

Vocational Discernment

Nov. 2, 2017

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Prayer for the Gifts of the Spirit

Side 1: Spirit of Wisdom, dwell in us.

Reveal to us the inner journey of wisdom.

All: Spirit of Wisdom, guide us.

Side 2: Spirit of Understanding, be with us

As we seek to know your will.

All: Spirit of Understanding, open us.

Side 1: Spirit of Counsel, help us when making important decisions.

Guide us in our discernment.

All: Spirit of Counsel, teach us your ways.

Side 2: Spirit of Courage, be our strength as we face the challenges

Of creating a world of justice and love.

All: Spirit of Courage, strengthen us.

Side 1: Spirit of Knowledge, be light for us.

Open our minds that we might see your vision.

All: Spirit of Knowledge, shine in us.

Side 2: Spirit of Wonder, be the joy of our soul.

Encircle us with your beauty and give us thankful hearts.

All: Spirit of wonder, delight us with joy.

Side 1: Spirit of Reverence, deepen our relationship with you.

May we never be separated from your love and goodness.

All: Spirit of Reverence, hold us close.

All: Baptized and Confirmed in your Spirit, O God of Life,
may we become Spirit and Light for the world. Amen.



Exploring Images of the Soul and Images of God

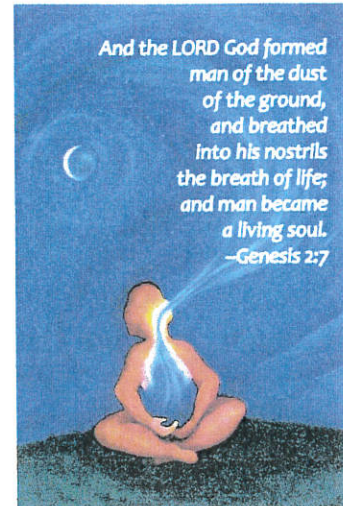
-A Benedictine Volunteers Discernment Weekend
& SoulCollage® Activity-

Materials:

- 8" by 5" blank card
- Card frame
- Elmer's Glue
- Scissors
- Magazine cut-outs of a variety of images/words/shapes that naturally gravitate to your soul/heart/intuition's choosing on this given day and moment, just as you are
- Candle (optional)

Process:

- **2:45 – 3:00 PM | Introduction to SoulCollage® by Patricia Nguyen**
- **3:00 – 3:40 PM | Make your Soul Collage®**
 - ✓ Get up and meditatively, prayerfully view/chose the images available to you on the table
 - ✓ Take your chosen images/words/shapes with you back with you to your table
 - ✓ Begin to cut your images, assemble your collage, and glue your images onto the blank card. You can use the card frame as an aid to help you see how images might appear on the card.
- **3:40 – 4:10 PM | Soul Collage® Group Sharing**
 - ✓ What was this process like for you?
 - ✓ Take us into the images you have chosen and the meaning behind your collage.
 - ✓ If this SoulCollage® serves as a mirror of your soul on this day, in this moment, what might God be saying to you right now?
- **4:10 – 4:15 PM | Closing Prayer (we say together on the back of this sheet)**



Some things to consider while you are praying/putting together your SoulCollage®:

Your stage of being/energy/disposition/feelings*
The images, words, and shapes you encounter
Colors, textures, lines that express how you feel

*It is helpful to keep in mind that this process is intended to be intuitive and natural. Try to resist any emerging desires/urges to calculate/analyze your images and words. Let the images speak to you. Let God speak to you. Surrender yourself to the process, listen, create, & ENJOY!

Did you enjoy your experience of SoulCollage® today?
To learn more about it, we invite you to visit www.soulcollage.com.



