

# Supporting Women in Discernment....

by Sr. Valerie Marie Roxburgh

Since beginning my ministry as Vocation Director in October of 2008, I have had the privilege of sharing women's sacred journey of discerning God's call in their lives. As part of my transition to this ministry, I attended the Theology on Tap sessions that were offered in the San Pedro Region last August and was very inspired by talking with a number of young adults who desire a deeper relationship with God.

9-11 was the catalyst that caused me to re-evaluate my life values and I feel the current economic conditions are also having this affect in many people's lives. As one successful, professional woman in discernment recently wrote, "I had been trying to create myself from the outside with the hope that the void would be filled. Now I am allowing God to recreate me from the inside as I respond to my call to religious life. My friends and family are asking me, 'why would you give up so much after all you have done to create what you want!' I say in response, 'Why not?'"

Like this woman, there are men and women in our country today who feel called to the priesthood or to be a religious brother or sister. Recent statistics from *Vision Magazine* indicate a heightened interest in religious life. We need to renew a "culture of vocation" that begins at home and is fostered in our Catholic schools and parishes. People in discernment need support from all of us through prayer and personal contact.

How can we each respond to people on a journey of discernment and encourage vocations to the priesthood or religious life? Parents and teachers can share about their positive relationships with priests and sisters, and encourage their children to develop a close relationship with God and a dedication to service. All of us can share films and written works about religious men and women with people we love, as well as explore the rich literature and art being created today by people who have consecrated their lives to God.

I have gleaned much from the work of Sister Melannie Svoboda, SND, a nationally known speaker and writer who has written a number of spiritually enriching books and articles. Her most recent book, "When the Rain Speaks," helps the reader see God in nature and other areas of everyday life.

**Please feel free to contact me at 805-452-9699 or [sistervalnsnd@gmail.com](mailto:sistervalnsnd@gmail.com) to arrange a vocations presentation at your parish or school, or to have a companion on your own journey of discernment.**



*Sr. Val (l.) and formation director Sr. Kathleen Burns work together to support women in the early stages of life with the Sisters of Notre Dame.*

## ...and Formation

*Women in various stages of formation with the Sisters of Notre Dame throughout the United States gathered in Chardon, Ohio last January. California postulant Kris Fuller (seated on floor, left) and Sr. Rosaria Park (middle*



*row, second from left), renewed friendships and learned more about the heritage and charism of the congregation. See more pictures at [sndca.org/vocations](http://sndca.org/vocations).*

## Join us in praying for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Dear Father in heaven,  
following your Divine Son's directive,  
we pray that you will call many generous  
women and men  
to serve you and your church as religious priests,  
deacons and dedicated laity.

We pray especially that those you are calling to be  
Sisters of Notre Dame may respond  
wholeheartedly to their vocation.  
May we ourselves radiate  
joy and love and thus more effectively  
convince others of the meaning and value  
of following Jesus as religious and encourage  
them to accept their call with great confidence in you.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*Sister Mary Antonine Manning, SND*

