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## Sr. Elizabeth: Education and Vocation

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Maddy Cuasay

### **Sr. Elizabeth: Education and Vocation**

Abstract: I interviewed Sr. Elizabeth in January of 2018 regarding her life as a woman religious. This paper includes her thoughts on vocation, her experiences as an educator, and her role as a family coordinator within her congregation.

Women religious each have their own story, both through their personal upbringing and their own idea of how their faith has guided them throughout the entirety of their lives. Each sister is unique in their vocations and the congregations that they ultimately choose, along with the paths that they travel before finding their home in the religious world. The sister I was fortunate enough to interview was Sister Elizabeth, who works as a family coordinator with her congregation of sisters in her state. However, she has a lot of previous experience working as an educator as well.

Sister Elizabeth was enthused and delighted to talk about her interactions and work with young people. She seemed most proud of her work as an educator, which had seemed to greatly influence her view on many things throughout her life due to her interactions with children and young adults. She spoke of how she also used to be a lay teacher for five years, prior to joining a religious order and seeking the life of a woman religious. However, she firmly believed that her role and approach to teaching would have been the same whether or not she became a sister. She wants the kids she teaches to know that “religion is something that when you’re abiding by it, it’s going to make you happy” and that it “gives you a peace of heart and mind.” Sister Elizabeth most definitely sees religion as a loving, but guiding force in life. She encourages others to seek

it, but would not push Catholicism upon her pupils. She emphasized that it is more about “wanting to be a faithful Catholic” than anything else for her on a personal level, as well.

Sister Elizabeth also mentioned that a recognition of mortality typically occurred when parents would age, or when somewhat shocking moments in life would happen. It would force people to come face to face with the reality of changes that occur within nature and in the world. This would then sometimes guide them back to their faith; likely through the desire to talk to God or the need to understand life in a different way again. However, she also stated that “it’s not necessarily a process that happens with everybody.” Sister Elizabeth was quick to recognize that this is something that clearly happens to young people during and after college specifically, and she wants to target assistance towards those who desire it during that time. She says that there “is a responsibility for passing on the faith” to younger generations from the people who know the faith well. Those who want to help, but do not know the faith well, cannot do as much good if they are not as well educated in the Catholic religion.

Near the end of the discussion, she spoke of her vocation as a woman religious and has parting words she wished to say. She repeatedly emphasized the point that “everybody has been given a vocation in life.” Sister Elizabeth said, “I hope and pray that each person, everybody, can take a step back and ask the Lord why he or she was created” and “have the courage to follow it” because He knows the big picture. “If everyone does what we’re supposed to do, then God can work in our world.” Sister Elizabeth seemed to be saying that God knows the big picture, but it is up to us to trust in Him and follow what He is trying to tell us to do.

## Works Cited

“Sr. Elizabeth.” Telephone interview by author. January 8, 2018.