



## BULLETIN INSERTS

February 28, 2021 – Lent 2 (B)

### Meet Our Religious Communities: Discernment of Vocation

#### **If I feel that God is calling me to go deeper in my spiritual life, what paths might I consider?**

In baptism, we are sealed as Christ's own forever, and all are fully welcomed into the Christian family. And, some may feel called to make a fuller commitment of their time and their lives to God. This may be a call to lay ministry, to ordained ministry, or to religious life. It may be a call to a combination of these.

#### **How does someone discern a vocation to religious life?**

A vocation to religious life can take a number of different forms. There are Christian communities whose members live independently, hold jobs, engage in ministry, may have a partner or spouse, and who also take vows and connect with each other as devoted and loving community.

Members of monastic communities are single, live together, and take vows of poverty, celibate chastity, and obedience. Benedictines may also take a vow of stability. Some monastic communities are primarily contemplative, others primarily active, and still others balance a "mixed life" of both prayer and active ministry.

#### **What is the difference between a call to ordination and to religious life?**

Clergy are leaders in the church, in worship, and in the pastoral care of congregations. Religious (what we call members of religious communities) may be involved in parish ministry, or other types of ministry, or may be primarily engaged in contemplative prayer. Religious almost always contribute in some ways to the maintenance and well-being of their community life.

Religious have an extended opportunity to nurture their own spiritual growth and to center their lives on God. The experience of living together (or in close association) with others on a similar spiritual journey enhances our ability to grow into blessed community and to share these blessings with others in the church. For those called to this life, it can be a source of great joy and fulfillment.

Some people may have a dual vocation, both to religious life and to ordination. These are separate callings, that may occur in the same person. Usually the discernment of and formation in these vocations should be engaged separately.

#### **What is the process of becoming a religious sister or brother?**

Communication and visits with several communities would be a good place to start, as well as ongoing conversation with a spiritual director.

For more information, visit [www.caroa.net](http://www.caroa.net) and [www.naecc.net](http://www.naecc.net).