Opening

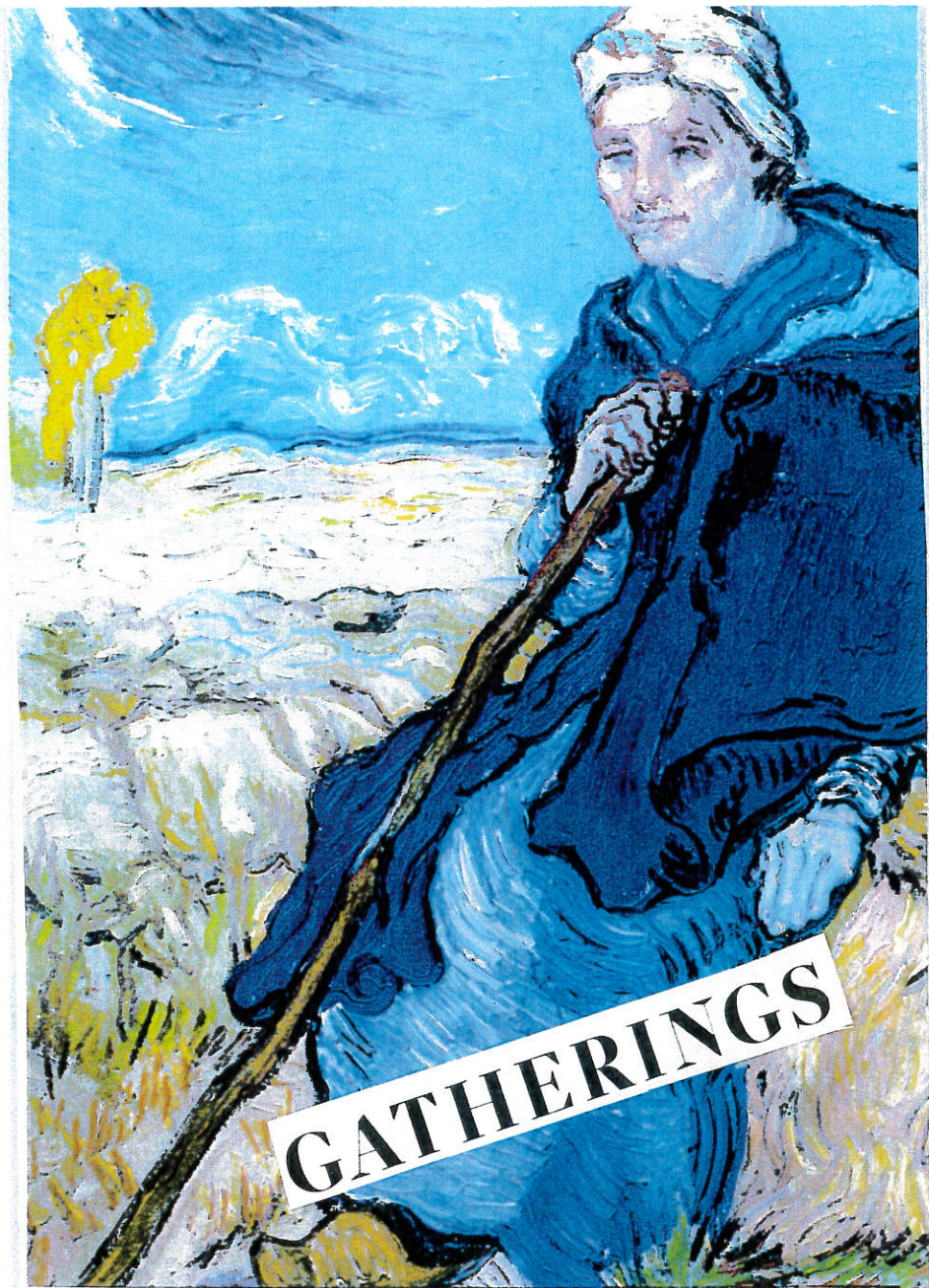
A

Winding

Way

Life is BETTER when it's *Real!*

Home



GATHERINGS

A Prayer to My Soul

-Inspired by SoulCollage®-

Living Soul:

Beholder of my visions,
Keeper of my memories,
And watcher of my dreams,
May my life pour out as prayer to the deepest call of my soul.

