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## Sr. Kathy: Journey of Vocation

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Grace Logan

### **Sr. Kathy: Journey of Vocation**

Abstract: This paper includes a compilation of sections from an interview with Sr. Kathy, a religious sister who has performed a variety of service-focused tasks in her many years with her community, and it illustrates her vocational journey.

“It was meant to be temporary,” Sister Kathy states through the phone with a laugh. The religious sister’s nearly fifty years of life in a religious community humorously contradict this admittance of original intent. She goes on to explain that in her time, to enter religious life was a safe, acceptable, and inexpensive choice for a young woman who had a history of rebellion and was uncertain about her future. This last observation is made with a good-natured, self-deprecating laugh. Her response to questioning on how her vocation came about is surprising, and upon further enquiring, she discloses that it was only many years later that she realized that in remaining a sister, God was fulfilling her innermost desires through her originally “temporary” choice to join a religious order.

Growing up with a Lutheran mother who provided most of faith formation in her life, Sister Kathy never felt a strong calling to Catholic religious life, and her vocation story is not one of theatrics, at least not at its origin. Rather, it is what she describes as an enduring process that began out of convenience. After graduating high school, she realized that owing to her family’s latest transfer across the country, something her father’s situation necessitated, she had missed the application deadlines for colleges. Indecisive about her future, Sister Kathy, like so many

young people, looked to her friends' examples for guidance. When two of her close friends decided to enter the same religious order, she followed them.

With satisfaction, she reveals that the religious order that the trio entered had always encouraged its members to work in any way through which women could be of service to those in need. However, like thousands of other women religious in the United States in the twentieth century, she began her professional life as a teacher, teaching at an elementary school before transferring to administrative roles. She describes the time as formative to her growth as a sister, but she admits she still viewed her religious stint as temporary. Nevertheless, even after her dear friends left the order, she remained.

Sister Kathy reveals that while she stayed, she did not think come to think of her religious vocation as permanent until she was in her thirties. When asked what held her back from leaving, she states that there was more to her vocation than simply wanting to be a sister. It was the desire to be of service to others that kept her involved until she found her purpose in activism.

Sister Kathy develops a passionate pride in her normally polite voice when she mentions how she and a group of sisters are planning to march in the Women's March this year to take a stand for the rights of women throughout the country. This however, will not be her first foray into activism. In the recent past, before taking over the presidential role of her order, she carried out a three-year mission of working alongside French sisters in the countryside of France, organizing and contributing to a coalition that vigorously combats the practice of human trafficking on an international level.

Altogether, Sister Kathy's varied and exciting work has provided her with fulfilment she would have never imagined as a young girl first entering the community. Even when she did not

understand the plan for her life fully, she recognized the heart for service that she was given, and that evolved into the determination to fight for the political and social rights of those in need.

#### Works Cited

“Sr. Kathy Debois” Telephone interview by author. 03 January 2018.