

Griffin, Joseph M.  
Careers for God  
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# CAREERS for GOD



## HOUR of FAITH

RT. REV. MSGR. JOSEPH M. GRIFFIN



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# Careers For God

A series of Sunday morning talks given in January, 1948, on "The Hour of Faith", a coast-to-coast religious broadcast produced by the National Council of Catholic Men in cooperation with the American Broadcasting Company.

BY

RT. REV. MSGR. JOSEPH M. GRIFFIN



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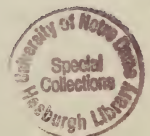
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## THE CALL FROM GOD

Talk Given on January 4, 1948

Fortunate indeed, yes thrice fortunate are the young who know exactly what vocations in life are best suited for them, and set about persistently and energetically to prepare for them. Their calm purposefulness is admired by all. Time does not weaken their resolves and even forceful talks about the attractiveness of other callings in life leave them unruffled and unperturbed. Their friends admire their decisiveness and often yearn earnestly for their secret of choosing.

There is very much concern in America about the inability, some say—incorrectly I believe—the unwillingness, of many of our young, both boys and girls, to choose their vocations. That it is attributable to the war in many instances, may have some foundation although it seems paradoxical that the very young men who were trained to make quick decisions on which depended life and death are now stamped as irresolute and fearful in choosing a vocation. It is very common, I must say, for girls who patiently wait, perhaps too

long, for the boys to ask for their hands to complain about the irresoluteness of some of the veterans who court them, and to stamp them as “variable and indecisive as teen-agers.” The boys blame the girls, claiming that they want careers, and extraordinary security before they go to the altar. None of these claims is entirely true or entirely false.

Even before the war, educators recognized serious lack in our educational system, especially as regards helping the youth in choosing callings in life. For this reason they introduced vocational guidance as a necessary and valuable adjunct to the curriculum. Our business men for a long time have considered it financially wise to have trained counselors guide and advise their employees vocationally. For years untold the Church has preached about vocations. Lately, she seems to have taken on new energy and interest in vocational guidance. No series of talks to youth now is complete unless it contains one on vocations. This is due, I am sure, not only to the great need for religious vocations

but also in the exceptional interest shown by youth and their parents in this timely subject. Priests and sisters, despite the great need for them in other labors, are being released to do what is called vocational work.

Whenever the subject of vocations is open to discussion, especially if it is not restricted to the religious life, many sensible questions result. Ordinarily, the leader insists as I will, that a vocation is a calling from God. Immediately the following questions come from the youth:

Does your definition of vocation mean that God calls each individual to a particular state in life? Does He give any choice in the matter? Are we marked from birth for a determined calling? Must we follow what seems to be our vocation or lose our souls? If others insist that this or that is our vocation and we for some reason are hesitant, perhaps from lack of courage, is that the sign of a call?

To answer these questions we make the following statements. A vocation is a call from God, and a religious vocation is a special gift or call from God. God does not often call a person directly, although we have evidence in Scripture and in life of

some extraordinary calls from God. He either makes known the vocation directly as He did to the Apostles when He said, "Come, follow me," (*Matthew 19:21*), and to the young man to whom He said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor" (*Matthew 19:21*). Or He so illumines the intellect that the favored one clearly knows that further deliberation as to a choice in life is unnecessary.

It is commonly held that one who does not follow a vocation clearly determined after reasonable reflection and spiritual guidance may find more difficulty in saving his soul than he would in the calling which reason and faith point out as a better choice.

There are many problems about vocations which cause young people to claim that they are, in their own words, "mixed up" as regards the choice of a calling and which cause parents to throw up their hands in puzzlement as their sons and daughters come to them for advice in the choice of a state in life. These problems are due, I believe, to an erroneous belief that a vocation is the awareness of a special divine impulse and is to be identified with divine attrac-

tion. This teaching has infected the thinking of many people. It is found, especially, in some candidates who, because of lack of talents, are urged to give up further thought about a certain vocation. They will claim that it is nevertheless their vocation, that they have been called by God, because they say they have felt the divine impulse. It is shown too by those people who persist in encouraging their children towards a special vocation although the children may have no qualifications for that particular state in life. It is surprising how many persist in the belief that God's call to each one is recognized entirely by the tendencies of the youth to a particular calling or state in life. How many directors of seminaries and superiors of convents have had experience with this type of judging a vocation is not known, but I am sure that those who are listening will recall how often it has been presented to them as an argument to accept or retain a candidate.