Living God:

Caretaker of my fears,
Counselor of my vulnerabilities,
And ambassador of my hopes.
May my life pour out as prayer to your deepest call for my life.

Living Soul & Living God,

Vessels of our Creative Spirits,
Companions of our Spiritual Journeys,
And partners of our Lives Unfolding.
May our lives pour out as daily prayer and daily service to You.

Amen.

(by Patricia Nguyen)

"Pilgrim"

by Enya

Pilgrim, how you journey
On the road you choose
To find out why the winds die
And where the stories go.
All days come from one day
That much you must know,
You cannot change what's over
But only where you go.
One way leads to diamonds,
One way leads to gold,
Another leads you only
To everything you're told.
In your heart you wonder
Which of these is true;
The road that leads to nowhere,
The road that leads to you.
Will you find the answer
In all you say and do?
Will you find the answer
In you?
Each heart is a pilgrim,
Each one wants to know
The reason why the winds die
And where the stories go.
Pilgrim, in your journey
You may travel far,
For pilgrim it's a long way
To find out who you are...
Pilgrim, it's a long way
To find out who you are...
Pilgrim, it's a long way
To find out who you are...

The Story I Tell Myself – My Personal Narrative

Who am I? What makes me, 'me'? How do I understand myself?
Who have I been told that I am? Who are key influencers in my life?

How have I come to be where I am? What key life decisions have shaped who I am today? How do the roles I play and hats I wear shape me?

What is my reality? What is my life's story? What is my personal narrative? Are these the same or different from the story I tell myself?

What is my relationship with God? Who does God say that I am? How has my relationship with God been a part of (or not a part of) my decision making? How has this relationship changed over time?

Thoughts in Solitude
By Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think that I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always
though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

PREPARATION FOR DISCERNMENT

“Listen, my child, with the ear of your heart.” (RB Prologue)

Discernment is a process of deep listening:

- ✚ to God
- ✚ to our own hearts,
- ✚ to the voice of our sisters,
- ✚ to our life experience
- ✚ to this time in our history.

Listening is an art, greatly compromised and lost in today’s culture.

- ✚ How we listen determines what we hear.
- ✚ How we speak determines how and what another will hear.
- ✚ What we hold in our hearts often colors and filters how and what we hear.

When listening to another:

- ✚ Ask “What’s possible” not “What’s wrong.”
- ✚ Be intrigued by the differences you hear.
- ✚ Expect to be surprised.
- ✚ Acknowledge each other as equals.
- ✚ Believe that everyone can teach me something.
- ✚ Listen for what is different, not for what you agree/disagree with.
- ✚ Value your perspective...and hers!

PROCESS FOR DISCERNMENT

“Behold, I am doing something new...do you not perceive it?” Is. 43,19

“Communal discernment is no substitute for critical intelligence. In all cases, critically trained intelligence is a good instrument to buttress spiritual discernment. In some cases, it is indispensable. Only God knows how much harm has been done to the Church by persons who prayed deeply but thought narrowly and acted accordingly.” Ladislav M. Orsy, Proving the Spirit pp 52-3

“Discernment is the process by which a person distinguishes his/her own inner promptings; and therefore, the source of his/her own motivation.”

S. Augusta M. Raabe, OSB “Discernment of Spirits in the Prologue to the Rule of Benedict,” Am. Benedictine Review, 1972 p. 398

“Discernment is a gift from God, not a personal achievement. The gift is not the result of training, technique, or analysis. Like other gifts of God, its origin is mysterious and gratuitous. It is given for the building of the community and our relationship with God.”

Patricia Loring, Spiritual Discernment, the context and goal of clearness committees, p. 3.



REALITY

- Ice cream is made from cream, milk, sugar
- Ice cream is available to me
- I eat ice cream
- I like ice cream

STORY I TELL MYSELF MY PERSONAL NARRATIVE

- "Ice cream tastes good, who wouldn't want to eat it?"
- "I eat too much ice cream."
- "I shouldn't eat this."
- "I can eat whatever I want, whenever I want."
- "I work hard; I deserve this treat."

