

THE LORD CAUSED MY VOCATION TO BLOOM



«A rose does not ask *why*: it blooms because it blooms, without thinking about it, and it does not ask you to take notice of it” (*The Cherubic Pilgrim* I, 289).

Looking back over my vocational journey, this statement popped into my mind. The Lord caused my vocation to bloom. It is a vocation without *why*'s: it blossoms anew each moment because the grace of the Lord stimulates it to do this.

I grew up in a Christian family. In our house, personal and family well-being was translated into comforting others, helping people in difficult situations and meeting their needs. This way of living shed light on my path. My dear aunt, Sr. Domina Yun—a Daughter of St. Paul who was a missionary in Russia for many years—supported me on the human and spiritual levels in my efforts to get to know Jesus and Gospel values.

One day, when I was in high school, I watched a documentary about a special education teacher who had dedicated his life to disabled children. I said to myself: “How wonderful! What a beautiful life! I want to do something like that.” So I decided that I too would become a special education teacher. My studies, internship and also volunteer work in my parish made me feel like an instrument in the hands of the Lord who, through me, caressed physically and psychologically challenged people.

One day some of my fellow-teachers and I took a group of disabled children to swim in a local pool. Suddenly, one of the children began to flounder and risked drowning. As the person in charge of the group, I accompanied the little boy on the ambulance trip to the hospital. It was a very serious situation. Feeling helpless, I waited in the emergency room, my mind blank. Just then, a nun wearing a veil passed by. When I saw her, my anguish came to the fore and I began to cry out interiorly to the Lord, begging him to save the child.

When the little boy's mother arrived, she consoled me, saying: “Don't worry. It's not your fault. The Lord will take care of him because he is His son.” I learned that the child was

born disabled because when his mother was pregnant with him she was in a car accident in which she also lost another child. Listening to that woman, I interpreted her words of comfort as a proclamation of her faith in God, which was an extraordinary experience for me.

This potentially tragic event was transformed into a precious and unexpected gift because in my fear and suffering I met Jesus, my Lord, and saw his merciful face. The French poet Charles Péguy says that Jesus gathers into himself all our sufferings and transforms them. In fact, he transformed my own brush with tragedy into an opportunity to call me to a more extensive charity—namely, intellectual charity. I had autonomously planned my life to work in a charitable way for children, especially disabled ones. But the Lord asked me to “put out to sea,” “throw out my net” and fish for true life. At that moment I came to realize that trying to plan my life independently of God was pointless because he was the true Master of it.

I entered the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Paul on the Feast of St. Joseph 2007. I am currently living in one of our communities in Rome while I complete my theological studies and continue my Pauline journey in the concrete circumstances of daily life. Right now, we are in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic—a dramatic period that has helped me better understand the greatness of the Pauline charism, which guides people's thinking in the direction of faith, hope and charity by enlightening their minds. As FSPs, we are called to help the poor in spirit and the suffering, who need the support of love and prayer.

The greatest and most powerful allure of the Pauline life is the Word of God. Each day, Jesus Master nourishes us with his Word and, at the same time, uses us as instruments to proclaim it. I am coming to understand always more profoundly that proclaiming the Word does not only mean preaching, teaching and giving talks about the Bible. Instead, it involves above all *living* that Word, *living* Jesus.

On my first summer vacation in Italy, I went to Verona to help out in our book center. Unfortunately, I wasn't much of a help because my Italian was still too poor. So my apostolate turned out to be that of offering a smile to every person who came into the Center. One day, a gentleman said to me: “You have such a welcoming smile, Sister. It does me good to see it!”

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