

## Books

***Vocations Anonymous: A Handbook for Adults Discerning Priesthood and Religious Life*** by Kathleen Bryant, R.S.C. talks about what you need to hear—but frequently don't know how to ask—regarding the discernment process, plus ideas for finding your way, growing in prayer, and asking the right questions. Offered by Rogationist Publications, <http://vocationsandprayer.org/product/vocations-anonymous/>

***What's Your Decision?: How to Make Choices with Confidence and Clarity: An Ignatian Approach to Decision Making*** by J. Michael Sparough, SJ, Jim Manney and Tim Hipskind, SJ. Do you have an effective decision making process in place, one that you can consistently rely on to help you make good decisions? In *What's Your Decision?*, the authors introduce readers to a time-tested Ignatian approach to effective decision making. Based on the insights of St. Ignatius, the book addresses common questions such as What's important and what's not when it comes to making decisions? Can I ever trust my gut? What do I really want?. Available at Amazon.

***Religious Life and You, The Best of VISION Magazine*** by Carol Schuck Scheiber, 1996 Berry Publishing Services, Inc. If you think God may be nudging you to consider a church vocation, this book is for you. Here you'll encounter men and women living lives of quiet heroism. Meet the California girl who found herself singing African hymns... the priest who cuts million-dollar deals to house the homeless... the brothers who pray in a centuries-old rhythm. Our writers ask questions that may be on your mind, too. How do I pray? How do I discover my own vocation? What is religious life all about? Read *Religious Life and You* and explore the riches of modern church vocations. Available at Amazon.

***Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*** by Suzanne G. Farnham, Joseph P. Gill, R. Taylor Mclean, Susan M. Ward. (1991) and 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition (2011) This 20th anniversary edition introduces the unique approach of *Listening Hearts* to the spiritual practice of discernment for a new generation. Written to make the often elusive and usually clergy-centered spiritual practice of discernment accessible to all people, *Listening Hearts* features simple reflections and exercises drawn from scripture and from Quaker and Ignatian traditions. The seminal work in the *Listening Hearts* Series, this book has been a beloved resource for tens of thousands of individual readers, retreat participants, small groups and church leaders, listening for and responding to God's call in their lives. Available at Amazon.

***Hearing with the Heart: A Gentle Guide to Discerning God's Will for Your Life*** by Debra K. Farrington, 2002. Only through learning to hear with our hearts tuned closely to God can we discern how we should find our way through the crowded and confusing thickets of our lives. Popular writer and retreat leader Debra Farrington leads you through a gentle process for discovering how to invite God's presence into every aspect of your daily life. Available at Amazon.

***Doing What Comes Naturally: Jobs, Career and Vocation (Crossings: A Series for Young Adults)*** by Mary Anne Reese (1998) This book helps young adults explore the spiritual aspects of who they are becoming in the world. Through readings, life examples, prayer, and group discussion, they are led to consider their desires for life, vocations, careers, and the use of money. Available at Amazon.

***Sisters Are Doing What?!: Great Stories about Religious Women Today***, by Regina Coll (2004) Providing insights into the development of religious life in the last two centuries, this title introduces some amazing women and their communities who have gradually and courageously broken away from the contemplative model of religious life to meet contemporary needs. Available at Amazon.

***Let Your Life Speak: Listening to the Voice of Vocation***, by Parker Palmer. (1999) With wisdom, compassion, and gentle humor, Parker J. Palmer invites us to listen to the inner teacher and follow its leadings toward a sense of meaning and purpose. Telling stories from his own life and the lives of others who have made a difference, he shares insights gained from darkness and depression as well as fulfillment and joy, illuminating a pathway toward vocation for all who seek the true calling of their lives. Available at Amazon.

### ***Catholics on Call***

***Discerning a Life of Service in the Church*** Edited by Robin Ryan, CP

What do you really want to do with your life? Who do you want to be in your life? How does God speak to you about your life? This volume, like the Catholics on Call program at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, raises these important questions. The highly respected essayists shed light on the variety of vocational paths in the church while providing insights about discernment, ministry, and prayer. They seek to offer young men and women information, guidance, and inspiration as they discern a life of ministry, and help them to discover that discerning a vocation is not a matter of choosing the more appealing of a variety of options; rather, it is an openness to discovering God's will. Available in paperback or ebook.

<https://www.litpress.org/Products/3270/Catholics-on-Call>

***Discerning the Will of God: An Ignatian Guide to Christian Decision Making*** by Fr. Timothy M. Gallagher, OMV (2009). How does a Christian go about making effective, important decisions, in line with the will of God? How does one go about choosing between two seemingly good pathways, such as when discerning one's vocation? In this book, Fr. Timothy draws on the wisdom Ignatian spirituality to take the reader through the steps of appropriate decision-making, always emphasizing the importance of openness to God, especially through silent prayer, the Eucharist, Scripture, and spiritual direction. He gives practical tips, helpful stories, and sure advice for how to find clarity (and what to do when you lack clarity).

