



Issue No. 44



Newsletter

8th March 2024



Good morning from Vocations Ireland The photo was taken a few weeks ago on a bright cold snowy Friday. I would like to begin our newsletter journey with you by sharing something I read in the Canadian newsletter that might help us on our own Lenten Journey and give us some food for thought. It is by Sr Deborah Borneman SS.C.M. NRVC.

I am delighted to introduce you to the members of our new Executive board and the plans we have for the coming year.

Once again can I ask for items for the newsletter and things to share on the website and social media.

We would like you to send us photos of professions/ordinations from your congregations.

We love to read stories from returned missionaries, stories from members of the communities of memories they have of their ministry, and stories from younger members about their Call, and what ministry and or studies they are involved in. These are all ways to promote vocations.

Could you please inform us of Congregation Jubilee's for this year and appointments of new leadership and vocations teams. Again these are interesting news events that can and should be shared.

The media are not interested in writing our narrative so we need to write our own and use social media as a platform to tell our story.

Our Next newsletter will have details of upcoming webinars, workshops and hopefully some stories.



Margaret Cartwright

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THIS LENT, LOOK AROUND

Sr. Deborah Borneman
National Religious Vocation
Conference Chicago



Look around this Lent and see what catches your attention. Have you noticed any nuances that invite you to look closer? Recently I was scrolling through social media, and I casually glanced at this fun fact: “The bee lives less than 40 days, visits at least 1,000 flowers, and produces less than a teaspoon of honey. Is it worth it?” This two-sentence post prompted me to inquire further to fact-check lifespans, and I found out that it depends upon the type of bee and when they are born! According to Buzz About Bees, there are honey bees (also known as the worker bees), bumble bees, and queen bees. They are different in appearance, lifespans, and pollination abilities. Additionally, I learned that bees born in the autumn live longer than those born in the spring or summer because of the varying workloads. This quick statistic reminds me of giving vocation panel presentations on religious life. For example, if the vocation director is a monastic or a missionary, some of their answers will vary. Likewise, insights about formation experiences will be different depending on entrance dates. Furthermore, there’s a distinction between charisms that cannot be generalized on a bumper sticker, there’s a difference between when and how we gather for communal prayer, there are variations on how we live the vows, how we choose to dress, and certainly, there’s plenty of opinions about the future of religious life! If women and men continue to respond to God’s call throughout their lives (versus a one-time decision), instead of watching the proverbial sand spiralling down in a fragile hourglass, look around to notice the Spirit beckoning us to the beach and places where the sand is deep and wide. What you see depends upon what you spend time looking for. Perhaps Lent can be a 40-day invitation to choose to look around longer, higher, deeper, and wider. This Lent, look around for... Music that breathes through your soul to enliven your Spirit. Longer pauses throughout the day to hear God calling you by name. Higher ongoing formation through podcasts, videos, books, and poetry. Deeper understanding of the timeless vows we live in the 21st century. Wider conversations with people who help you to dream, disagree, and discern. Looking around can enlarge vision rather than diminish it. Looking around purposefully rather than randomly can inspire weary souls to recognize that God continues to call even when we stop responding. Looking around requires movement beyond sitting still, it invites curiosity instead of complacency. When we take the time to look around, we can recognize Christ dwelling in our hearts, rooted, and grounded in love, and have the strength to comprehend the breadth, length, height, and depth of the love of God for each of us (Ephesians 3:18-21). There’s been a lot of chatter about intentionally slowing down, yet if we look at a bee’s lifespan, it’s all about purposeful productivity, isn’t it? That’s a deeper calling, to discern choices in what is best for the person making the decision or what brings life to the community. “One bee, less than a teaspoon of honey. Is it worth it?” While I do not understand much about the minds of bees, I am convinced a bee does not value its worth by the honey produced or count the flowers visited each day. Yet at least 1,000 flowers are pollinated because of one bee’s lifetime. Looking around may take us away from counting members to appreciating the countless lives touched by each person in our communities. As we continue our Lenten journey, let us also continue to look around.