GOD'S PURPOSE

- To nourish my body with a source of calcium, phosphorus, B vitamins, and protein
- To enjoy the experience of and gift of a treat
- To share surplus with others who might also enjoy an ice cream
- To transform the experience of eating ice cream into a community activity and/or spiritual experience

Journeying with the Process of Discernment



- **NOT EASY:** we have not been trained or taught to do it; we don't always practice it
- **DIFFICULT:** requires sitting with our difficult and sometimes, not-so-desirable selves; the information we might have access to currently is limited; we ourselves, are limited
- **CONFUSING:** the process of fully entering Spaces of Unknowing with an Open Heart is confusing
- **CHALLENGING:** it requires, to a certain extent, surrender to God's unique purpose for me, which sometimes, may be different from what I want (or others) want for me— that is OK.
- **SIMPLE:** it leads us to the places we are meant to be, the places God intends for us; intuitive feeling “I am home”
- **REWARDING:** doesn't mean that what is to follow will be easy, but there is a deep knowing in my Being, that I am where I am meant to be, doing exactly what God created me to do.
- **ON-GOING:** Life itself is discernment; therefore, the more we become familiar with its processes and how it feels for each of us, the more fluidly and freely we are able to move throughout life making good, right, ethical decisions
- **COLLABORATIVE:** you have your spiritual director, your spiritual community, you have us, you have God at work within you
- **COMMITMENT:** saying yes to new beginnings and letting go of other options

Prayer of One Who Desires to Say "Yes." - Michael Quoist

Voice 1: I am afraid of saying "Yes," Lord. Where will you take me?
I am afraid of drawing the longer straw,
I am afraid of signing my name to an unread agreement,
I am afraid of the "yes" that entails other "yesses."

Voice 2: And yet, I am not at peace. You pursue me, Lord, you besiege me.
I seek out the din for fear of hearing you,
But in a moment of silence, you slip through.
I turn from the road, for I have caught sight of you,
But at the end of the path, you are there awaiting me.
Where shall I hide? I meet you everywhere. Is it truly impossible to escape you?

Voice 3: I am afraid to say "Yes," Lord. I am afraid of putting my hand in yours,
For you take hold of it and don't let go.
I am afraid of meeting your eyes, for you can win me.
I am afraid of your demands, for they say you are a jealous God.
I am hemmed in, yet I hide. I am captured, yet I struggle, And I fight, knowing that I am defeated.

Voice 4: And yet, in all this, I still love you, Lord. I will work for you. I will give myself to you.
O great and terrible God, what more do you want?

Voice 5: *Say "Yes," child! I need your "yes" as I needed Mary's "yes" to come to earth,
For it is I who must do your work, It is I who must live in your community,
It is I who must be in your ministry, and not you. For it is my look that penetrates, and not yours
My words that carry weight and not yours, My life that transforms, and not yours.
Give all to me, abandon all to me. I need your "yes" to be united with you
And to come down to earth, I need your "yes" to continue saving the world.*

Voice 6: O, Lord, I am still afraid of your demands But who can resist you?
That Your kingdom come and not mine, That Your will be done and nor mine,





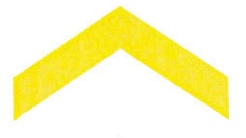
Decision Making



Intentionally inviting God into the process of my reflection and decision making



Listening to, receiving, and praying with the Interior Voice(s) that arises



Going to the HEART

Tending to, with compassion, all that arises from the Sacred Spaces within me



Gently and boldly allowing the Sacred Interior Voice to guide my decision making



Discernment

Spiritual Director

Spiritual Community

Spiritual Companions

A Prayer of Presence

By Joyce Rupp

Radiant and Unfading Wisdom,
Your deep love calls to me,
I seek you with all my heart,
Hasten to make yourself known.

