



Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will



“Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them;
for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs.” *Luke 18:16-17*

The Importance of Our ‘Yes’



Two more Benedictine Daughters have entered the novitiate, bringing our white habit count up to seven. But the sisters themselves don’t get top billing this time. Don’t worry...you’ll be able to read more about them, about their investment ceremonies, and about all those external details we like to know in the pages to follow. For now, however, let us focus on the real centerpiece of our story – the importance of our ‘yes’ and the Eternal Love that obtains its victory.

As we watched our two postulants willingly, joyfully and freely pledge their heart, mind, and soul to Jesus, new light was shed upon the famous Gospel passage: *“Many are called, but few are chosen”* (Matthew 22:14). God is unchanging, unconditionally loving and infinitely merciful. How is it possible that He first calls and then changes His mind? But it is not His mind that changes. It is not His decision that wavers. It’s precisely His love and mercy that gives us the freedom to choose (or not to choose) Him. A teacher may ask her whole class for volunteers, but will only select those that eagerly raise their hands. A man may court a young woman, but will propose only if he believes that she truly loves him too.

Though the Divine Suitor can be very persuasive, the gentlest of gentleman never pushes. His wounded Heart is far more sensitive than even our own, desiring to be loved by choice and not out of force or obligation. Yet despite countless rejections, He has not stopped calling. God calls as much today as when the Church was flourishing with filled monasteries, convents, and rectories. The cause of the current vocation crisis can be found in the unanswered knocks, ignored calls, or the fearful refusals, leaving few left to be chosen.

Oh, if all knew what peace and joy would await them in their ‘yes’, for *“eye has not seen, ear has not heard, and the heart of man has not imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him”* (1 Cor 2:9). Better yet, if all could realize what happiness they would give to Jesus. It’s about Him, not us...God’s Will, not our own.

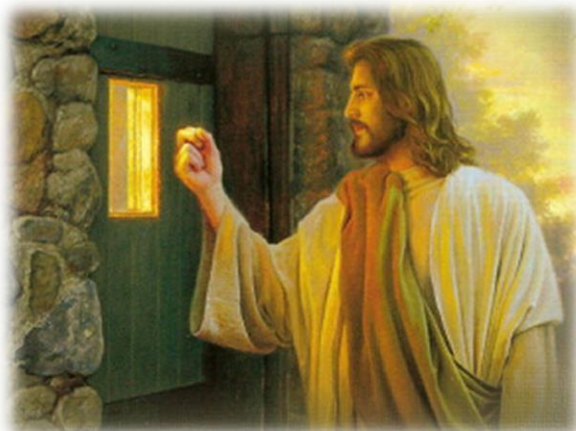


“How beautiful it is to be able to say: ‘*You have loved me, I have loved You!*’...I ask you, as a mother, never to deny anything to your God, even though they might be sacrifices that would last all your life. Remaining ever unwavering in the test which God asks of you – your loyalty, is the call of the divine designs upon you, and the reflections of His virtues, which, like many brushes, make of the soul the masterpiece of the Supreme Being...God does not know what to do with one who is not faithful in the test; not only this, he upsets the most beautiful works of his Creator. Therefore, My dear child, be attentive.”

(The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will, Day 4)

What is this “Call” and how do I know if I’ve got it?

Contrary to what most people imagine, the Holy Spirit usually begins to beckon very subtly – with a quick thought, a gentle whisper, a new idea. Even if we initially reject, ignore, or deny, that first motion, the original inspiration never fails to return. In fact, it often comes back more clearly than before, accompanied by little signs that God knows each particular soul will understand. Whether we react with fear or excitement, disappointment or delight, the key lies in remaining open to all possibilities.



and children, desiring a career, or seeking adventure. Such dreams are normal, healthy even...and definitely not a sign that one does not have a religious vocation. The distinction

comes into play when we sincerely seek the Will of God, praying and discerning with wide-open hearts. There we come to realize that no matter how beautiful and appealing those dreams may be, they will never fully satisfy us. A void would always remain, *the* void that could only be filled by the love of Christ. No other love

would be enough. That is the call.

Religious are no different from anyone else. Most of us have struggled at one point or another with attachments to certain dreams for our lives, whether they be hopes for marriage

However well we may claim to understand ourselves, only our Eternal Father really knows how to fulfill the desires of His children’s hearts. All we have to do is let Him...

“Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive back an overabundant return in this present age and eternal life in the age to come” (Luke 18:29-30).

Do you think God may be calling you to the *Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will*? Don’t be afraid to take the first step and drop us a line on the “**Vocations**” page of our website. Remember, discernment is simply about discovering, not committing.

