

# GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



**A**vocation to religious life is a gift from God that needs an affirmative response from the one called. The call to religious life unfolds within the ordinary context of our lives. Most likely, the call to religious life will not come through an apparition, or some supernatural religious experience. God works most powerfully among His people within their very day-to-day human experience. This experience includes joys and sorrows, health and illness, strong confidence and profound

## CALLED TO SERVE

### ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY

#### Vocation Newsletter

doubts, when in prayer or beholding the majesty of nature. The Lord calls one within the totality of their life experience. It is the discerners' mission to listen, clarify what is heard and to respond to the call. A vocation to religious life is God's

invitation to the phenomenal adventure of loving Him so deeply that one wants to similarly love others into experiencing the same depth of the divine love that the servant experiences. Discerning the call to religious life requires understanding what a vocation is and what it entails.



In article 105 of the Servite Constitutions, the vocation of the Servant of Mary is understood as “a particular expression of the fundamental condition of the People of God, a people made up of brothers and sisters. It includes a gratuitous invitation from God and a free and deliberate response to follow Christ in an apostolic fraternity according to the spirit of our Order. This vocation develops within a community which passes on the riches of the Church and Order and fosters the gifts and talents of each person. Since this vocation is not realized in a single act, but continues in a constant rhythm of invitation and acceptance...as he pursues the ideal of achieving the perfect stature of Christ.”

Servites understand firstly that our vocation is being brothers to all. We see all people as brothers and sisters who



deserve respect because we share the dignity of being children of our heavenly Father. Here we experience the divine call to create solidarity among the human family. This echoes the call of Pope Francis, who in his encyclical *Fratelli tutti* states that *“the world exists for everyone, because all of us were born with the same dignity. Differences of color, religion, talent, place of birth or residence, and so many others, cannot be used to justify the privileges of some over the rights of all. As a community, we have an obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and has sufficient opportunities for his or her integral development”* (118). Building communities among ourselves

in our work and life. Seeing the majesty of a glorious sunset makes us feel part of the larger reality that is creation. Feeling the touch of a treasured loved one or hearing the supportive affirmation of a trusted, dear friend makes us feel alive and loved. God uses the same senses together with our faith to call us in a deeper relationship with Him and to invite us to serve Him. God reveals our vocation within the context of our lives because this makes the most sense to us. It is when faith experiences are revealed in the real and ordinary of life that God becomes close and not distant. When we feel God is near and close to us, accepting His invitation

## Questions for Prayer and Reflection:

1. How am I hearing God’s call in my life?
2. How do I see myself living my vocation as a Servite Friar?

and among others where all people can flourish, grow and feel God’s love is part of our Servite vocation. Strong communities where faith is joyfully expressed, hope is alive, and a deep caring concern for each other is authentically lived become places of encounter with God. This enriches our prayer and the lives of the friars of our communities and the people in the communities where our ministry is engaged. Being men of faith expressed in care for each and the persons we serve is how we understand our vocation.

becomes less frightening and more a possibility laced with hope. Servites grow in deeper understanding of our vocation through our prayer, in celebrating the liturgy, and by our life in community. In these very tangible means and moments, the All Holy Mystery who is God becomes a bit more comprehensible because we see, hear, taste, touch and smell God in the ordinary aspects of daily life.

As we reflect on the encounters with God that we experience in prayer, in community, in ministry and in the lives of each other, we Servites understand that our call to religious life is not a once in a lifetime experience. Our vocation unfolds in the constant rhythm of invitation and acceptance within the ordinariness of our lives. The Lord calls us through the normal events and relationships of life because these are relatable and enduring moments. As we learn through the five senses of our physical body, there too do we encounter God. Accomplishing a task at work in which we use our intellect and our talents makes us feel a deeper sense of purpose

In your discernment of a vocation to Servite religious life, look for God in the ordinary events, moments and relationships of your life. It is in these that God reveals His love for you. Know that we Servites are praying for you in your discernment.



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