Sit at the gate of my heart,
Teach me your ways.
Meet me in every thought,
Attune my mind to your perceptions.

Open all that is closed within me,
I desire your instruction.

I long to receive and to share your love,
Dance on the path of my life.
Free me from all that hinders,
Deepen all that attracts me to you.

As the mystery of my life unfolds
Through the quickly passing years,
Draw my love ever nearer to you.

I promise to be awake and vigilant,
Attentive to your voice,
Receptive to your guidance.
I will hide no secrets from you,
Come, reveal yourself to me.

Aug. 12: Eyes Fixed on Jesus.
 * choice + Grace

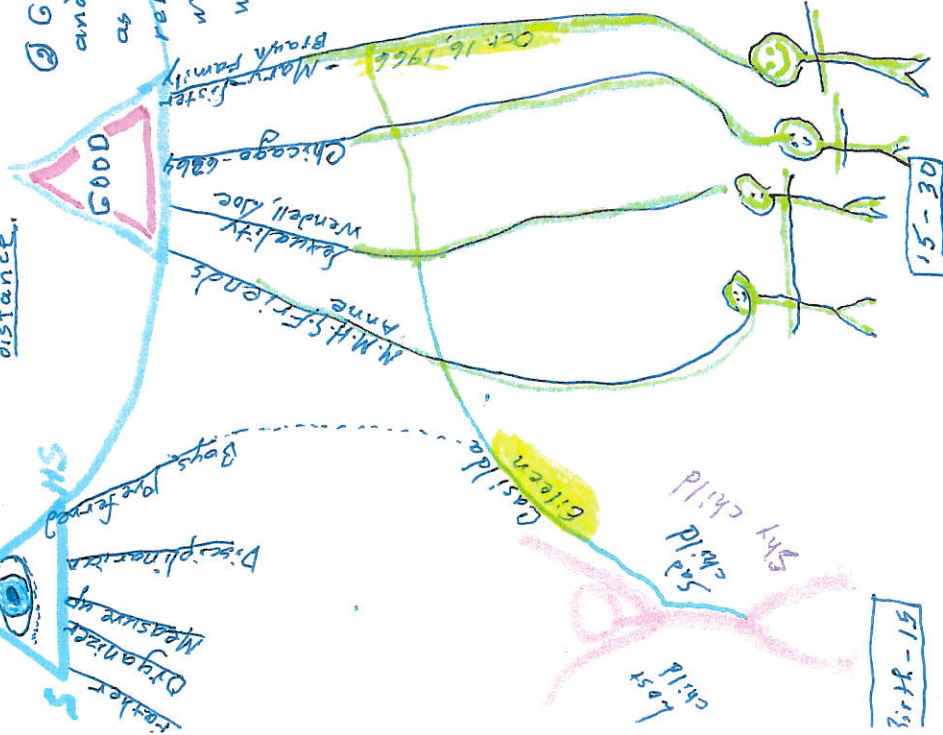
Aug. 12: Retreat Reflection:

Images of God life line - Changes over Time

① "Do good; one high the eye of God."
 "God is watching you... from a distance."