Come meet Sister Maria Benedicta...

Nancy Casanova, a nurse from south Texas, exchanged her scrubs and medical tape for a black jumper and veil when she entered the Benedictine Daughters. And on April 12th, Divine Mercy Sunday, another wardrobe change took place as Nancy was clothed with the holy habit and given a new name - *Sister Maria Benedicta of Our Little Mother of Divine Will and Her Most Chaste Spouse*. Even her soul reflected the whiteness of her new garment as she, and several others present that day, received their baptismal innocence back with the Divine Mercy indulgence. Not bad for one Sunday morning.



Our friends and neighbors who had gotten to know Sister Benedicta since her entrance became quickly accustomed to her upbeat personality and jovial laughter. However, those who witnessed her “betrothal” saw something different in her face that day, something that brought both women and men to tears. The same smile was there, but with an expression that seem to sigh, “Finally!” As Mother Gabrielle Marie snipped away her long, beautiful, brown hair and Father Elijah sang the most fitting words of the Magnificat, one didn’t sense the weight of this small offering nor the larger sacrifices that led Sister Benedicta to this point. We could only feel the love and lightness of heart with which she offered her all to the One who loved and called her first.



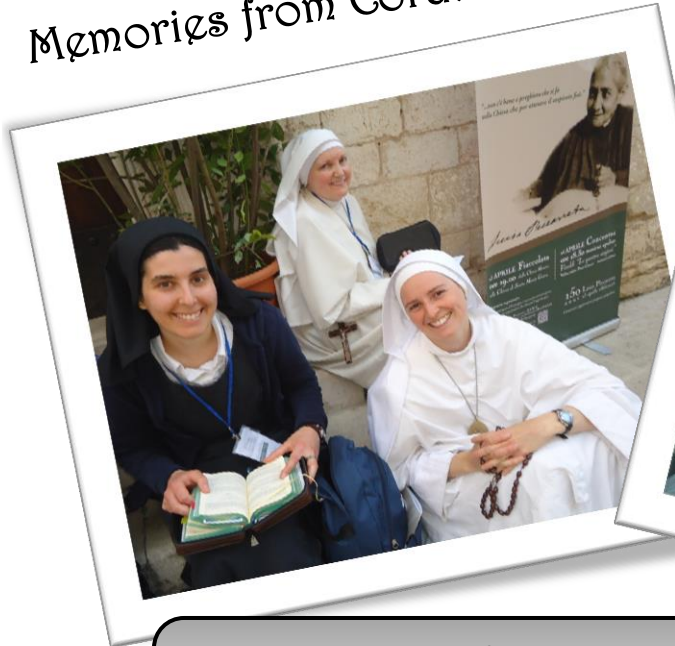
Though many, we are one

Sister Gemma Marie of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whom you met as Nunzia Ciricosta back in our December newsletter, joined her sister in the novitiate just two months later on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart. Though not much time had passed since the previous investment, we had already outgrown our private chapel. Making room for our swiftly growing community of brothers in addition to the invited guests, we decided to hold the ceremony in the local parish church of Talamello. How beautiful to see Father Elijah celebrate Holy Mass there for his sisters on this important day with seven of his young monks serving at the altar! Not only one ‘yes’ could be heard that morning, but a whole family of them echoed within those holy walls. Many, yet united as one in fraternal love.

The Benedictine Monks of Divine Will are increasing, but there’s always room for more. Do you want to be in that number? Send a message to Fr. Elijah Joseph on their website at www.dwmonks.com to see how you can begin the discernment process.



Memories from Corato...




Please join us in praying for the two benefactors who made it possible for our whole community to attend the 4th International Divine Will Conference in Corato. Thank you, again, for being so good to us!

Supporting the Benedictine Daughters...



It's official...we've outgrown our car. With each of our Fiat's seven seats already occupied, there will be no room for future sisters or vocation guests. Would you prayerfully consider helping us to purchase another small, second-hand car?

You can make a one-time donation by credit/debit card or sign up for automatic monthly payments on the "Donations" page of our website (www.benedictinesofdivinewill.org). Or simply send a check or money order to the address of our non-profit organization below:


Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will
P.O. Box 1002
Hanceville, AL 35077

We greatly appreciate all of you who have supported us in the past and continue to support us both financially and spiritually. Please know that the needs and intentions of our benefactors never escape our daily prayers. May every beat of Jesus' Sacred Heart and every drop of His Precious Blood remind us all of just how much we are loved.