

A Meditation on the Religious/Monastic

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This booklet presents short descriptions of Religious and Monastic Life in the Episcopal Church. Intrigued by these descriptions, you may want to find out more about religious and monastic life. Perhaps reading these selections have provoked within you some faint sense of *call*. You, probably like most Episcopalians, may have only thought of a "call" in terms of ordained ministry. But, to your surprise, these descriptions suggest the possibility that the "call" to serve exists in a container in which ordination is only one of many ways to serve God.

What then is this "call" that may be stirring within you; a "call;" that isn't necessarily a call to the ordained ministry? Like all of the Baptized the goal of life is to seek God. This is the basic component of the spirituality of all Christians, lay or ordained. But this stirring within you may be a stirring toward a radical transcendence. This radical transcendence is what Sandra Schneiders, IHM, describes as a "***developed relationality to self, others, the world and God.***" What is stirring within you then is the radical desire to move yourself toward God. You seek God pure and simple. And it is that seeking of radical transcendence that may spark an interest in the possibility of religious life for you. As you read the descriptions of the various communities, you might have experienced an "Aha!" That is, you may come to the realization that religious/monastic life may be the container in which that inner stirring you feel to seek God might be reached. And that the Religious/monastic life might be the place where that "***developed relationality to self, others, the world, and God***" is developed and becomes the context for your fulfilling the Gospel mandate to reconcile yourself and others to Christ.

Religious Life is the invitation to live on the margins of life so that the following words of the psalmist, becomes your ongoing reality:

**Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful,
to those who turn to him in their hearts.
Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.
Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
justice and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
The Lord will give what is good, and
our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps. *Psalm 85:8-13***

Then, if this is the stirring you feel within, "Come follow me." Amen