

## Call to Action.

My hand were folded in prayer. My knees ached from kneeling. This was my daily ritual after noon Mass. I was once again praying for God's will to discover my vocation. Then it happened. I felt an interior voice begin to rise up within me. A voice that boomed, "Scott, stop praying and start doing!" The words reverberated throughout my body. In that moment my prayer quickly changed to, "Lord, give me the strength to do, instead of just praying."

One cannot simply discover their vocation by praying; one must *do*. We are called to *try*. That is what God ask of us. We are called to try on our various vocational options of religious life, diocesan priesthood/deaconate, married or single life.

We cannot discern whether we should *do* something, but only whether we should *try* to do it. For instance, you cannot discern to marry Susan unless you begin to date her. You cannot begin to discern religious life unless you experience the Order's fraternal, prayer and ministerial life. These observations also make it clear that some vocational paths require the consent of more than one person. Therefore, we have to be prepared to receive the answer *no*. In the other's *no* we come to know God's will in that particular circumstance. The *no* is not a sign of failure, but a sign of a successful discernment.

In religious life, you are discerning if you should *try* to enter our postulancy program. The word postulancy comes from the Latin, *postulare*, which means, "to ask." An aspirant asks to enter our year-long program of preparation (postulancy) for formal acceptance into the Franciscan Order. During postulancy, you are provided with an experience of fraternity, prayer, and ministry with the friars. In addition, you are given the resources to help you develop the psychological and emotional qualities necessary for religious life and ministry. Postulancy is the equivalent of dating Susan to discover if you wish to both marry each other.

The surest path to happiness is to discover what God is inviting you to *do*. By living out your personal vocation, you will do the most good, and in so doing will find fulfillment both here and hereafter. Moreover, God does not want us to simply settle for the easiest path, but challenges us to choose the greatest good for our lives.

A concept shared in the story of the rich young man who approached Jesus and asked Him what he should do to gain everlasting life. Recall, the rich young man was not choosing between good or evil within the story. We were told that he kept all the commandments. In the story, Jesus told him what to *do* if he wished to be perfect and to live the greater good. The scripture (Mt 19:16-22) makes clear to the rich young man and ourselves: We are not called to simply avoid evil and do good, but to do the greatest good. Therefore, I ask you, "What is your greatest good?" What is God calling you to *do* with your life? The only way to find out is to *try*.

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

Peace and all Good,  
*Bro. 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.

### Personal Reflection:

According to the National Religious Vocation Conference direct experience with their religious community and its members, through “Come and See” experiences, discernment retreats, and other opportunities to spend time with members are important to help discerners discern religious life. How do you plan to *try* on religious life – to *do* instead of just pray about your vocation?

### 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.