VOCATIONS IRELAND EXECUTIVE



Br Kevin Mascareuhas FPM; Michelle Robertson, Communications Officer, OLA Ireland, Lay representative; Margaret Cartwright; Sr Jeanne Bott OSB; Sr Eileen O'Connell OP; Fr Colm O'Mahony OSA, Sister Mary Hanrahan, PBVM and Fr Cyril Odiia,SDB

Missing from the photo is Sr Mary Usifoh OLA and Sr Carmel Ryan DC both of whom were unable to attend our reflection and planning day due to circumstances beyond their control.

As an Executive we recently met in Avila the Carmelite Centre for a time away from our day to day routines to pray, reflect and plan a way forward for Vocations Ireland.

We had a very fruitful day together getting to know one another. We began with morning prayer, shared ideas, discussed possible ways forward. We took some time for individual prayer and more sharing of ideas and discussion. We ended our day by celebrating the Eucharist together in the beautiful chapel in Avila followed by relaxing a sharing a meal together before heading home in our different directions.

SOME PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

- ❖ We are exploring the possibility of forming RETREAT TEAMS in partnership with the Salesians to enable a response from schools in Dublin, Limerick, and Kildare.
- ❖ Planned approach to COFFEE AND CHATS in the universities.
- ❖ We will be inviting people to join the different TEAMS to ensure we have enough people to cover the various events.
- ❖ We have formed a planning team to begin to prepare for VOCATION SUNDAY. We will have Mass on the eve of Vocation Sunday as we did last year in Whitefriar Street. Perhaps some of you could plan ahead to bring some young people to the Mass as well as invite members of your communities to attend. It would be lovely to have people attend from all over the country. One idea would be to organise a pilgrimage to pray for the culture of vocation at the vocation Mass and have the opportunity to meet Religious of all ages and hear their stories.
- ❖ We will have other events about Vocation leading up to Vocation Sunday.
- ❖ We also discussed how we might support those in vocation ministry which can be a lonely place at times especially if you have no team with you.

Opportunities for those already in vocation ministry

1. **“Thursday coffee & chat”** an opportunity to meet one another via zoom to share ideas and support one another . The first of these will be held on Thursday 21st March 7.30p.8.30p.m.
2. A **survey** has been sent out to all vocation personnel asking what supports they need and what would interest them most. If you have not received this there is a copy at the end of this newsletter.
3. The upcoming **Book launch** on 9th March is one useful support for Vocation and Leadership personnel to help us understand the global trends in the Culture of Vocation. If you are able to attend see details on flyer attached.



VOCATION PERSONNEL SURVEY 2024

NAME

CONGREGATION

EMAIL ADDRESS

MOBILE NUMBER

DO YOU AGREE TO HAVE YOUR MOBILE NUMBER ADDED TO THE VOCATION WHATSAPP GROUP (This group is only for those involved in Vocation Ministry and will not be shared with anyone else)

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN VOCATION MINISTRY?

What type of support do you need in your vocation ministry?

What supports would you like to see Vocations Ireland put in place for Vocation Ministers?

Please complete and return to the email address below no later than 22/3/24

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Web: www.vocationsireland.com

BOOK LAUNCH

GOD'S CALL IS EVERYWHERE:

A GLOBAL ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS FOR WOMEN

Religious life is vitally necessary to the Catholic church and society today. But it will exist in new and varied forms which speak to the spiritual hungers of different societies, ethnic cultures, and generations.

SATURDAY 9TH MARCH

Mercy International, Baggott St
Dublin

**10AM
TILL
5PM**

Lunch €25.00 non refundable, must be pre booked no later than 1st March

AUTHORS PRESENT ON THE DAY:

Patricia Witterberg SC
Mary L Gautier
Gemma Simmonds CJ

**TO BOOK, CALL:
086 782 0149**

VOCATIONS
ireland 

