

Listening to the decision being made in you

God's will is fullness of life for each of us and for the whole world. As you move towards an important decision, take care that it is life-giving for you, and then it will enable you to be a life-giver for the world.

As you imagine yourself making a life choice and taking steps to pursue it, ask yourself some questions:

- ❖ Does this decision bring peace to me?
- ❖ Is this choice in harmony with my gifts and personality?
- ❖ Am I able to do all that will be required of me in this life choice?
- ❖ Does this decision free me?
- ❖ If it doesn't work out, can I imagine other options?
- ❖ Do I get a sense of excitement, challenge, and possibility for growth as I consider this decision?
- ❖ Does the possibility of acting justly, loving tenderly and walking humbly with God in this chosen way give me energy?
- ❖ Is my sense of God's response one that indicates God's delight and pleasure in my choice?

If so, take the next step. And may your journey toward "life to the full" be filled with blessings.

*Loving Creator of the universe, I
come before You with the great desire
to live life fully, and to make a
positive difference on this earth.*

*You, compassionate God, call all
people to co-create with You a
universe of respect and healing, of
justice and beauty.*

*How can I do that in the best
possible way?*

*Speak to me. Teach me to know
myself, You and Your world through
listening attentively to Your Spirit.*

*Help me to know the vocational path
through which I can best "act justly,
love tenderly and walk humbly"
with You, my God.*

Amen.

Adapted. Text: Clare Wagner, OP & Mary Therese Johnson OP
(Sinsinawa) Used with permission.

Make a Difference!

A Guide for Life Choice

Listening to God's Purpose

God's purpose is fully revealed in Jesus Christ and in disciples who choose the way of Jesus even to this day.

God wants healing of the woundedness in the world, peace for those threatened by violence, nourishment for the hungry, and freedom for the oppressed. Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., Francis and Clare of Assisi, Jean Vanier, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and others are or have been committed to using their lives for God's purpose. Important to these followers of the way of Jesus is *making a difference in the world.*

And that difference has to do with being and acting in a way that makes God's mission visible. Do you have a passion for God's purpose? Do you perceive in yourself a deep desire for "life to the full" (John 10:10)? *Do you wonder what kind of difference you are called to make?*

*God has shown you,
O people, what is good.
And what does God ask of you?
To act justly, to love tenderly,
and to walk humbly
with your God.*

- Micah 6:8

Listening to your heart

Do you know that you are absolutely unique and that the Creator invites you to live intentionally and fully? God's spirit lives in the depths of your heart — the place where your true feelings live and the place where God's Spirit touches yours.

Become very quiet and move your focus to your heart's centre. Practice this. Then listen. Pose these questions to yourself:

- ❖ What are my deepest desires?
- ❖ What do I want most in life?
- ❖ What makes me feel most alive?
- ❖ What is my image of God?
- ❖ What are my greatest fears?
- ❖ Can I name my feelings about God, myself, the world?
- ❖ When I imagine myself in religious life or priesthood, what feelings arise in my heart?
- ❖ When I imagine myself married or single, what feelings arise?
- ❖ What gifts would I bring to religious life, married life, single life?
- ❖ Do I desire to deepen my knowledge of and relationship with God?
- ❖ Do I value interdependence or independence most?
- ❖ When I picture myself five years from now in each life vocation, what images arise? What feelings come to me?

Ask God's Spirit what steps you might take toward a life choice. Listen to your heart and to God's response. Take your time with these questions. Use weeks or months to consider them. Keep notes on what you hear when you prayerfully listen to your heart. Trust your feelings and God's presence and love.

Listening to the data available

Life is messy and challenging. Decision-making isn't easy. Use the help available to you. Trust your heart and your personal listening to God's Spirit.

Walter Brueggemann says that vocation is "finding a purpose for being in the world that is related to the purposes of God." That is a sacred process requiring information and assistance in discerning.

Some of the following suggestions may be helpful:

- ❖ Remember that a vocation is a call from God. Spend time in prayer. Ask for the gift of openness. And, always, listen to your heart.
- ❖ Gather with others who are searching for their life choice; form a prayer or support group.
- ❖ Read books and articles on the various life choices and discernment. Search recommended web sources.
- ❖ Visit with people who have chosen a particular Christian vocation. How are their gifts to the Church and the world being used?
- ❖ Seek a spiritual companion or mentor to talk with about your feelings and what happens in your prayer as you explore possibilities. Take part in a retreat.