



VOCATION VIBES

Volume 2 No. 2

“Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch”. Lk.5:4

Jesus’ direction to Peter and his fellow fishermen resulted in an unprecedented catch of fish after a long discouraging night of no results. It resulted in a life change for them as well. They left everything to follow Jesus. This gospel story has always served as an encouragement for vocation ministers. Now, more than ever, it continues to challenge us. Where are the deep waters we must travel, and what are we being asked to leave behind so as to inspire others to follow us?

This April marks the fifth anniversary of the Third Continental Congress on Vocations to Ordained Ministry and Consecrated Life in North America. The Pastoral Plan, which resulted, was meant to help foster a vocation culture in North America. It invites each of us to cast our nets and immerse ourselves in the world so that people may see consecrated religious life as a viable life form.

Who are these young adults we seek to engage? They are classified as Generation X, born between 1961 and 1981 and Millennials or Generation Y, born in the 1980’s and 1990’s. These young women and men, sociologists tell us, are very different from the generations preceding them.

Generation X is more tolerant of diversity than previous generations. They are the grown up latchkey kids who are delaying life commitments and looking for a world and church that is stable. Many took on responsibilities at an early age and define family without relying on blood ties, trusting friendships over all other relationships.

Generation Y is described being as self-confident, optimistic, hopeful, independent, goal-oriented, diverse, and inclusive with a respect for the other. They are more global, civic and community minded, than Generation X as well as less cynical and more concerned with social issues.

In her address to the NRVC Convocation last fall, Sr. Laurie Brink, OP (Sinsinawa), noted what set these two generations apart from those preceding them. “Growing up after Vatican II,” she said, “these young adults are loosely catechized in the Catholic faith. They are attracted by outward symbols that reflect their desire for spirituality. They have

experienced life on their own and many have served in volunteer ministries. They are attracted to common life and common prayer in community that will enable them to develop relationships. They are seeking something to believe in, and we have that to share.”

Sr. Laurie, who teaches at Chicago Theological Union in Chicago, ended her presentation, by quoting one of her students regarding religious life. “I want you to live out your vocation and I want you to want that for me.” Can we do that? Can we take time to discern how we are meant to live our religious life in this time?

Diarmuid O’Murchu in his book, *Consecrated Religious Life*, recommends just that. He invites us to engage in “communal discernment of what the living Spirit of God wants to call forth in the members now, encouraged and inspired by the primordial example of the founding person.” O’Murchu cautions that this is not meant to be a return to the past. Instead he invites us to imagine what the founder or foundress would invite us to do now with the same vision and courage they had in their time.

Can we, the Northeast Dominican Six, put out into deep water and offer young adults something powerful in which to believe? If we can, perhaps we shall create something new in our day just as Dominic did in his.

Michaela Connolly, OP
Congregational Vocation Minister
Blauvelt