

The Gatekeeper

St. Scholastica Monastery Fort Smith, Arkansas

My Daughter or Son has a Vocation! 'Now What'?

This article was presented by Mr. Ben Schroeder, father of Sisters Barbara, Stephanie and Regina Schroder of our community. Mr. Schroeder, a native of Windthorst, Texas, was the father of eleven. Among these children he was blessed to have 4 daughters and one son join religious life. Mr. Schroeder gave this presentation to the Knights of Columbus prior to his death in 1984.

“Andy called by telephone the other night and said that he was in trouble and needed help. I then asked if I could be of any help to him, He said, ‘You sure can.’ He asked if I would say a few words on vocations, so here we are.

What I am going to say does not pertain to any particular person or family, it concerns everyone. We all know that there is a great need for vocations to the religious life, for priests, sisters and brothers. These vocations must come from the family. Every parent must be willing to make this sacrifice, should God call one or more of their children. We all know that a vocation is a gift from God. It is the duty of parents to see that this gift is not



lost. And just what are some of these duties?

Someone once said, you have to use the right kind of BAIT. That is true.

By BAIT what is meant is P R A Y E R , TRAINING and

EXAMPLE in the home. *Prayer* is the request or plea. *Training* is the instruction, and *Example* is the pattern or model. How often do we hear unpleasant remarks made of the pastor or sisters right in your own home? Even with the children present? When this happens we are destroying a vocation, and the possible calling of your own child.

We must ask God's help to see that we can fulfill our duties toward vocation. We cannot expect to get everything the easy way. We must do things according to the teachings of religious duties. These duties come first.

How often does it happen on Sunday evening when there is Benediction there are few people in church and even fewer children? How can we expect God's blessing if we don't encourage being at Church? Did you know that if you want something really

special, and ask God for it when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, it is nearly always granted. If you are present why not ask God for vocations to your family? Strive to teach your children to do without some of the worldly things before they leave for college, seminary or convent. It is hard enough for a child to be away from home without having to learn to deny themselves of so many worldly pleasures.

How many parents have taken their children to a day that a community is celebrating profession? If not, it would be wonderful if you would let the children see what it really means to offer yourself to Almighty God. If our young girls only knew what happiness is waiting for them when they become brides of Christ. And also our young men to be another Christ. God gives special graces to those who answer His call—COME FOLLOW ME.

It is up to parents to make big sacrifices and God will bless those who do. These are just some of the duties parents should do. Uncles, Aunts and Classmates (and other mentors) all should help to encourage the one who tries to answer the calling. And when profession day comes try to be present and celebrate. You will be glad you did.”

—Ben Schroeder, Parent of Sisters Barbara, Stephanie & Regina.

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March 2010



Special points of interest:

- *Cover Story: My Son or Daughter has a Vocation! Now what? Series 3 of 3*
- *Listen with the Ear of Your Heart*
- *Social Networking...What's one to do? Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Blogs and now Farmville plus others galore! Here's a thought on one more...*
- *Vocation Visit Opportunities*

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TO GROW: A Reflection by Sister Madeline Clifton

To grow is to experience

New feelings

New awakenings

New Life.

It is to stand before the Lord of Creation with an enriched sense of wonder and awe with a renewed spirit of justice and love with a deeper knowledge of the mysteries of life. To grow is to change—it is a becoming.

A new being

A new creature

A new creation.

This newness is bought at a great price... The price of tears...separation...confrontation...decisions.

It is like the precious pearl, the healing ointment, the cedar of Lebanon. It is a rebirth, a plunging into the depths of suffering, a rising to the heights of ecstasy.

It is to be a pilgrim on the way

To be centered in faith and hope

To be anchored in love. To grow is to become.

—Sr. Madeline Clifton, OSB



Sister Madeline Clifton, OSB

~Vocation Opportunities~

Are you thinking about a vocation?

Here are some terrific opportunities to come and get to know the *Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery*.

All it takes is some time, a suitcase and yourself!

Come and See Weekends are scheduled to meet the inquirer's needs. Have a particular time that you want to come and visit? Let us know!

Not sure of the Step to take? Try on the

Sister's Shoes. March 26-28, 2010

Lectio Divina Day Retreat: For Discerners March 20, 2010

Movies, Monastic Life and Me Weekend April 23-25, 2010

How God Calls: Sacred Listening to One's Own Vocation: May 14-16, 2019

Consider your Call Retreat July 8-13, 2010

Observership Program: (For serious discerners only) Scheduled on individual basis.

We invite you to Come & See Weekends and other opportunities to get to know us here at St. Scholastica!

Monastic Volunteer Opportunities (Anytime)

Shadow A Sister Day (Anytime)

Alternative Spring Break (Colleges Only)

Benedictine Bowling & Balance (Teens)

School and Parish Visits (When requested)

Listen, with the Ear of your Heart...



To 'Listen'
Another's soul
Into a condition of
disclosure
and discovery
May be almost

The greatest service that any human being ever performs for another.

—Douglas Steere

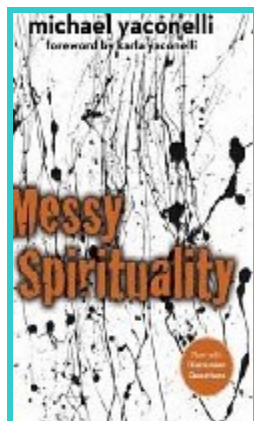
From Gleanings: A Random Harvest



BENEDICTINE BOOKENDS: What a Monastic Reads *Messy Spirituality* By Michael Yaconelli

Messy Spirituality. What a great title for a book. *Messy Spirituality* seemed to fit me like a glove. I often thought that those who had it all together in life must have a spiritual life that was all nice and neat and exceedingly organized and wonderfully extraordinary. I wanted to be this but all too often I fall and come up short.

