

Franciscan Sisters Minorees: 'The Call'

Since the beginning of the year you have been welcoming us into your homes as we have shared different aspects of our Franciscan life. Today we would like to share with you something about how people can discern what path in life God is calling them to.

Making contact

The first contact a person makes with us may be through personal contact, through the Internet (details below), through writing, or even by reading an article in the Catholic Newspaper - like this one! How do I discover God's call for me? Every person has a unique and specific vocation. By looking into our hearts, and in prayer we discover who we are called to be. The call to religious life will normally be known

through an inner attraction to Christ and a desire to live for him in the service of people.

What should I do?

Spend time in prayer asking God to show you His will for you. Grow in intimacy with God through receiving the sacraments. Speak about vocation to those already living religious life, and take the opportunity to visit a convent or monastery and take part in any discernment programmes they are running.

Discerning with support

We have regular monthly Come and See Afternoons and regular Vocation Discernment Weekends. Decisions are often made during these residential weekends. At our June Weekend we had four young women discerning their vocation and

at our most recent one in September we had five. We would ask you to pray for these nine young women as they pray to discover God's plan for their future lives.

Our next scheduled weekend is the 5th - 7th of February, but we are about to launch this year's Monthly (afternoon) Discernment Programme:

If there are young women reading this who feel the attraction or invitation to explore Franciscan Religious Life, take heart and remember these beautiful words of Pope Benedict:

I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ - and you will find true life. Amen.

Families

Parents and Grandparents can help children discover their vocation by helping



The Franciscan Minorees Sisters of St Clare's Convent with Marzene, received as a Candidate 4 October

them develop a life of prayer, and an active Christian faith. They can also help them to become aware of the variety of different religious vocations within the Church. The visible presence of so many families at the visit of

the relics of St Therese to our Cathedral bears witness to the vibrant living faith in family life in our diocese. Saint Therese's unique vocation was nurtured by the simple yet devout faith in the Martin family home.

You can check out our website at www.stclaresconvent.fsnet.co.uk and our Vocation website at www.franciscanvocations.org Our weekends and afternoons are always advertised on

the Diocesan website. You can also contact the vocation director, Sr Marianne, via these sites or by email marianne@chesi@hotmail.com

Date of next Come and See afternoon : 31st October 2009

October is the beginning of the 2009-2010 twelve month programme. There are residential discernment weekends built into the programme. If you cannot come to all the Saturday meetings you are welcome to come when you can.

Time: 2.30pm -5.00pm

These afternoons include: reflecting on The Call in Scripture and the Life of St Francis; some input from the Sisters; Eucharistic Adoration; opportunity for one-to-one with a Sister; tea with the community; Evening Prayer with the community.

This programme is especially relevant for those people who are unsure about which path in life the Lord is leading them towards, and wish to explore the call to Religious Life to discover whether the Lord may be inviting them to discern about this call more deeply.

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Frankly speaking

EVENTS OF EARLY OCTOBER ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE FORGOTTEN



There are times in our world today when events seem to be either too familiar or too stark. The "events" of early October are not likely to be forgotten. They were sadly familiar and revealed the stark contrast in our earthly lives today.

Despite all of this we witnessed a tremendous surge of Faith and spiritual uplifting with the visit of the relics of St Therese to 22 locations in England and Wales. At the time of writing this article it is not possible to estimate just how many thousands of people re-arranged their daily lives and joined long queues showing great patience as they waited to venerate the saintly relics. The tour of the relics co-incided with both the Cafod Family Fast Day and news of tragic events in the southern oceans in the east of our planet.

The tsunami in the South Pacific and powerful earthquake in the Indonesian island of Sumatra came within hours of each other and resulted in great loss of life and devastation of buildings including hospitals and churches. At times the 'stark' contrast I referred to earlier is perhaps best illustrated when you consider these world tragedies and the work of Cafod and similar agencies with the great concerns over obesity in our own country. There are of course some people who are over weight for reasons beyond their control and we should never forget this but "for the most part obesity is the result of dietary and lifestyle choices." I am quoting the words of a doctor in the northwest of England who is also chair of the NHS. The doctor also referred to the temptations of the fast-food outlet, too much television watching and working on computers, which he felt, had reached epic proportions for some people. The doctor was clearly worried of the way in which his concerns were being taken up by our children and he went on to claim that a third of our children are



either overweight or obese, by 2050 he felt this would rise to two thirds.

It is not always easy you put this into a financial perspective but one estimate of the cost of obesity in England for 2007 was £4.2 billion. In 2015 this may well be £6.3 billion. At one of our recent political conferences the cause of foreign aid got mentioned again. Many readers will be familiar with the target of 0.7% not being achieved by successive British Governments. The work of Cafod is highly respected and many Catholics regularly contribute in a generous way, Cafod will always help the vulnerable when it possibly can, and events in recent times have showed just how necessary the work is. If only some of the money spent on obesity could be re-directed to foreign aid then who knows it could even rise to more the 0.7%. I am sure that is what Saint Therese would want.

Frank Goulding
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