

A vocation Filled with Joy

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By Lynne, fcJ, first appeared at [FCJ Sisters Blog](#)

Recently I was asked by a young woman why I thought religious life was a good life choice for women. It's something I think about often and has answers on many levels.

I think objectively it is a way of life that **broadens and stretches us in ways that we could never expect**; to meet others from very diverse backgrounds, cultures, faith perspectives etc and to learn to be open to them and welcome the diversity of God; to live with little and rely on God whilst also accepting all as gift and enjoying the good things that come our way; to travel and live in new places, open to being uprooted and trusting that wherever I am I will find God, and therefore home...

Encountering difference isn't always easy. As we open ourselves up to other perspectives, our own views can be challenged or shaken and that can seem scary. We see so often in society how people close themselves off from people who are different from themselves, building barriers and retreating into isolation. Religious life encourages us to be stretched and to trust that we are never diminished by a broader perspective.

“ For me religious life is also a place of depth. I am invited and challenged to enter into a personal relationship with God and to let that shape the direction my life will take. It calls me to a place of interior openness and trust in God, and to constantly seek interior freedom.

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Again this isn't easy! I don't think we ever 'achieve' it – we might have tiny glimpses of what it could be like, but we are influenced by some many things both external and internal. Recognising and acknowledging our prejudices, vulnerabilities and limitations and seeking not to let them dominate our choices and decisions is in itself a freeing step!

It's a **place of community** where the interaction with my sisters calls me to be my best self and yet accepts me when I'm not. Community helps me to grow in self awareness, generosity, love and service. Sometimes community isn't easy – living with others can 'knock the corners off us' a bit, we learn to compromise and we see others accommodating our needs and wishes too. We learn to disagree without it rupturing relationship. We discover that we can be connected to each other in a profound way through our common faith. Community frees me to take risks, knowing I am loved and supported.

But most of all, when it is what you are called to, religious life frees you for joy! It is just great!



“ Soyez dignes de votre beau nom par un grand amour pour Jésus, un amour qui se montre non par des paroles ou des désirs stériles, mais par le courage dans son service. ”

Marie Madeleine d'Houët

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