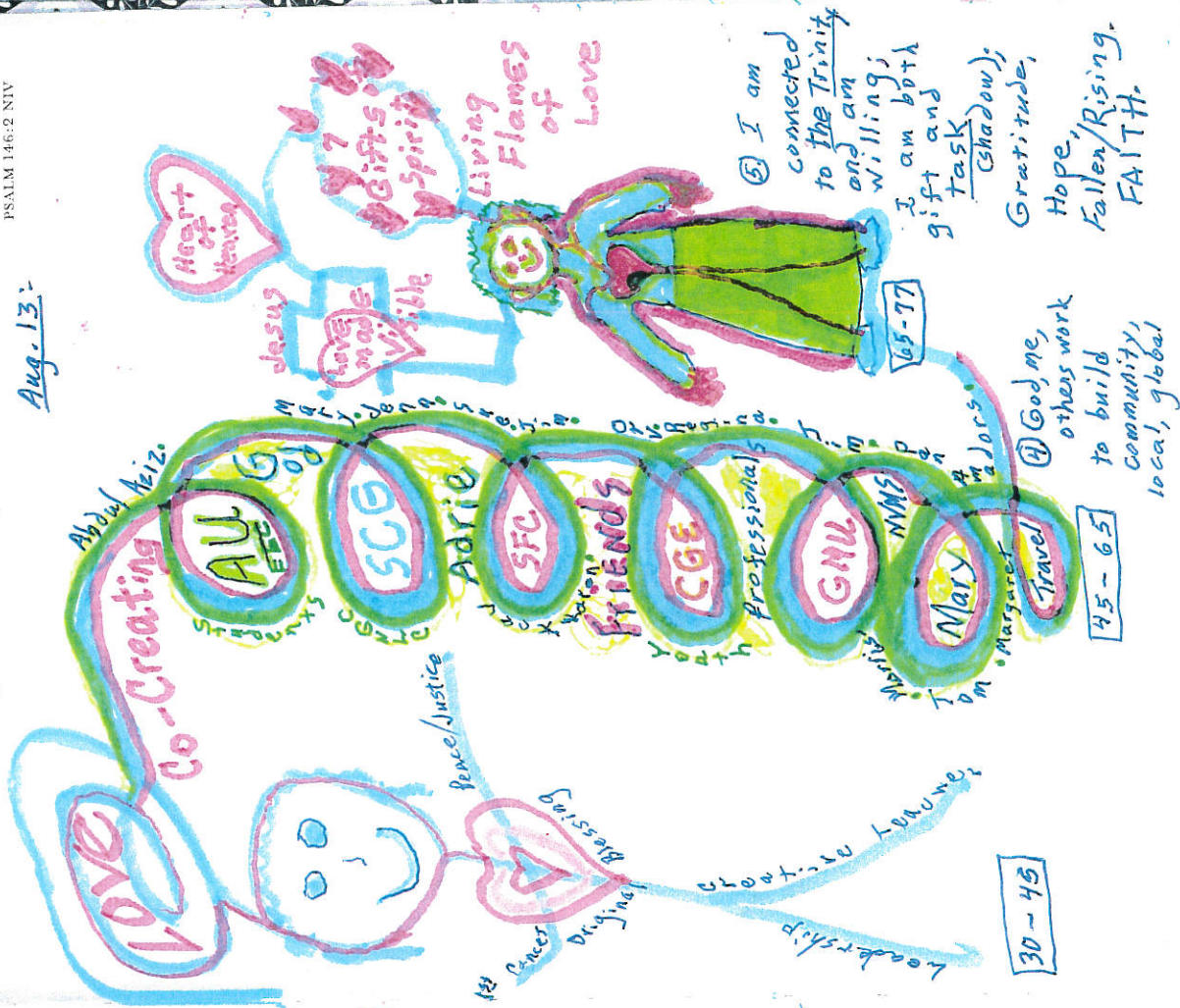
② God known and experienced as good through relationships with those who love me.

③ God is Love and I am an original blessing!
 I am made in God's image and God lives in my heart!



I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
 PSALM 146:2 NIV

Aug. 13:



MY MAINTAINING IMAGES OF GOD

**Litany of God's Presence within Each Created Person
From Abbey of Gethsemani**

Response after each phrase is spoken: "This is who you are."

Image of God
After His likeness
Eternally known
Abiding in the Son
Branch of Christ
The glory of God
Abode of the Trinity
Born of God's breath
Dwelling of God
Chosen of God
Called from eternity
Temple of the Holy Spirit
Receptacle of the Most High
A song God sings
Vessel of Diving Love
Capacity for the Infinite
Home of Infinite Majesty
Alive in the Lord
Heir of the Kingdom
Carrier of Living Water
Abiding in His word.

