



# Sisters of the Holy Family

## Vocation . . . Answering A Call To Religious Life



**Sister Claude Marie Crinnion**

I was what they use to call a late vocation because I was too busy enjoying life to hear the call. I was working at a publishing company. It was a good job, but traveling was my passion. I was systematically seeing the world on my vacations.

I think God had been inviting me in very subtle ways for a long time, but I didn't get the message. Then one day I heard about some girls that were going to make a retreat. The idea sounded appealing and I decided I wanted to do it too. I asked one of them if I could come along. She told me they had just had a cancellation and if I had a large car and could drive a group of them, there was room for me in the retreat. Thankfully, I had a big car.

The retreat was a profound experience for me. On Saturday afternoon, the retreat director suggested that everyone take a nap. That was strange to me. I didn't take naps, I was a career girl. They said, "If you can't nap, then just be very quiet." So I went to the chapel. I was praying, or maybe even daydreaming, when I saw a vision of myself in a habit

and many happy children running towards me. It was such a strong vision. I couldn't shake it. I knew I had to respond.

As a child, I had been educated by the Holy Family Sisters, and I always loved them, but when I felt the call, I didn't go talk to them because I didn't like the habit they wore. I talked to several other orders, but nothing seemed right. It was suggested to me that I should go see the Holy Family Sisters. My response was that I couldn't wear the headpiece they wore. But the more I thought about it, the sillier that seemed and I decided to talk to them.

At first I had trouble getting in touch with the right person. Finally, one day I just drove to the Novitiate in Fremont. It was a Saturday and most of the Sisters were away, but there was a group of them in the swimming pool, and one other who was not swimming. She came out and took me on a tour of the grounds. I remember that she was so dear...very cute, very down to earth and full of life. She answered my questions, talked a lot about their life, and promised to have the Sister in charge of vocations call me. I left filled with joy. I was sure I was on the right path and I entered the next year. Of course, we long ago discontinued wearing the headpiece I didn't like, but it had never mattered anyway. Being a Sister of the Holy Family was like coming home.

*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."*