leadership, Sr. Sue ministered at the University of Notre Dame in Campus Ministry and as a rector of a dormitory.

When Sister Barbara first asked if I would put a few thoughts down on paper about my vocation journey, I thought, well, that should be easy enough. If there's one topic I could write about, it's my life story. However, as the days and weeks went on, I became perplexed. I suddenly discovered that speaking of one's vocation is deeply and profoundly personal. So, I decided to go to the very beginning. I asked myself, when did I first become aware of my call to religious life?

It started for me at age 14 when I met the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate (Joliet Franciscans), where they taught at Sts. Peter and Paul grade school and high school in Chicago. This was my first

experience of actually meeting or speaking with Sisters. To be honest, I was very intimidated, scared and nervous around them. They were an enigma to me. How did they live? Why would they give up marriage and raising a family? Why were they so happy and joyous?

As I began to feel more comfortable around the Sisters, actually conversing with them and eventually working alongside them, helping with church and sacristy responsibilities, I discovered that they were down to earth, fun to be with, generous human beings. I was no longer afraid of them. During my sophomore year, when my home life became a challenge; I was filled with fear and uncertainty. It was then that I found that I could seek counsel, understanding and prayerful support from my friends the Sisters.

By my junior year, I realized that I was beginning to manage the stress of home because of the patience, encouragement and love of the Sisters. It was then that

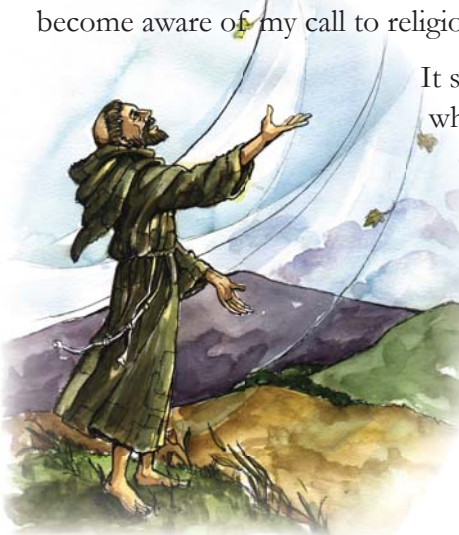
"I began to listen from within for the gentle voice of God."

- Sr. Sue Bruno, OSF



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Go where the journey leads...



REFLECTION (CONTINUED)



Sister Sue preparing to make some of her famous homemade spaghetti sauce.

I began to ask myself, “Could I be a Sister? What would it take? Could I help others the way I had been helped? Would I be worthy?” Those were the beginnings of the stirrings within me concerning a personal call to religious life.

But that’s only the beginning of my vocation

journey. Even though I entertained the thought of a vocation to religious life, I wrestled with questions regarding my ability, my worthiness, even my intelligence. So, I tried to push the idea of being a Joliet Franciscan out of my mind. I didn’t want to deal with my questions, my lack of self confidence, and my feelings that I just wasn’t convent material. By this time, I had put the Sisters on a pedestal, I had made them my heroes, and therefore, I felt that I could never measure up to them.

By now, you may have noticed that my early inspiration didn’t include my relationship with God. There’s a reason for that. Why? Because I hadn’t included God in my discernment. My first attraction to the Order was my relationships with these good and holy women. Yes, I wanted to serve as they did, but the part I hadn’t connected yet was they were prayerful women, in love with God and in service to God’s people. You might say, “I put the cart before the horse.” I wanted to live, serve and emulate these women, but I had a very shallow relationship with God in those early days.

With all my questions, doubts and fear of my short-comings, I pushed the thought of entering religious life out of my mind. I began a career with Illinois Bell Telephone. I had an apartment, a car, a motorcycle, and I was content. Well, in most ways. But

the idea of a vocation to religious life was never far from my mind. With these nagging questions, I decided to join our parish youth group and choir. Also, during those days, I stayed in touch with my Sister friends who supported my quest to seek answers about God’s will for me. They neither pressured me nor discouraged me; they just listened and walked with me along the journey.

In all honesty, it was a difficult journey. I asked myself: How do I know the will of God? How does the will of God present itself to me? How can I be sure that I am truly listening? Through the help of our youth group moderator, a parish priest, and several Sisters, I finally started to discover who God was in my life, what it takes to be a dedicated woman religious, and I began to listen from within for the gentle voice of God. For me it was not a tangible sign, not a bolt of lightning or a voice from outside. It was a gradual awareness that I wanted with all my heart to please God, to live a good and holy life, to serve others through ministry and to live in community. This was my deepest desire. It was also a letting go and shedding my previous fears about worthiness.

