

The Great Sculptor.

Every year I share the following story with my adult Confirmation candidates. A story I learned from Sr. Kieran Sawyer, SSND from *Confirming Faith*.

"Once, just as a sculptor was beginning to work on a new block of marble, he noticed a young boy standing in the doorway of his shop. The boy did not say anything. He just stood watching the great man chisel away at the block. The boy came often to the sculptor's shop. He watched the chunks of marble fall away one by one-first large chunks, then finer and finer pieces-until he could see a form emerging from the marble. One day the boy arrived at the shop to find that the block of marble had been transformed into a magnificent lion, poised, powerful, and larger than life. For a long time the boy stood in amazement just looking at the lion. Finally, he turned to the sculptor and said, "Hey, mister, how did you know that there was a lion inside that marble?"

I then proceed to share with the candidates that in a very real sense the boy's perception of what happened was right. There was a lion inside the marble - a lion that was clearly visible to the eye of the great sculptor. The artist saw his task as that of bringing to light the true beauty that was hidden in the marble block. The role of a vocation director is similar to that of the artist. We are tasked with helping bring to light the beauty of your baptismal vocation.

Through Baptism we share a common vocation, "To Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27). Entering into a time of discernment is about bringing to the surface our vocation to love. A task we are all called to not just those discerning a vocation to religious life.

It is a time to reflect on our gifts, talents, desires and passions. It is a time to discover how best to use them to love God, and one another. For some, our greatest capacity to love will flow from a calling to religious life as a sister, brother or priest. Others will grow in their capacity to love through the diocesan priesthood or the diaconate. The majority will experience the deep love of a spouse and children. Each are an expression of our common baptismal vocation to love God, and one another. Your task is to discover the best way to grow in your capacity to love and be loved.

Your local vocation directors are here to support your discernment. Like the great sculptor who was tasked with bringing to light the true beauty that was hidden in the marble block. We will help you chisel away negative attitudes, false beliefs about religious life, and answer questions that will help you grow in your understanding of your baptismal vocation.

May God bless you on this journey of faith called life.

Peace and All Good,
Br. Scott Slattum, OFM

Prayer before the San Damiano Crucifix - St. Francis of Assisi

Most High, glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of my heart.
Give me true faith,
certain hope and perfect charity,
sense and knowledge, Lord,
that I may carry out
Your Holy and true command.
Amen.

Reflection Question:

According to the National Religious Vocation Conference new members to religious life found that the vocation director and other team members played a critical role in their discernment process. Have you connected with our vocation director to help you in your discernment to religious life?

Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.