Ordinarily, and let us insist upon this, a vocation is revealed as the result of deliberation according to the principles of reason and of faith. Reason demands that a candidate for a cer-

tain vocation be free from any impediments which will make the fulfillment of its purposes improbable. Hence, any candidate for any vocation in life must measure health and abilities with the requirements of the state of life which he hopes to embrace. If the vocation is to the religious life there must be enough constancy of purpose, resolution and spiritual progress to enable the candidate to serve God faithfully in that state of life. As regards a vocation to religion we may also wisely note that even though one may fulfill the requirements of a certain vocation, he may still lack the call of the religious Superior. The call of the religious Superior, or the call of competent authority, is generally contingent on the needs of the particular diocese or religious group and is ordinarily not given unless the candidate has shown the physical, intellectual, and moral requirements necessary to fulfill successfully the expectations of the Church.

It is then possible for a person to acquire a vocation. This is encouraging to those who have never thought before of serving God in a special way but through association with the clergy or sisters feel that they would like

to dedicate themselves to the work of the Church. It is sensible too for those who, after accepting a call to the married state, for instance, and after years feel that they would have been happier in religion, to set about dedicating themselves with greater fervor to their present state of life and to spiritualize their actions in it.

The needs of religion in a particular period of the Church's history should cause the faithful to encourage by advice and prayer their children to study the requirements of the religious life and to measure their physical, spiritual, and mental abilities with it. Even though there have been cases where parental influence has just about forced a child into religion, there are few chances that that can happen at the present time when the church exerts extraordinary efforts to see to it that the candidate is accepting the vocation as a free choice. Yet parents may do much to point out the needs and the joys of a calling to religion.

Naturally they should instruct their children, as should teachers too, that one may serve God well in what is known as a world-

ly calling and indeed most of our youth should be encouraged to marry. We shall discuss this in a later talk.

And now, to sum up what we have just said about choosing a state in life: First of all, do not expect God to give you an extraordinary call. Such cases are extremely rare. Remember too, that God does not take away free will when He grants a vocation, and the best way to determine a vocation is by considering it in the light of faith and reason.

A vocation should be entered into freely, and without being forced, and in the case of a vocation to the religious life, even though one has the qualifications and even the desire for it, one must be called by the proper Church authorities or superiors.

Of utmost importance is the emphasis which we must place on prayer through which we should seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in selecting a choice of life or in advising others towards a calling which befits them. To whom shall we pray? My recommendation is that we follow the example of the Church. She seeks the assistance of the Holy Spirit—so should we!

# WHY CHRIST WAS AT CANA

Talk Given on January 11, 1948

I had just come from a class in religious instruction for public high school students. My subject had been matrimony. The lesson was introduced by the question: "Why was Christ at Cana?" Frankly, I had hesitated to use this biblical story because it appeared to be too familiar and too easy for the teen-agers. Imagine my surprise when only three out of a hundred and twenty-five knew anything at all about Cana. These three were aware of the fact that the miracle of the changing of water into wine had taken place there, but not one of the group had heard or else did not recall that Christ was at Cana to honor marriage.

My reaction had been something like that of a radio commentator to whom I listened on my way home. He was complaining rather bitterly, I thought, about the indifference of our American people. In a very forceful voice he related the results of a recent poll of the rural population of America concerning their knowledge of the Marshall Plan. "Imagine this," he said, "less than twenty per

cent of these people know anything at all about this plan which will very vitally affect their economy and lives. Eighty per cent know nothing at all about it, notwithstanding our constant efforts by the radio and press to make known to them this method of helping the people of Europe."

