

## **Three Hallmark Signs That You Have Found Your Calling**

A religious community or a marriage community is the place where you give Love, receive Love, and grow in God who literally is Love. Please know that vocational graces cannot be faked or self-generated. The following three signs are to help verify if you have the vocational grace to a particular religious community, diocese, or spouse.

### **1) A Special Grace for Your Conversion**

The religious community (or spouse) has been given by God Himself a special authoritative grace for your conversion. You likewise have a special essential grace for the conversion of the existing community members or spouse. Someone else can tell you something 100 times, but it is only when grace-filled members of the community (or your spouse) speaks that you get it and are transformed. They speak with authoritative grace given by God for your conversion. Not only do you hear them, but their words penetrate your soul, transforming you into Christ. Reciprocally, you have this same grace for the growth of the community (or your spouse). This grace is a hallmark of your vocation. It is the absence of this supernatural phenomenon that validates the legal procedure of annulments and dispensations. This grace cannot be feigned. If your primary motive for marrying someone or entering a religious community is transformation into Christ, you will not be fooled, as the grace you seek will be evident. If you enter religious life or marry for any other reason, you are building your house on sand. If you do not find this grace in your life, keep moving toward the Promised Land. The Promised Land of vocation is real and you will find it, if you do not lose your focus like the Israelites did in the desert as they tried to break free from the bondage of Egypt. If transformation into Christ is not your goal and you marry or enter a

religious community with some other motive, no matter how well meaning, you run a high risk of falling back into bondage or being stalled in the desert of discernment.

## 2) They Accept You, Your Reality, and Your History

Because of your strong relationship with your own inner Jesus, you are mature enough to have truthful emotional and spiritual intimacy with your religious community or spouse. Since you are comfortable with your own inner reality and capable of expressing it, you are also capable of hearing your community or spouse with openness, without defensiveness, without feeling threatened. Likewise, your community or spouse have to be healthy enough to handle their own reality before they can handle your reality, your truth. One cannot enter into oneness with others who are not one with themselves, one with their own inner Jesus. This oneness is Christian intimacy, and it is essential to growth in a loving community or marriage. No intimacy means no growth, because without the truth that intimacy so graciously allows, accepts, and even embraces there can be no true healing. So the ability to speak truthfully about concerns and have those concerns acknowledged and healed is a sign of the presence of transforming vocational grace. If, however, you sense a kind of rejection when you are telling your truth, and if that rejection is continuous and unchanging, that is not the community or the spouse for you. The Gospel says “You will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free” (John 8:32). If your community or spouse cannot handle your reality, then telling the Truth will “set you free” to move on in order to find the Love you deserve, the Love, the Life, that Christ died in order to obtain. Telling the Truth to the persons you are called to oneness with will set you free to go deeper into Love with your community or spouse and will seal your soul with ever deepening healing. The grace they possess will bring healing to both you and them. The power to heal each other is one of the surest signs of vocational graces because this power cannot be self-generated. Ultimately, only the Lord can

make a wound heal or cause a flower to grow. If you wait on the Lord in patience and trust, you will one day know these graces, this Promised Land of intimacy, freedom, and healing.

### 3) Reciprocity

The love you extend to the community (or a spouse) is reciprocated at the same level of commitment, as your Love grows. There is a wonderful circular reciprocity whereby you and the community or spouse are uplifted towards Christ, each supporting the other. Both your presence and that of the existing community members (or spouse) are essential. There is a respectful awareness in everyday interaction that expresses valuation, appreciation, and gratitude for the presence of the other.