Let us pray: Loving God, lead us to genuine communion with you, with our true selves, and with others. Help us to notice the resources of comfort and assurance that are within and among us. May your saving grace and love be the heart of our lives as we journey to you. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Litany of Divine Love



Love that draws us to friendship and fidelity and leads us to kindness and compassion...

Love that stirs in our flesh, dances in our bones and lures us toward the sacred and serene...

Love that calls us to new vision and growth and soothes our heartaches and gentles our pain...

Love that sees worth in each human being and believes in us and whispers with hope...

Love that sings in the seasons and sighs of the wind and taps on the door of forgiveness...

Source of Love, we offer thanks for how you are abiding in all our loves. May the hearts we give and receive remind us of you, the One Great Heart, holding us all in the tenderness of your love.

God of affection, devotion, passion, tenderness, and all forms of love, this day we thank you for the myriad ways that we have been given a touch of your goodness. We are grateful for the love you share with us.

Love that longs for peace among all humankind and surprises and fills us with awe...

Love that sings praise for the face of earth's beauty and offers the hand of warm welcome...

Love that respects those who won't come too near and urges us to take risks and have courage...

Love that goes out to those from afar and embraces the shadow in us...

Love that sheds the old skin and welcomes the new and ripens our souls for the final journey home...

(Adapted from a reflection by Joyce Rupp)

“What we would like to do is change the world—make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the worker, the poor, of the destitute—the rights of the worthy and the unworthy poor, in other words—we can, to a certain extent, change the world; we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world. We can throw our little pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world. We repeat, there is nothing we can do but love, and, dear God, please enlarge our hearts to love each other, to love our neighbor, to love our enemy as our friend.”

-Dorothy Day

“Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are, quite naturally, impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.

We would like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new, and yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—and that may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you. Your ideas mature gradually—let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste. Don’t try to force them on, as though you could be today what time (that is to say grace and circumstance acting on your own good will) will make you tomorrow. Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that His hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.”

– **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**

Lord,

Give me the patience to wait for my true path to roll out in front of me like a red carpet. Stop me from jumping ahead and forcing myself to run from it, to avoid it. Change me so that I can trust you completely and help me to understand that you will provide for me along the way. Finally, grant me the strength to draw people in through my life so that they are not lost because they never saw a path.

Amen.

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KEY VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT RESOURCES FOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Compiled by Adrienne Kaufmann, OSB
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For all ages:

*GOD, GRANT ME A DISCERNING HEART: VOCATION DISCERNMENT JOURNAL. National Religious Vocation Conference, 2013. Purchase on-line: www.nrv.net/store, cost \$7. (There is a director's discernment manual, which is helpful for the leader; however, not essential)

DIVERSITY OF VOCATIONS by Marie Dennis, Orbis Books, 2008.

THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE: WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR? by Rick Warren, Zondervan, 2002.

LET YOUR LIFE SPEAK: LISTEN FOR THE VOICE OF VOCATION by Parker J. Palmer, Jossey-Bass, 2000.

FINDING GOD IN EACH MOMENT: THE PRACTICE OF DISCERNMENT IN EVERYDAY LIFE by Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ and Eugene F. Merz, SJ, Ave Maria Press, 2006.

For those under age 30:

*EXPLORING GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE. A six-part DVD series. Paraclete Press, 2004. Purchase: 1-800-451-5006 or order@paracletepress.com.

- God has a purpose for your life.
- Seeking God.
- Obstacles to hearing God.
- Trusting God.
- Making Decisions.
- Steps of Faith.

*BENEDICTINE VOLUNTEERS 20-WEEKS DISCERNMENT SERIES. "Inspired by the Preparatory Document for the October 2018 World Synod of Bishops' "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment" by Patricia Nguyen. Benedictine Volunteers, 2017. Purchase from Adrienne Kaufmann, OSB, adriennekaufmann39@gmail.com. Cost: \$10.