Now take the one hundred and twenty-five pupils to whom I had been speaking. For the vast majority of them, matrimony will be their vocation in life, and yet they knew nothing about the great occasion when Christ, their God, honored marriage by His presence at the wedding feast. In fact, they were surprised that I should spend time discussing marriage with them. It was too far away. Why their parents and teachers had missed the opportunity to open a discussion with them on their future vocation by emphasizing Christ's interest in marriage distressed me. Perhaps they had told the pupils about Cana. Youngsters are notoriously indifferent or heedless about very important things. They must be made to be a very part of their everyday lives to

interest them. There was a time when our youth did not have to know much about matrimony. It isn't true at the present time. They know plenty about marriage now, but it isn't the right kind of knowledge. They see marriage as an adventure, a romantic thing—a lark, if you will. To them, divorces and re-marriages make the news. Triangles form good plots and youngsters are theatre-goers. Good marriages have not been made interesting to them. Romantic and unsuccessful ones are attractive gossip.

Ninety-nine out of a hundred parents admit that they should prepare their children for later life, but they let time pass, hoping for a good match. The majority of them consider preparation for marriage as a series of about seven or eight instructions after the children become infatuated. Unfortunately, they think that a child becomes of age when he becomes serious about a partner. I may shock such parents a bit by claiming that the proper time to prepare children for matrimony, so far as their characters are concerned, is during the first five years of their lives. This is not my opinion or that of a few radicals, but of very wise

thinkers. As the tree is bent, so shall it grow. What the child learns in early years is seldom forgotten. Then habits are formed, tendencies are directed, and foundations are laid for the good or bad character which will make or break the natural partnership of marriage.

The Church, in instructing how young men should be prepared for the vocation of the priesthood insists that from the very earliest years they should be given a seminary training. They are to be treated like seedlings, developed in mind, body, and soul in an atmosphere conducive to sturdy and successful growth. Day by day, year by year, step by step, they put on the things for a successful priesthood and shed the things of the world. Boys are not ordained after four or five lessons. They have lived the spiritual life of a priest for many, many years. Spiritually, mentally and physically they are practically priests a long time before the Holy Spirit officially stamps them as other Christs.

Young women spend many years under the developing atmosphere of convent life. Their lessons have been absorbed with every breath and they take their

vows only after they have lived by them for a long time.

It is more important, it seems to me, even though the spiritual vocations are higher in dignity, that the preparation for matrimony be as prolonged and effective. It is wise, don't you think, to develop an attitude among our American people of instructing the children early in this important vocation which affects more than anything else the future of civilization? The thinking attitude of many people may be reflected by this characteristic answer to the question: "How do boys and girls prepare for marriage?" "They meet one another at a party, they like one another and keep company, they fall in love, they announce their engagement and get married. Parents tell them something about the life a short time before they are married." To the modern youth, I am afraid, it's just natural to be married. Love is all that counts and, to them, love is romance.

Many will say: "We didn't have these modern instructions for marriage and our lives have been very happy together." The answer is: Oh, yes, you did. Your instructions may not have been formal ones like classroom lec-

tures, but they were given to you. Years ago, there were larger families and each day brought the lessons of living together in peace and in harmony. Children learned how to give in to one another. Conflicts settled themselves because the children and parents knew that they had to live together. There was no place else to go—no careers away from home—before marriage. Boys and girls learned the chores of matrimony either from their own homes or from those of their friends—by daily living. Parents were with their children more, often unconsciously instructing them in how to make marriage work. Children were with their parents more. They took care of their brothers and sisters. They learned how to live with people. They saw little of the distracting things which now make home a place to come to at night and not a sanctuary where most of the moments of the day and night are passed rubbing elbows with others.

Parents know very well from experience that the best preparation for marriage is learning the art of housebuilding and homemaking, of bringing children into the world, of getting along with one another, of tire-

less patience and constant adjustment, of love which must be permanent and deep. No day in marriage will be like the previous day. There will be clashes of temperaments. There will be widening cracks in the structure of family life which only prayer and infinite tact can heal. Even with a perfect partner, matrimony is not easy for those who are not prepared for it. It is joy untold for those who are prepared how to select the proper partner and how to live with that partner for life. When people know that, there cannot be trial marriages. When their characters have been developed for the particular strains of living together, when two people with God enter into the contract, then there is success.

