

Your Future and Ours

Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes?

Photo & text by Sr. Carol Bredenkamp, SCC

An old country song, performed by George Jones, laments the passage of several "greats" in country music. In it the singer asked the question: "Who's gonna give their heart and soul to get to me and you? Lord, I wonder, who's gonna fill their shoes?"

I ask the same question as I work with young adults. Some have never thought about being a Sister. Others have never even had a Sister in school. Within the last few years several of our own "younger" Sisters have had to be removed from their extremely viable and satisfying ministries because of illness. Many have passed on to God. So I ask, "who will take their place?"

We need Sisters like Sr. Jeannette Wiltgen who taught Kindergarten in a very "grandmotherly" way. She enjoyed teaching little children and did many creative activities with them as they learned their ABC's and sight words. She was always open to new ideas and often attended workshops to bring better ways of teaching into her classroom. Who will take her place?

Or Sr. Joachim Kaufmann who had energy to spread God's love to her CCD program in Tucson, AZ. She was always finding new and creative ideas to help her catechists improve their teaching so the children would have a solid foundation in their Catholicism. Who will take her place?

Then there was Sr. Hildegard Smith who began a new mission in New Mexico at 69 years of age. I am privileged to be able to "visit" her ministry site twice a year but the people long for "Sister" (any Sister) to return to them. Who will we send?

And Sr. Joann Kelzer who spent countless hours taking care of all the financial aspects of our province. She always had a ready smile and a comforting answer to any question we might have had about a car, or a bill, or convent. She was a good steward of our money. Who can take her place?

Although there is a dearth of religious vocations in many communities, our Sisters are still filled with joy because they know God is in charge. Have you asked someone recently



Recently I spent several weekends with teenagers in retreat. Their energy and love for the Church is amazing. Their searching questions and wonderings are profound. Some of them are thinking of religious life and priesthood. I have asked them to think about it, to ask God what God wants them to do with their one, beautiful, wonderful life.

if they have thought about religious life? It really is never too early to plant the seed. I go into many classrooms (from K – 12). Always I say, "Most of you will be called to marriage. A few will be called to the single life. One or two of you will be called to Religious Life or to the priesthood."

Listen to God in your life. My mom once told me that if God wants me to do something, it will happen and there is where I will be happiest. So invite someone to consider religious life. God has a purpose for our life. We need to listen to God and follow it. Who will take "Sister's" place? Only those daring enough to love God with an undivided heart. Do you know someone like that? Have you asked them recently if they have thought about the priesthood and religious life? Some times all it takes is one question. Don't be afraid to ask the question. Peace, Sister Carol. †



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