



A life as a consecrated religious is a life of on-going discernment.

All Christians, by their baptismal commitment, are called to witness to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and, in Him, with His Father through the Spirit. Some are invited to live their Christian vocation through the profession of the evangelical counsels in a religious community. They are attracted to a particular Congregation and to its unique way of living out the call received at baptism by the spirit of the Congregation as it is manifested by the members.

Each Sister, by reason of her own apostolic commitment, has the responsibility to foster vocations and to preserve membership in the Congregation. Since the good example of her life affords the highest recommendation for the Community and the most appealing invitation to religious life, she frequently examines the quality of her personal witness. She also actively encourages possible candidates and prays for religious and priestly vocations. (#43 Constitutions)

LEADER: We exalt Your Providence, O Lord, and we entrust ourselves to Your loving care,

ALL: *with praise and gratitude for the good and beautiful things we have received,
with confidence when confronted with our human limitation,
with humble submission to the mystery of God's purpose when we experience
suffering and frustration.*

LEADER: and we commit ourselves to making Your Providence more visible in our world,

ALL: *with fidelity, living as responsible stewards of the earth and our personal gifts,
with courage, confronting the evils and injustices of our times,*

*with compassion, entering into the joys and sufferings of your people,
with hope, collaborating with people of good will in fostering your reign on earth.*

ANTIPHON: As Sisters and Associates of Divine Providence, we have been called to labor with Jesus in the building up of the Kin-dom of God by proclaiming the Good News, by sharing God’s unconditional love with others, and by working for justice wherever injustice is found.

O sing to God a new song;
Sing to God all the earth!
Sing and bless God’s name.
We proclaim your glory among the Nations.
Your wonders among the peoples.

You are great and worthy to be praised;
To be feared above all gods.
The gods of the nations are idols;
But you made the heavens.
Honor and majesty are before you;
Strength and beauty, in your sanctuary.

Give to God, you families of peoples,
Give to God glory and power!
Give glory to God’s holy name;
Bring an offering, and enter God’s courts!
Worship at the temple of Yahweh.

O earth, tremble before the Almighty.
We proclaim to all the nations:
“You, O God, are sovereign.
The world you established,
It shall never be moved;
You will judge the peoples with equity.”

Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice;
Let the sea thunder and all that fills it;
Let the field exalt, and everything in it!
Then shall all the trees of the wood sing
For joy at your presence, O God, for you
Come, you come to judge the earth.

You will judge the world with justice,
And the peoples with your truth.
(Psalm 96)

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READING: A DISCERNING HEART AND ATTITUDE

How can we, as disciples of Jesus, keep our call alive, authentic, and evolving? If we believe that our vocation is dynamic, then we will see our call continue to unfold in unexpected ways. If we reflect on our experience prayerfully and integrate it, we will strive toward authenticity in our vocation. How does a vocation not only stay alive and authentic but continue to evolve in faithfulness to all in the future?

Developing a discerning heart so that God’s will is almost instinctively recognized is a way of keeping our call authentic and evolving. Discernment is an art that develops from years of practicing fidelity and inner freedom. To remain in conversation with God, listening and responding to the next invitation, keeps a vocation ever changing, ever fresh, ever new.

Discernment demands that we sift and tease out the various movements that affect our inner selves. The fine-tuned, discerning heart recognizes the best and cuts through the core movements and feelings to detect God's beckoning...

In the same way that Jesus learned to follow the leadings of the Spirit, we learn to discern by responding to the movements of the Spirit in our lives. It is learning to say "yes" even while we struggle with "no." Discernment is the art of saying "yes" to movement toward God.

Discernment is a lifelong task of staying faithfully in conversation with God. It does not end with ordination, matrimony, or religious profession. God continues to invite us forward to new insights, to more loving choices, and to places we would otherwise never have imagined.

Pause to reflect on the following:

*Where am I in my life of discernment? How am I evolving my discerning mind and heart?
Do I invite others, encourage others to discernment of their vocation?
What do you do as a local community to promote vocations to our community?*

INTERCESSIONS:

Provident God, give us discerning minds and hearts that we may know what you call us to do in our daily lives;

May my life be a true Christian witness of the vocation to which I have committed;

Give those brothers and sisters in Christ struggling with your call the grace to discern what you ask of them and the courage to respond;

O Holy Spirit, enlighten our minds and hearts that we may remember, with gratitude, the graces that have stirred our hearts to service and recall those people in our lives who have inspired and continue to inspire us to carry on the building of Your Kin-dom;

We pray especially for those women and men who will hear the call of Jesus and respond willingly and joyfully. Touch their hearts that they may give themselves in generous service to you and grant that we may be blessed with new members and associates who will respond positively to the mystery of Providence and the miracle of your call.

And for what else shall we pray...

LEADER: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ.

Before the world was made, we were chosen in Christ to be holy and spotless and to live through love in God's presence,

predestined to become adopted sons and daughters through Jesus Christ for God's own kind purposes,
to make us praise the glory of the grace, freely given to us in the Beloved,
in whom, through his blood, we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins.

Such is the richness of the grace showered on us in all wisdom and insight.

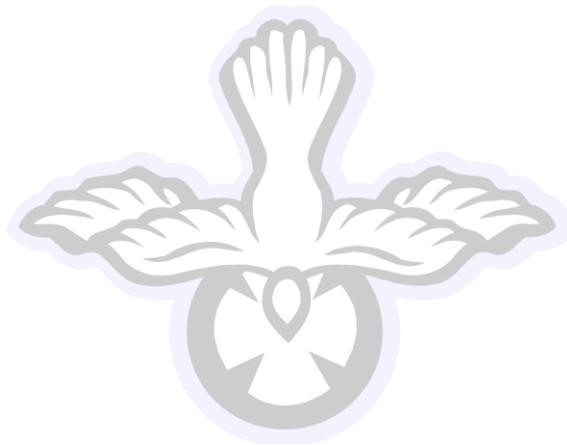
The mystery of God's purpose was made know to us, the hidden plan so kindly made in Christ from the beginning, to act upon when the times had run their course to the end;
that everything should be brought together under Christ as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth.

And it is in him that we were claimed as God's own, chosen from the beginning, under the predetermined plan of the one who freely decides all things and guides them, chosen to be, for the greater glory of the divinity, the people who would put their hopes in Christ, before he came.

ALL: Now, we too, in him, have heard the message of the truth and the Good News of our salvation and have believed it:

and we, too, have been stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit of the promise,
the pledge of our inheritance,
which brings freedom for those who are God's own,
so that the glory of God may be praised.

Adapted from Ephesians 1:3-14



Prayer prepared by Lisa Paffrath, CDP. Artwork used with permission from Microsoft.