I once asked an engineer who was poring over figures on the stresses and thrusts to be expected in a building which he was planning, if it were not exacting work. "Not half as exacting as yours, Father, in dealing with people. We can figure out fairly accurately in dealing with steel. You can't do that with people." My answer was: "Yes, you can, if you know what type of training they were given."

Matrimony is a vocation—a great vocation—as matrimony is a great sacrament. On its success depends the whole structure of society and the happiness of countless individuals. It is not a contract for two people alone. Man, woman, and God are a party to it—each one dependent on the others. Children are the result of it and they and their children's children are affected by it. For what vocation in life should there be more serious preparation and greater knowledge?

Parents, like the Church, must deal with preparation for matrimony by cold, sensible logic. The Church indicates that the rights of individuals must never conflict with the rights of society as established by God. By her laws, she establishes the fact that matrimony is not to be based on emotion or so-called love even to the violation of the laws of God or society. The training of children to be obedient to the laws of right-ordered marriage must begin at childhood. The art of selecting partners, not for selfish motives or based on emotion alone, is not learned overnight. It requires self-discipline. The ability to live with a partner in sacred intimacy, in peace, harmony



and contentment for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health—till death, is all based on the youth's training which must begin in the home—at earliest childhood. Let's teach the children that matrimony is a vocation—a wonderful one—but a mighty serious one, too. For this,

time and patience consumed in learning its requirements are better spent than for many other callings in life.

O Christ of Cana, direct parents to bring up children prepared from youth to honor and love marriage as a real vocation—a Career for God.

## COME, FOLLOW ME

Talk Given on January 18, 1948

A group of young seminarians were standing on the steps of their magnificent minor seminary. They had become restless. Cardinal Pacelli was long overdue and the tenseness of the occasion was magnified by the remarks of some of the more pessimistic students that he might be forced to cancel his visit. Others insisted that he would not disappoint seminarians. All wanted to see him, whose fame had preceded him. The common opinion was that he would be the next Pope. At last the car appeared in the distance. The ubiquitous camera fan—they are in seminaries too—adjusted his lens, tested his light meter, and jockeyed for a favorable position right next to the Bishop, who descended the steps to greet his famed guest. The Cardinal exchanged a few whispered words with the Bishop. A nod of the head, and a quick visit to the Chapel first of all—silenced the cheer of greeting. Vocations were strengthened as the tall prelate knelt in rapt prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Here was a man of God—a man of extraordinary ability and po-

sition—just an humble suppliant before his Lord. Cardinal Pacelli spoke a few powerful words to the candidates for the priesthood—greeted each one of the faculty—and was on his way. The camera fan smiled broadly. He had some fine shots. The students were joyful. The man who was to be the next Pope had spoken to them, and had favored them with his blessing and a free day.

Only one lad was disconsolate. He mumbled to himself: "I thought I could speak to him for a moment. But I was too slow. He would have settled it all."

"Settled what?" asked a kind priest.

"Oh, gosh, Father, I didn't think you would hear me. I've been very troubled about my vocation. One day I like it here, the next day I'd leave at the drop of a hat. I want to be a priest and yet I fear to go on. It struck me yesterday that if the representative of the Pope, the Papal Secretary of State would only advise me—I'd be all set."

"Sorry you did not have a word with him, my boy," an-

swered the priest, "but I'll tell you right now what he would have said."

And the priest spoke to him like this: Vocations to the priesthood are gifts of God. Naturally we should not presume them unless we are able and prepared to fulfill the requirements of that state in life. It is not as difficult as many people think to give up the so-called natural way of life—marriage—home — family—when there is a substitute. The priest is a member of every family—his work is for people. His life is with God and that supplies all the longings of the heart and soul. In the Old Testament men who were of a certain tribe, served God as priests or levites. Birth into the tribe qualified a man for the priesthood. That is not true now. Color, race, social standing—these things have no serious bearing on the selection of candidates for the priesthood. A generous heart—a healthy body—a capable mind—and the call of the superior are the qualifications. To fulfill the life of perfection, a spiritual life is demanded. So-called emotional piety is not necessary. Practical, sensible, *constant* spirituality is basic. This develops under the warmth of seminary life. If a

