

on the MOVE



'How Do I Answer the Call?'

vo • ca • tion
(vō kā 'shən)n.

[[ME *vocacion* < LL(Ec) *vo-*
catio, a calling < L, an invi-
tation, court summons <
vocare, to call < *vox*, voice]]

1a) a call, summons, or
impulsion to perform a
certain function or enter
a certain career, esp. a
religious one **b)** the
function or career to-
ward which one be-
lieves himself to be called
2) any trade, profession,
or occupation.

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Photograph by Matthew Scott

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About three years ago, Bryan Lee began hearing the call toward a possible religious vocation.

"I was an altar server and I experienced being around priests. I liked it," Bryan, 15, said.

The voice grew louder as Bryan moved into his teen years, and he began to seek out priests for advice on how to decipher the message. Bryan first met with his parish pastor, Father Gerald Connor, of St. Pius X Church in Chili. More recently, he has conferred with Father Dennis Kauffman, CSB, his guidance counselor at Aquinas Institute.

"I asked Father Connor what I should do as I get older," Bryan said. "He said to just pray about it, because God will let me know. And I know he will."

Bryan, an Aquinas freshman, said this particular call is louder than any previous message he received from God.

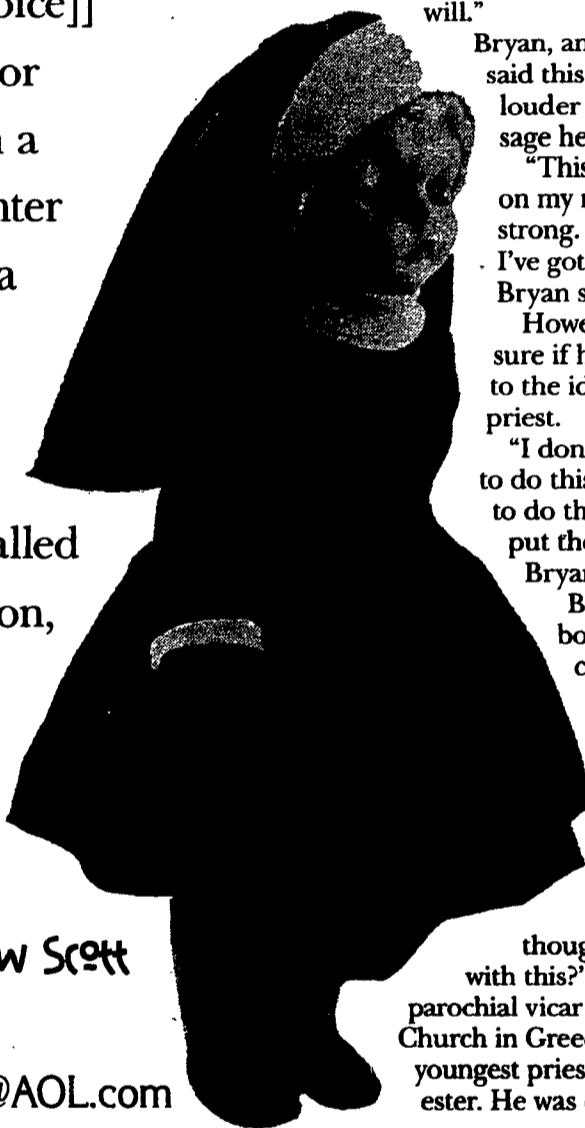
"This is something that is on my mind and is real strong. And it's something I've got to concentrate on," Bryan said.

However, Bryan is not exactly sure if he's being told to commit to the idea of someday becoming a priest.

"I don't know if God is calling me to do this now, or if he's calling me to do this at all. But he definitely put the thought in my head," Bryan remarked.

Bryan speaks for many teenage boys and girls who have considered a religious vocation, but aren't sure what the future holds. The thought can be so staggering, Father Doug Della Pietra noted, that a teen's uncertainty can also be accompanied by a certain amount of fear.

"It's kind of an initially scary thought, like, 'Wow! What do I do with this?'" said Father Della Pietra, a parochial vicar at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Greece. At 27 years old, he is the youngest priest serving in the Diocese of Rochester. He was ordained this past June.



Why are we moving toward religious life

For the mystery...

"I entered religious life because of a profound sense of God's love. I felt called to express my love and gratitude by dedicating my life to Christ in service and ministry to the people of God by becoming a Sister of St. Joseph of Rochester. I made my first profession of vows on Sept. 7.

I can only describe my motivation as a call from God deep within. It is all about mystery. A deep-felt inner peace and joy assures me that this choice is right for me.

If I would never have believed 10 years ago that I would enter a religious vocation. I had worked 23 years as a caseworker. I had a good life, a nice home, loving family, friends and colleagues. Yet, throughout my adult years, I had always searched for something more in my life. Eventually, my search led me to God.

I believe community life is a primary element designating us as women religious, fueling us for ministry and mission. Deep communal and individual prayer, thoughtful reflection and faith sharing, a desire and willingness to live simply and to risk openness with one another are only a few of the blessings and gifts I have experienced. Our shared life together has inspired and empowered me to grow and stretch in ways I never thought possible, inviting me to share freely in ministry what I so generously have received."



Elizabeth Leonard, SSJ

To be part of a group...

At the age of 26, when I felt God tugging at my heart calling me to religious life, I was initially scared. I didn't feel worthy of such a call. I was teaching at the time and loving it. Yet there was this nagging feeling of not being totally fulfilled with my life as a single woman. I wanted to share my gifts in a much deeper and formal way — be a part of a community of women who shared my values and beliefs.

I was privileged to have been taught by the Sisters of Mercy at Our Lady of Mercy High School and then to minister with them in later years. My years of formation have been blessed with women who have nurtured my vocation and, through their faithful and loving example, deepened my desire to walk this journey each day.

These past eight years with the Sisters of Mercy have been transforming and growth-filled. I know I would not be the person I am today were it not for the women with whom I have journeyed or the experiences that have touched my life. My present ministry of teaching at Seton Catholic School deepens my commitment to serving my God daily.

The call to religious life in the Sisters of Mercy has brought me to a place of deep, inner peace. There is a true sense of fulfillment and meaning in this lifestyle I have chosen. A precious gift from God that I have never taken for granted."



Carolyn Rosica, RS