



Sisters of the Holy Family

Vocation . . . Answering A Call To Religious Life



Sister Carol Crater

I first met the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1973 while serving as a volunteer for the church in Juneau, Alaska. I knew even then that I wanted to give my whole life in service to God, but the form of my response to God's call was just beginning to take

shape. I was happy with being a volunteer, and any thought I may have given to being a Sister was only to reject the idea outright.

The 1970s and 1980s were years of change in the church and in religious life, and I had many questions about how I could best serve God. Yet all during this time, I had a nagging gut feeling that God was calling me to let go of fears, let go of the need for answers, and trust the call to religious community.

When I finally overcame my fears, I found in the Sisters of the Holy Family a group who was asking the same questions that I was about vocation and ministry, a group who was committed to serving the poor and empowering

the laity, a group who seemed to be praying my own prayer when we prayed together.

I joined the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1984 and, in the years since then, I have found myself in unexpected places, serving in unpredictable ways. I have been part of projects and ministries that I probably would not have done as a minimum-income volunteer – such as the affordable housing project in Fremont, a multi-congregational ministry project in Los Angeles, the Holy Family Day Home in San Francisco. Even without directly working in all these areas, I am part of them by belonging to the Congregation. And when the Congregation takes a stand, as we recently did against human trafficking, my effectiveness is multiplied because of the strength of the Congregation.

All those fears I had before I joined the Sisters have turned out to be unfounded. I have not given up my identity as a laywoman in the church, but have fulfilled it. While I could have fulfilled that identity in many ways – as a single volunteer, as a wife and mother, and more – I have no regrets for following the path I have chosen as a Sister of the Holy Family.

The decision to answer a call to religious life is different for every woman.

One Sister of the Holy Family shares her own personal "vocation story."