boy wishes to be a priest, he must permit himself to be trained along the lines which the Church has formulated through experience. The road to self-knowledge and self-discipline is a tedious one. Yet it is a comforting and pleasant one for the candidates. Time and difficulties weed out the enthusiast whose only qualification for a vocation was emotion. They who have the "stuff" can take it. However, the serious often overworry. Too many boys talk themselves out of the seminary. Good vocations are lost by nervous fear and delays in seeking advice. Persistent doubts over long periods of time generally force a boy out of the seminary. We urge each candidate to make up his mind quickly and to spend his time preparing for the future rather than worrying.

Vocation for the priesthood is not a hit and miss affair. It is judged by well-measured and practical standards. The candidate may be able to fulfill and even be attracted by many callings in life. Generally, a boy who has good possibilities for the priesthood would make a fine candidate for any professional calling. Let him decide according to sensible principles which voca-

tion offers most opportunities to him as an individual to do good to himself, to his soul, to society and to God.

If he is generous enough to sacrifice for his calling natural tendencies for family and home—the priesthood is best for him. God will supply deficiencies. If he wants the world together with a calling—his place is in the world. To try to mix the world and the priesthood is fatal, always.

So much for young seminarists who have taken the first step. We speak to them because we consider them the first source of our future priests. We urge them to face any decision, to remain or to leave the seminary sensibly. Take advice—pray—judge qualifications—trust in God. This sounds easier than it is because dispositions often cloud judgment. That is why seminaries ordinarily provide competent directors to help seminarists reach the right decision.

There has arisen lately an unfortunate opinion that is more widespread than one might think, that there are enough vocations for the priesthood. The fact is that the needs of some of our American dioceses are frightening. Generous people

with means often find much joy in underwriting financially the education and first years of priesthood of many willing candidates for these less fortunate dioceses whose people are impoverished.

Be sure of this! Vocations for the missionary work of the Church in America and elsewhere are not as numerous as the needs. We urge high school boys, college students to think seriously of this manner of serving God. It offers a challenge to our American Catholic youth, to our teachers who are consulted in vocational guidance work, to our parents. It is a challenge to sacrifice for souls, for God. The rewards are a hundred thousand fold. Ask any foreign missionary, especially those in the fields afar. They would give their lives just to be able to return to their arduous work.

Just a few days ago I read an article which indicated that there is one priest for 27,000 Catholics in the Philippines. China, Japan, Africa, the Pacific Islands, the Near East, all need priests. The solution proposed by many well-meaning people that priests from the more fortunate dioceses of America should man these regions is not practical at all. Or-

dinarily a candidate must be trained from seminary days for the mission field. Even for our mission fields of the South and West, special training is needed. The ideal is native vocations.

There are various organizations that make it their special work to train missionaries. One of these is the Society of Saint Peter, the Apostle, whose aim is the education of native seminarians to the priesthood in the foreign missions.

This happens to be the auxiliary work of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith. To aid in educating a young man for the priesthood is a very consoling work, I assure you.

If you want to find the happiest youth in the world, I urge you to visit the nearest seminary. All the boys there are real red-blooded, sensible American boys. They are happy, they are peaceful, they have plenty of fun, clean fun. Boys from our leading high schools are among them. College boys from all over the country help to fill their ranks. Football, tennis, baseball, basketball, swimming, hockey, debating stars are among them. Good students, fair students, exceptional students are there. One

thing they all have in common. Thy love God—with a manly love, and they want to work for Him in a special field. Like every other calling—it demands work—hard work. It requires spirituality. But it is day-by-day occupation. No one expects a student to manifest all the qualifications of mind, body and soul for ordination immediately. Gradually these young men learn to overcome their faults, gradually they acquire knowledge, gradually they come closer and closer to God.

The boy who wants to become a priest usually asks himself these questions: "Am I generous enough to give up home and family to devote myself entirely to God and souls? Have I a fairly good mind? Am I healthy enough to undertake the work? If the answer to all these questions is "yes," then the boy usually talks to his parish priest and tells him of his own desire to be a priest. The priest, in turn, gets the approval of the Bishop of the diocese for the boy to enter a seminary, and he is then well on his way to the priesthood.

