

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



Recently, I found myself walking behind an elderly couple leaving a Catholic hospital. As we walked I overheard a small portion of their conversation. The gentleman said to his wife, "Why do the Catholics have all of the hospitals?" His wife responded, "I don't know, but this is a great hospital." I smiled and kept walking. Obviously, the Church does not own, sponsor or operate every hospital in our nation, but those it does provide excellent care to persons of all walks of life. The founding of hospitals

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ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY

Vocation Newsletter

as well as schools, social service agencies of great variety, and other institutions is in fulfillment of the Lord's command in Matthew 25:40 "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." Serving

each other is our response to the divine command to love as we are loved by the Father.

Religious communities immigrated to the United States as early as the 16th century. Upon arrival, these communities began investigating ways to serve the local people as the focus of their mission. The proclamation of the Gospel was accomplished through preaching and good works. The Lord did the same. His sermons and teachings were accompanied by miracles that addressed the human condition. Imitating their Lord, religious communities discerned ministries that respond to the needs of the human family. Hospitals, orphanages, schools, universities, social service agencies, soup kitchens, counseling services and more, were all established by religious to serve as the Lord did. In hundreds of ways, thousands of consecrated persons and their communities selflessly minister to people simply to offer hope to their sisters and brothers in the human community. Since the arrival of the first community of friars in 1869, Servites have ministered to





God's people as parish priests, teachers, missionaries, hospital, prison, school and university chaplains, counsellors, spiritual, retreat and shrine directors. We have fought for human rights and the cause of justice and peace. Servites, like all consecrated persons, continue to discern how to respond to the Lord's least brothers and sisters. This discernment is crucial to our life's passion of searching for God and being vigilant for His coming.

For one discerning the call to religious life, a continuous prayerful reading of Matthew

we need to have the courage of convicted faith to respond with ministry that lovingly brings hope. The ministry of consecrated persons is simply that, bringing hope in love to others as this is given to us by the love of our lives, Christ Jesus. Discerning the call to religious life must include one's willingness to intimately encounter Christ in one's encounter with others. The communal life nurtures the call. The vowed life is a witness to this call. Ministry is the response to the call. The call begins at initial discernment and continues throughout life until that glorious moment

Questions for Prayer and Reflection:

1. Reading Matthew 25:31-46, how am I feeling Christ calling me to serve? Whom is He calling me to serve? How?
2. If I join the Sevites, what ministry might I be called to do? Why and How?
3. What do I need from Jesus to answer His call? Pray about this.

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follow



25:31-46 is important because this text serves the mandate of how we are to serve. Our charism of service begins with this text. How is Christ needing to be served today? In whom is Christ still suffering in those who suffer? How can I alleviate the sufferings of Christ in His least ones? If our prayer on this text is truly authentic, then we will be able to look beyond the obvious to those who likewise suffer, but in silence: those who face the stress of daily life without any support; those who suffer the ravages of mental illness of any kind; those, who as caregivers, suffer from their worry for their ill loved ones. To look beyond the obvious means that we are willing to be led by Christ to seek Him suffering in others whose suffering may not or will not be apparent. Whether another's suffering is obvious, or silent and hidden, makes no difference to us. If we are serious in fulfilling the Lord's command to care for His least ones, then we must be willing to be led by the Holy Spirit to seeing all those who need to be ministered to. Likewise,

when the religious meets Christ face to face in heaven. To serve as Christ served is not always easy, but when done with Him and thorough Him, the joy one receives is indescribable. The Church has many ways to serve Christ in others. How will you serve?

As you continue to discern the call of the Lord for your life, know that we Servites are praying for you.



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