For me, it was, as Francis Thompson wrote at the beginning and ending of the **Hound of Heaven**:

**I fled Him, down the night and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter....
Rise, clasp my hand, and come!....
I am He Whom thou seekest!”**

Even now, I listen daily and recognize additional ways to answer my call to religious life; it doesn’t end when one enters. It continues day after day, through daily Eucharist and prayer, through generous service in the name of God and in living community with my Sisters.



Sister Sue makes a point during a seminar for our Sisters.

JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Each year the Joliet Franciscans gather to celebrate our Sisters who have anniversaries of profession of vows. On June 19th, we celebrated 28 Sisters with anniversaries of 25, 50, 60 and 75 years of faithful service to God and to the Church. The day began with a festive liturgy at the Cathedral of St. Raymond in Joliet. During the liturgy, the Sisters publicly renewed their religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Mass was followed by a reception and delicious luncheon to which our Sisters, their families, friends and guests were invited.



Standing from left: Sister Sue Bruno, Mrs. Nancy Budzinski, and Sister Sandra Sudkamp. They all were taught how to work the switchboard at the Motherhouse by Sister Mary Wilhelmine Tikva (seated). Sister Mary is the oldest Sister in the community; she celebrated her 75th Jubilee.

CHECK THESE OUT!

I attended a symposium at the University of Notre Dame recently. The following books were recommended by several presenters at the symposium.

***A Sacred Voice is Calling*, John Neafsey, Orbis Books, 2006.**

This book deals with the subject of personal vocation and discernment. The author explores the journey to finding and living in the place “where our deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

***From the Pews in the Back: Young Women and Catholicism*, edited by Kate Dugan and Jennifer Owens, Liturgical Press, 2009.** A collection of twenty-nine essays exploring the role of women in the Church and what it means to be a young, Catholic woman in the Church today.

www.catholicsoncall.org Catholics on Call assists young adults with exploring God’s call in their lives. Through the website and the programs they offer, you can learn more about opportunities for service in the Church and how God might be calling you.

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Peter 1: 3-9

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we have a sure hope and a promise of an inheritance that can never be spoiled or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens. Through your faith, God’s power will guard you until the salvation which has been prepared is revealed at the end of time. This is a cause of great joy for you, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which perishes though refined by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your soul.

Questions for Reflection

- What are the trials and difficulties that have refined my faith in Christ? What have I learned from them?
- What are the aspects of my life in Christ that bring me hope and joy? How can I better communicate and witness this to others?

Closing Prayer

Loving God, sometimes the events of our world, our country, our Church and the things happening in my own personal life make it hard to be hopeful. Yet, in these words from St. Peter, you remind me that because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, I can, with confidence, expect a better tomorrow, a future full of hope that will never die. Help me to act on that hope by making good choices and by rejoicing in the gift of the present moment. Amen.

THE JOURNEY

“Where are you going?” I asked.

“To places I have never been,” was the answer.

“What do you plan to do?” I asked.

“My purpose will be evident at journey’s end.”

“Who has planned your itinerary?” I asked.

“Its plan will be revealed at times most unlikely.”

“Why would you consent to such a vague plan?”

I asked.

“I accepted the challenge when I accepted life,”
was the answer.

By Mary Eleanor Rice

UPCOMING EVENTS

Brazil Mission Trip Sendoff, July 6, 2010, at OLA

Join us for a special mass and blessing for our mission group as they leave to spend 3 weeks serving in Brazil. Mass will take place at 4 p.m. at Our Lady of Angels, 1201 Wyoming Ave., Joliet, IL 60435. If you are unable to join us, please pray for our safe travel and for the success of our trip!

Prayer Evenings, 4th Tuesday of Each Month

Join the Joliet Franciscan Sisters for an hour of prayer once a month. Prayer evenings are held at 7 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of every month at the Joliet Franciscan Center, 1433 Essington Rd., Joliet. Dates for the next few months are **July 27, August 24, and September 28**. Refreshments and an opportunity to socialize follow the prayer.

Reception into the Novitiate, August 8

The Joliet Franciscans invite you to celebrate with us the reception of Deborah Gaughan into the Novitiate at a Vespers Service on Sunday, August 8, 2010, at 5 p.m. at Our Lady of Angels, 1201 Wyoming Ave., Joliet. Please join us for supper immediately following the service. RSVP to Sr. Barb at (815) 725-8735x115 by August 3rd.

Have a great Summer!



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