I have dealt with candidates for the priesthood for more than a quarter of a century, and I have seen many a boy become a

priest, happy and contented in his work.

On the other hand, I have known of young men who had a desire to become priests but who were not able to make the great decision soon enough. They remained in the world until they fell victims of its easy and pleasant ways, and the great vocation they might have had went glimmering.

The vocation to the priesthood is like all vocations—a gift of God. He often gives it to those who seek for it through prayer. It is not an easy life, but it has its consolations, especially in the knowledge that through it, many men will be helped to come closer to God. It is the Priest's work to save souls. It is my work, and it is yours, in your own way, too.

## THE SPOUSE OF CHRIST

Talk Given on January 25, 1948

Many people, including myself were keenly disappointed recently when an incipient blizzard prevented our presence at a ceremony of religious reception and profession in the Cathedral at Hartford. For days these people had eagerly looked forward to witnessing for the first time the acceptance of candidates by the Sisters of Mercy of the Diocese. Up until now the Sisters always have taken the veil and pronounced their vows in the convent chapel. Few attended it. The chapel was too small and invitations were at a premium. There was a comfortable seclusion about the entire service. Fortunately this year the daily newspaper on the morning after the event carried four excellent pictures of the various stages of the ceremony. They were accompanied by a remarkable interesting and accurate article describing the entire event.

I am sure that the editors felt happy about carrying this story for newspapers print what is news.

For what other reason except news would they have graced the front page with a four column picture captioned: "Newly Pro-

fessed Nuns Prostrate at Altar?" The explanation continued: "Newly professed nuns with black veils and novices in white, prostrate themselves at the altar of St. Joseph's Cathedral at the close of ceremonies advancing them in the Catholic Congregation of Our Lady of Mercy. The prostration symbolizes the spirit of humility." This quotation from the newspapers indicates that knowledge about sisters, their lives and their background, their ceremonies and their work is so scarce, that to be permitted to report on them is newsworthy. I am sure that Catholics were glad to note this departure from the extraordinary reserve and privacy which has accompanied the every action of these good women. They are the unsung heroines in the Church. Their unwillingness to accept worldly publicity is understandable, since they are not seeking rewards.

Unfortunately, such seclusion hides from people the magnificent lives and extraordinary deeds for mankind which these sisters perform. What would our school children, the poor, the orphans, the sick, the wayward

do without these fine women who have dedicated themselves to life of service to the children of God? They must have recruits if the work is to continue.

Who are these women whom Catholics call Sisters or nuns? First of all, they are a selected group of women who have volunteered to give up their lives for God and religion. Wisely they have spent time before accepting the responsibilities of this way of life. Generally there is a probationary period of six months to try their stability and capabilities. Then there are years of noviceship during which time they study diligently to make progress in the spiritual life and to prepare themselves more and more for the particular purposes of the community which they have joined.

If acceptable to the community, and they are willing, they pronounce publicly their vows for a stated period of time. Generally they renew them each year over a period of years. Finally, they are accepted as worthy, full-fledged members of the community, capable and willing to remain with it for life. The Church insists that the candidates have the proper qualifications, have full freedom of will

and the spiritual traits necessary to live closely to God with lives dedicated to His services.

Some communities forego all external communion with the world. They are called cloistered. They contribute immensely to the salvation of souls by their prayers and deeds. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." There is not an idle moment in their lives. Then there are some groups whose members are nurses and conduct hospitals. Others teach and conduct schools, academies and colleges—still others staff orphanages, homes for the aged and asylums for the wayward. They all pray and they all love God and work for the Church diligently.

To whom does this life appeal? Healthy, sensible girls of unselfish hearts are most successful in this career. Girls of exceptional talents, girls of ordinary ability, professional girls—all have a place in dedicating themselves to the service of God and religion. Many yearn for the life but often they are not qualified. Some fear the convent as too gloomy, difficult and confining. They should visit a convent and see there the happiest women in the world. Some hesitate



too long to seek admission to a convent. Youth is adaptable. Overly mature people become too set to follow such a vocation. There are many girls who, of course, would not want to live their lives as nuns. Nothing but admiration is in their hearts for these noble souls who accept its hardships, but for them—no, it cannot be. They picture it as a gloomy, difficult life which would deprive them of all freedom. Frankly, the life would be impossible for some girls. But it is never gloomy, the happiest women I have ever seen are in the convents. It does take away certain freedoms—but only to permit the Sisters to dedicate themselves to what they want and like to do.

