

# Call draws woman to Mercy order

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

GATES — Unsure about the direction your life should be taking? Laurie Orman has some advice: Go climb a rock. In so doing, you may even come to discern a religious vocation.

It was while rock climbing during a retreat three years ago that Orman, 41, began embracing a call that had been lurking inside her for a long time — but had been suppressed by a lifestyle that included working full time, teaching part time and pursuing a graduate degree.

"I think we can get caught up and we don't do for ourselves. And I was just so focused on finishing school. Something was missing in my life, and it wasn't until I went on the retreat that I realized it," said Orman, who serves as faith-formation director at Holy Ghost Parish.

Actually, she admitted, that wasn't the full story. Staying busy had given her an excuse to avoid going deep inside herself. "I didn't have to maybe look at where God was calling me," Orman said, explaining that "you have to start doing 'heart' stuff and I'm a 'head' person. You have to start with feelings, and that's scary. It's a loss of control, letting God lead me and not knowing where it's going to lead."

She returned to the same retreat in each of the subsequent two years. "Each year I came back, the feeling was stronger," Orman said.

That feeling eventually led her to the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester, into which she was accepted as a candidate during a welcoming ceremony on April 29 at the Mercy Motherhouse in Brighton. This marks Orman's first step toward becoming fully professed as a Sister of Mercy.

Orman recently moved into the convent at Holy Cross Church in Charlotte, where she will stay through the summer before moving to another Rochester-area Mercy community in the fall. At this point, Orman will continue her full-time duties at Holy Ghost Parish. If plans progress after a two-year period, Orman would then leave her job and



Rebecca Gosselin/Catholic Courier

Laurie Orman gets a hug from a well-wisher during an April 29 welcoming ceremony at the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse in Rochester. The ceremony marked Orman's first step toward becoming fully professed as a Sister of Mercy.

become a novice in the Sisters of Mercy. After another two years she would profess temporary vows, with final vows coming approximately three years after that.

Orman grew up in Gates, graduating from Gates-Chili High School and the State University of New York at Brockport. She and her family have belonged to Holy Ghost Parish for more than 20 years. Orman worked part-time at Holy Ghost before becoming associate director of youth ministry for the Diocese of Rochester in 1991. However, that

full-time position was dissolved after one year. Orman left church employment behind for five years, working as a medical assistant. "That was before God said, 'Really, you're supposed to be in ministry,'" Orman remarked.

Orman went back to parish duty in 1998, as full-time youth minister at Holy Ghost. She then became the parish's coordinator of faith formation in 2000, and was named director in 2002 upon receiving her master's degree in theology from St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry. She has also taught part time at Bryant & Stratton for several years.

Throughout her discernment process, Orman said, she's received strong support from the Sisters of

Mercy without feeling pressured or obligated. "It's an ongoing discernment, which is neat," she said.

By the same token, everything that has happened so far has her believing she'll become a Sister of Mercy. "It all feels right. I think that's the key to it. Nobody's telling me I have to do it," she said. "This is a win-win situation. If this isn't where God's calling me, he'll tell me where I'm going. But in my heart, I think this is where God's calling me."

The folks at Holy Ghost Parish would second that motion. "So many parents (of religious-education students) say 'I'm not surprised.' And I'm thinking, what did they see that I didn't?" Orman remarked, with a laugh.

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