The text by Michael Yaconelli is pleasingly real and shows us that God works with the *messy* as much as the multi-tasker of neatness. When I was introduced to this book I admit the title certainly



intrigued me and piqued my interest in such a way that I was not at all let down by the words and experiences as told by the author. No matter the chapter, whether messy, in *meeting the resister*, or facing *odd discipleship* or encountering *God's annoying love*—Jesus is there. I honestly cannot say I favor one chapter over another. But I guess if I had to make a choice I would say that chapter four on “The Ugliness of Rejection” and chapter five on “Odd Discipleship” touched the heart of my own messiness in a way that I could get at and claim well. I do know that each paragraph led me to see that

God is in it all and we do not have to be squeaky clean to find Him.

The text as given by Michael Yaconelli and the tribute as delivered by Karla, his wife, in 2007 are enough to grab a reader and keep them in the book until, well—you see yourself among the words composed there. If you find the world a bit lopsided and see yourself being tilted along with it take some time to wander into the state of *Messy Spirituality*, a place of reassurance that life even when broken and littered with uncertainty, obligations and distractions will still be wonderfully messy but with God gratefully in the mix.

—Sr. Kimberly Rose Prohaska, OSB

Social Networking: Let's offer Vocationville!

Okay, there are few of us who have not entered into the world of social networking. Its as common now as microwaves are to popcorn or DVD's to HD television. Technology is to chat and to text and to IM and stay connected in some way shape or form with others. It can be overwhelming to the non-techno of the twenty-first century.

In the arena of social networking there are all forms of activity to be found. From the virtual to the actual people are playing a part in networks all over the cyber globe. Ways to interact with others on real time continuum or not it's all there. One of the most popular ways of networking is Farmville, Yoville, and even Petville. Yep, handle your own farm, your own place, your own pet. This networking form has been interesting and fun and yet I know somehow there has to be more to it all. How can we network on a deeper level? Some how there must be a way to take a break from the hectic pace of life and somehow make a difference. I have an idea and its just that—an *idea*. In the area of social net working I would like to offer an opportunity for those who seek something more.

What about Vocationville? I think we may be on to something here. What if those who

want to know more about religious life had an opportunity to virtually vocation themselves?

Can a *Vocationville* happen? I suppose in some ways it already does. Those who are thinking about religious life and the call are looking for ways to connect with communities that might offer a sense of prayer, belonging, service, and peace.

There is a sense of anonymity that happens with social networking that can allow someone to be just who they are as they are and yet with some it is a way to be what they are not. This can happen not just in social networking but with potential discerners as well, as they want to put their best foot forward when meeting a community for the first time. It is hard to allow the vulnerable be seen while striving for acceptance and this is true both in the virtual and actual worlds of trying to connect with another.

Vocation seekers today have so much at their disposal and with communities looking for healthy and age appropriate candidates to join them it's harder still. Demands are to be met and all too often one must choose what is the better for right now, and sometimes we sacrifice what is better for what is accepted or

expected. The world says one thing, the heart often another. Does God not say, my ways are not your ways? So how can we make God's way ours?

It may not be Vocationville. A virtual place to discern to take time with God that doesn't allow a certain sense of risk— to entertain the sacred is not to encounter the sacred.

How might I find God in even the social networking of my life? It depends on how real or how virtual we want to go.

If there were a Vocationville, I would hope it would contain more than meta based figures and places that only seem genuine. I would hope that a seeker of the heart of God would play Vocationville the real version that never has to be rebooted, later upgraded, downloaded or texted or messaged other than in the actual network of life, the life in which we are given to share with God and yes with one another. What greater network is there?

So the question is:

How will you play *Vocationville*?

—Sr. Kimberly R Prohaska, OSB



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**Consider
Your
Call**



*"Listen carefully,
my daughter
to the master's
instructions..."*

Rule of St. Benedict Prologue

Come and See Monastic Experience

For Women and Men ages 18-45

July 8-13, 2010

St. Scholastica Monastery

1301 S. Albert Pike Ave.

Fort Smith, Arkansas 72903

To attend this annual summer retreat contact:

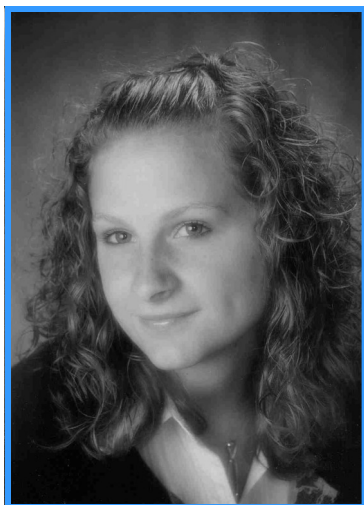
Sr. Kimberly R. Prohaska at 479-783-4147

Monastic Word of the Month

Contemplation

'The act of contemplating; thoughtful observation, full or deep consideration, reflection, *religious contemplation*, purpose or intention, prospect or intention.'

Do you know a woman we'd like to know?



**Does she have listening heart-like ours?
A Heart filled with passion for being a God seeker?**

We are Benedictine Sisters:

Committed to seeking God, rooted in a rich monastic tradition. Women who seek to be a voice for the voiceless—by living a life balanced in hospitality, simplicity, and in the wisdom of the Gospel.

We join together in prayer, community life and service to help create a loving world! Come live out our 20/20 vision by sharing in our dream of being a prophetic and contemplative community!

*Please share with women
information about the sisters of
St. Scholastica!*

Write, or Call today!

Do you know a woman who would like to know more about us?

We'd like to know her too...