There are many opportunities in the convent for the use of particular talents, more opportunities than most people know. Practically every phase of activity for mankind except marriage is included in the labors of the many congregations working in America and in the entire world. There is a place for the brilliant mind, the professional girl, the business woman, the Martha and the Mary, for those anxious to do little things well, and those capable of gigantic tasks.

In judging the qualifications of a candidate to the convent, I should look first for health. It is a necessary requirement. Generosity is most important, too. Love for God is imperative. A happy disposition, even vivaciousness, helps greatly. Love for God and His creatures—a normal sensible attitude towards prayer and duty, the ability to live with others in community life are also very essential.

The garb of sisters or nuns is often the subject of much comment. Cute, impractical, old-fashioned, sensible, modest are adjectives often used to comment on it. The garb dress or habit of each community is traditional. It is generally the dress worn at the time the community was established. Sisters are very devoted to their habit and its traditions. The Church lets the communities select their own dress, caring little about the style. One thing is certain, none are slaves to the changing styles.

In the past few years, especially, sisters are accepting the progressive attitude—remember I said progressive, not worldly—towards matters that concern their work. They attend meetings, they read prepared papers at public meetings, they are out

of their convents more. It is indicative of the adjustment of the Church to changing times and changing people. Years ago they would not have been accepted, perhaps, or they did not think that the good to be done outside equalled the good to be done by retiring lives. Many of these women teach in colleges for girls. They feel that, to be effective teachers, they have to be abreast of the times. The people of the outside world who might never have heard of them or have seen them, now accept them as capable, industrious, practical, saintly. They respect and admire them. They may not understand their way of life, but they are not judging that. At least they know that it works. The contribution to the community by a group of sisters is immeasurably great.

The unfounded notions of some writers which have pictured sisters as incarcerated girls who were practically imprisoned by their parents to keep them on the straight and narrow path is very untrue. That they are women disappointed in love or frustrated in their ambitions in life is ridiculous.

The candidates for the convent are normal girls whose earnest

desire is to serve God. They understand the attractions of the world, the naturalness of family and home life. The attractions of self-directed freedom are sacrificed as they are in every way of life by the majority of girls, for a desired dedication. What girl wants to remain free from responsibility of a vocation in life? She would be unhappy without a definite purpose. It is natural to serve a cause.

Candidates for the convent, like all normal human beings, yearn for love. For them, the noble love of and for God surpasses any earthly love. They see Christ in His creatures—yet they serve them only to serve Him. They know that community life and effort is the most efficient way of furthering a cause. United action with unity of leadership accomplishes things. It has done this for the Church from its early days.

The call for sisters to direct and staff hospitals, schools, orphanages, old folks' homes, colleges, and to assist the Church in her other many works of charity is unprecedented. If popularity is a sign of success, the work of the Sisters is thriving. There are few superiors in the country, however, who are not

forced by increasing calls and the services of their Sisters to seek more and more candidates. That American Catholic girls are willing to serve is indicated by the increase of vocations, especially to the missionary life. Dedication to the life of the convent is not over-popular. Why? There are many answers. The world offers opportunities more tempting, is one. The habit of deferring decisions to enter until characters are too rigidly formed, is another. Whatever the reason, this fact remains. There is no life for girls which brings

more peace of soul, greater closeness to God, more joy, more love, more permanent reward.

For the Sister, her family is the little children who cling to her shawl, the sick, the sorrowful, the noble, the rich, the poor, the outcast, the unfortunate, the youth and the aged. Her luxury is the giving up of riches for queenly poverty. Her life nowadays is not as rigorous as you would suppose, but orderly and fruitful. Her charity is for all mankind. Her heart is for everyone who seeks God, for she is the spouse of Christ.

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