



Hidden with Christ

The Call to Enclosure

Satisfying the Search for “Something More”

BY SR. MARY REBECCA, SSPSAP

One evening, early in my freshman year at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I was sitting in my room after finishing my homework and wondering what I could do next. The bulletin from the Sunday Mass that I had dutifully attended at the Newman Center (the Catholic Church on campus) was on my desk, and I picked it up to glance through it. Noticing that they had a Mass every weeknight at 9:00 P.M., I saw from my clock that it would be starting in a few minutes. Since the Newman Center was only a block away from my dorm, I decided, “Why not?” and walked to the church.

Opening Up a Deep Longing

I found a place in the back just as the Mass was beginning. It was very simple, with just a small choir and nothing fancy, but as I sat there soaking it in it was the most beautiful thing I had ever experienced. All around me were young people—

people my age—enthusiastically participating in the Mass and there on a weeknight because they wanted to be! I had never encountered anything like it, and it opened up a deep longing in my heart. I had gone to a small Catholic school for grades 1 through 12, but it was definitely not considered “cool” to show any interest in the things of God. I, along with my friends, joined my high school choir so that during the twice-weekly school Masses I could sit in the choir loft and use the time to study for my Spanish quiz in the next period.

I had thought that religion and piety were for old people, but that one Mass in the basement of the Newman Center spoke to a hunger I didn’t even know I had. I went back the next night, and the next, and the next... that was how I began attending daily Mass! I made friends at the Newman Center and started getting involved in their other activities too. I was learning more and more about being a Catholic and became excited about my faith. Meanwhile the Lord was watering the seeds of my religious vocation, but if I had suspected it at the time, I think I would have run in the opposite direction.



Being Honest with Myself

I was afraid even to think about my vocation since I knew deep down that if I did start looking at religious life, I would discover that I was in fact being called. Eventually, however, I had to be honest with myself. By the end of my second year of college, I was ready to be open about what God wanted me to do with my life. My relationship with God was important to me, and I couldn’t pretend any longer that He was number one while at the same time closing myself off to His plan for me. First I looked at an active teaching order that some of my friends were entering, but it didn’t seem right. My spiritual director suggested the cloistered Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters, commonly known as the “Pink Sisters” because





of the rose-colored habit they wear in honor of the Holy Spirit. I knew right away that it was a fit. I had been visiting their chapel in Lincoln frequently, sometimes with a group from the Newman Center and sometimes by myself. I was attracted to the Perpetual Adoration like a moth to a flame, and the more I learned about their contemplative-missionary charism, the more it seemed like the Order had been formed just for me. Still, I had cold feet, and I told the Lord, “Ok, if that’s what You want, I’ll do it, but I want to finish school first!”

Fulfilling a Dream

The second semester of junior year I fulfilled my dream to study abroad. I spent six months in Malta, a little island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. Taking advantage of the location to backpack around northern Africa and southern Europe, I met many wonderful people, saw beautiful sights, and had all kinds of adventures. The experience was priceless.

I never let go of my desire to enter the cloister, but, well, traveling was fun and there was so much more of the world to see! In the back of my mind I toyed with the idea of putting off my degree for another year so that I could squeeze

in a few more trips. For spring break of senior year some of the friends that I had met in Malta took a trip to Costa Rica. We lived out of our backpacks and stayed in youth hostels just like old times. It was great!

Hearing a Voice in My Heart

One day we were walking along the beach, heading back to the place where we were staying after having explored the rain forest all day. My friends had gotten a little ahead of me and I was watching them play in the surf. Suddenly it was like I heard a voice in my heart: “This will never satisfy you. There is something more than this.” I was having the time of my life in an exotic country with people who were very dear to me. Back home, I loved my family, my job, my college life. But it was true: my longings were even greater than the Pacific Ocean that was stretching out before me, and I knew that God alone could satisfy the desires of my heart.

After graduation, I spent the summer at home with my family



(I am the oldest of seven and my youngest brother turned 3 years old that summer) and took one last trip with my friends. I entered the Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters in the fall of 2001 and made my perpetual vows in November 2009. True to what the Lord promised, I found the “something more” I was looking for within the bounds of the enclosure. I, along with my fellow sisters in our twenty-two convents around the world, am taking part in the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament that has continued uninterrupted since our foundation in 1896. We bring the needs of the Church and the whole world before the Eucharistic Throne.

If I am inclined to doubt the importance of the work that I do (I work in the sewing room and kitchen, as well as maintain our website), time spent in adoration reminds me that all that I am and all that I do is consecrated to God as an offering to Him. What more could I ask for? It hasn’t always been easy, but I have definitely found the place where I am supposed to be. Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift! 🕯

The Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters are a cloistered congregation whose members are entirely dedicated to the contemplative life in the service of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The Church’s missionary activity and the sanctification of priests are particularly remembered in their life of prayer, which includes the singing of the Liturgy of the Hours in choir. The rose color of their habit symbolizes the joy of their dedication to the Holy Spirit.

**For more information, contact:
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