

2018

Sr. Ruth: Teaching Change

Riley Ferguson

Augustana College, Rock Island Illinois

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/relgsister>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#)

Augustana Digital Commons Citation

Ferguson, Riley. "Sr. Ruth: Teaching Change" (2018). *Ask a Sister: Interview Wisdom from Catholic Women Religious*.
<https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/relgsister/20>

This Student Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Religion at Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ask a Sister: Interview Wisdom from Catholic Women Religious by an authorized administrator of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.

Riley Ferguson

Sr. Ruth: Teaching Change

Abstract: This paper is part of an interview with Sister Ruth, a Sister of the order of Notre Dame who has focused her adulthood on teaching youth. This paper focuses on how Sister Ruth has understood and interacts with the millennial generation.

Sister Ruth joined the Sisters of Notre Dame and started following the saying, “if you can educate a woman, you can educate the family.” Sister Ruth took teaching the woman as teaching the teacher, as women were often known as the teachers in the family. Teaching has played a large role in Sister Ruth’s life which led her to the passion of aiding youth in their education earlier on in her life. One of the very real aspects that Sister Ruth addressed was the lack of women who were/are entering the convents and religious life. Throughout her time working as a teacher Sister Ruth has learned about the passions of each generation. Sister Ruth when asked about the millennial generation said, “they are enthusiastic, learning to seek the truth, and are very service oriented.” Sister Ruth currently teaches at the undergraduate level and has daily interaction with millennials. Sister Ruth’s approach and understanding of the youth of today is true of young adult’s passion, but what the Catholic Church is not seeing is that passion directed back towards its congregations.

Sister Ruth’s understanding of millennials and their passions such as volunteering is compatible with research done by various institutions. Bridget Schulte writes in The Washington Post, “But while they may not be donating at the office, millennials, now the largest living generation, are donating. Big time – even as they carry high levels of student loan debt, have had

to navigate a tough job market and may have had to move back into their parents' homes before getting on their feet."¹ Amongst all the stress factors that millennials face they are still volunteering and giving time and money when they have very little of both. Millennials are passionate and Sister Ruth realizes that. When asked about the future of the church in regard to its ability to pull in millennials, Sister Ruth answered, "The Catholic church can make a good fit with millennials through different service opportunities... College age is in the young adult stage of looking to find the right direction and make good decisions." Sister Ruth believes that if the millennials continue the way they are they will continue to do good by the community and fulfill the volunteer needs.

It is clear that young adults today have a desire to volunteer and take care of the world they have inherited. It is through the teachings of people such as Sister Ruth that the Millennial generation can learn from and foster their desire to take care of the world around them. There is desire for the elder generations to pass on the knowledge they have received to the newest one, as they are the future of the Catholic Church and the nation. Sister Nancy left me with a quote that has left me thinking when it comes to assessing the relationship between the Catholic church and young adults. "Everyone could use a little help, nuns could use a little help from the people and the thing is that we are all trying to live life the best that we can." Sister Ruth is dedicated to her faith and the individuals she has taught and is teaching. The world could do with a little bit more of people like Sister Ruth.

¹ Schulte, Bridget. "Millennials Are Actually More Generous Than Anybody Realizes." *The Washington Post*, 24 June 2015.

Works Cited

“Sr. Ruth.” Telephone Interview by author. 22 December 2017.