***And You are Christ's: The Charism of Virginity and the Celibate Life*** by Fr. Thomas Dubay, S.M. (1987). In this book Fr. Dubay explores the charism of virginity, or chastity, in the context of living in the midst of a world that often misunderstands or undervalues it. Emphasizing its biblical roots, he invites us to consider the call to chastity as a positive, deeply personal call that

is ultimately ordered toward our happiness and fulfillment rather than something negative that is imposed or as a discipline to be taken up solely for the sake of mission. While this book takes both men and women into account, Fr. Dubay points out that consecrated women are able to more fully and naturally image and in a special way, consecrated women are able to more fully image and live out Christ's own wedded relationship with the Church, and he offers both meditations and practical advice on how women discerning the call to consecrated life can more deeply live into this relationship and identity.

***Chastity, Poverty and Obedience: Recovering the Vision for the Renewal of Religious Life*** by Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C. (2007). Mother Mary Francis, beloved spiritual author and experienced abbess, here offers the fruit of her own prayer and reflection on the Second Vatican Council's call for renewal in religious life. Using the council document *Perfectae Caritatis* to guide her, Mother Mary Francis invites us to consider what authentic reform and renewal looks like and how each of us are called to participate in it. At the heart of her penetrating analysis is the recovery of the understanding of religious life as a path to perfect love, in imitation of Christ, through the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience.

***When God Asks for An Undivided Heart*** by Fr. Andrew Apostoli, C.F.R. (2007). Proposed summary - In this easy-to-read book, Fr. Apostoli draws on his 40 years of experience and wisdom as a priest, Franciscan, spiritual director, and seminary teacher to provide a clear and insightful overview of the call to celibacy. Throughout the book, Fr. Apostoli traces the practice of celibacy in the Scriptures and throughout Church history, addresses common questions and misunderstandings for those discerning the call to celibacy, and offers practical advice on how those living consecrated celibacy can lead fully integrated, healthy, and holy lives. The concept of loving with an "undivided heart" is offered as the surest road to living a happy and fruitful life of consecrated celibacy.

***The Courage to be Chaste*** by Fr. Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R. (1988). A contemporary treatment of the traditional theme of chastity that shows that a mature chastity can be loving, peaceful and fulfilled.

***Perfectae Caritatis*** (1965). This decree was promulgated by Vatican II as a call for the adaptation and renewal of religious life. Its title, "Perfect Charity", captures the essence of the whole document, which affirms the beauty and necessity of consecrated life for the Church and for our world today as a witness to true and perfect charity. This decree calls for religious institutes (all the various religious orders and communities) to focus more deeply on Christ and conforming their lives to the Gospel way of life. It also calls for a wider education of members and incorporating more thorough biblical and theological studies, as well as what is good and true of modern sciences like psychology, sociology, etc., into the formation process for young religious. [Link to \*Perfectae Caritatis\*](#) (available at Vatican.va)

***Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life*** (1983) This document was written by the Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes in response to the call for clarification of the Church's vision of consecrated life post-Vatican II. In the period following Vatican II, the Council Fathers permitted a time of experimentation for the Church, including within religious life, to try to meet the needs of the times in their methods of formation, their apostolic activity, etc. This led to a need for evaluation and clarification as the time of experimentation came to a close. This document does just that. It is short and sweet and

provides the norms that distinguish consecrated life from other vocations, affirming the enduring necessity and value of religious life for the Church. [Link to \*Essential Elements\*](#) (available at Vatican.va)

***Vita Consacrata*** (1996). This apostolic exhortation was released as a summary document following a general assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome. It marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vatican II document on religious life, *Perfectae Caritatis*. This document expands on the norms put forth in the *Essential Elements* document, further clarifying and affirming the consecrated life and its particular mission within the Church and the world. The guiding image for the document is the Transfiguration: as Jesus invited some of His intimate disciples to experience a glimpse of His glorification, so He continues to invite men and women into religious vocations, so that nourished by this intimacy with Christ, they may go forward in hope towards the cross and ultimately towards Resurrection and mission. [Link to \*Vita Consacrata\*](#) (available at Vatican.va)

***Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church*** (2015) This document was recently released to illuminate the value and necessity of the religious brother's vocation and its enduring place within the communion of the church. One of the greatest treasures that religious brothers offer is their witness to a fraternal, communal life. [Link to Lay Brothers](#)

***Vultum Dei Quaerere—Apostolic Constitution on Women's Contemplative Life*** (2016). Pope Francis wrote this document in reflection of the essential aspects of contemplative religious life, particularly of women's monastic communities. In it, he invites reflection and discernment on how contemplative communities are keeping focused on these fundamental aspects such as personal prayer, the sacramental life, and life in community. [Link to \*Vultum Dei Quaerere\*](#)

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