



RELIGIOUS LIFE

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” - JEREMIAH 29:11

OPENING ACTIVITY

GUESS THE TRUTH

Read the following statements and identify which ones are false.

Bees have 5 eyes.

A mosquito can fly to outer space in 3 days.

Some butterflies migrate every year to the same place in Mexico to avoid the cold winters.

Consecrated brothers and sisters are poor.

Most consecrated people live long happy lives.

Consecrated people all work in schools.

Those in the religious life never come from rich families.

Those in the religious life often wear special clothes called a habit.

Those in the religious life range from brilliant to average intelligence.

Some religious sleep on straw instead of a bed.

You need to be able to grow a big beard if you want to be a religious brother.

There are about 50,000 religious sisters in the United States.



A young Norbertine at his Solemn Profession

<http://www.stmichaelsabbey.com/abbey/>



READING

INTRODUCTION

Did you know that RIGHT NOW there is probably a monk or a nun on his or her knees praying for YOU?! Some people in the religious life spend hours each day praying for people throughout the world.

There are lots of different kinds of ways to live out the religious life. Sisters and brothers may work in a hospital, teach, run a homeless shelter, or offer counseling. Religious people who do these kinds of things are called “active.” They pray a lot, but they also do active work for God out in the world.

Other nuns and monks are secluded from the world. Some religious men are hermits; some religious sisters are “cloistered.” The work they do for God and for others is prayer. Instead of leaving the convent or monastery to work in a school or with the homeless, they pray for people throughout the world. Believe it or not, it is very hard work with lots of sacrifice, and religious can help us a lot by their prayers. Often a sister who is cloistered is called a nun, and a brother who is cloistered is called a monk.

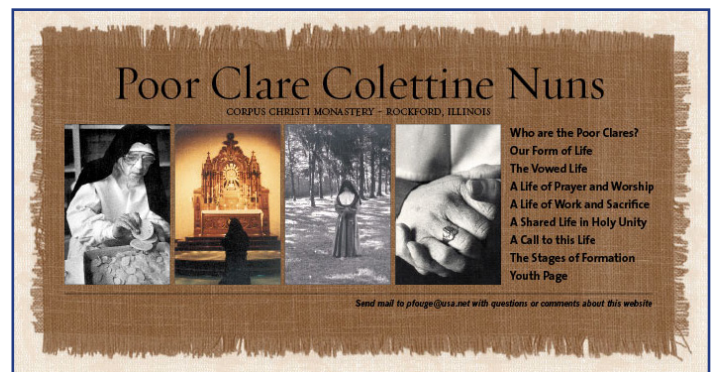
Here is a story about a cloistered nun who came from a surprising place. This nun used to be a player in the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA). She “took a shot” at being a nun and found her true profession.

EXCERPTS FROM

“WHAT’S IMPORTANT? ASK SISTER ROSE MARIE.”

By James Warren, Tribune Staff Writer, September 19, 1997

One day in 1988, in a gym halfway around the world, Mary Michelle Pennefather brought her hands together for one shot that transformed her life, altered the lives of her friends and family, and may be touching untold others in ways we can’t fully fathom. From her fingers it came: the shot that put her in God’s debt.”



For sure, that Pennefather would become Sister Rose Marie was not a total surprise to some. Indeed, she had gone to mass every day at Villanova and was clearly a selfless, yet fun-loving soul who provided critical emotional support to her coach when his marriage went down the tubes. When in Las Vegas to receive one sports award, the hosts gave her \$100 to spend at the Circus, prompting her to “clean out every basketball arcade game in the place and spend hours on the Strip giving stuffed animals to kids.”

But nobody for a moment thought she’d become a cloistered nun with the Colettine Poor Clares, one of the Catholic Church’s most austere orders. Members take vows of poverty and don’t sleep more than four hours at a time, eat more than one full meal a day, or use phones, TVs, radios, books, magazines or newspapers, except for religious periodicals.



READING *continued*

Further, they usually only see friends and family one time a year, and then only through a screen. They sleep on a bed of straw and, except if there's a medical emergency, will not leave the monastery (in Sister Rose Marie's case, one in Alexandria, VA.) until they die.

Before entering, Pennefather went on a generous spree. She gave her friends all her clothes, and her brother and coach money to make down payments on homes. According to Wolff, she underwrote horseback riding, clothes shopping, and meals at fancy restaurants in Washington's Georgetown area for both family and friends.

Then, on June 8, 1991, she crossed the threshold.

So as you read the tales of ambition and success elsewhere in these pages, or the next time you watch a sneaker commercial with one of the new female pro basketball stars, just remember one standout who took an enriching, but different, path.

STEP IN HER SHOES

- How may Sister Rose Marie's athletic training have helped prepare her for the life of a Poor Clare?
- What would lead a person to want to lead such a simple, quiet, and austere life?
- What do you think was the most exciting thing for this athlete as she prepared to enter the convent?

EXPLORATION

DRAW A RELIGIOUS BROTHER OR SISTER

Using paint, markers, or crayons, draw either a monk or nun in prayer, or a sister or brother serving others.

Around the drawing, write words describing the internal gifts a person in the religious life may need.



Poor Clare sisters enjoying a snowy day

GLOSSARY:

active – a sister or a brother in the religious life who serves God and people actively out in the world

cloistered – an adjective that describes a sister (often called a nun) who serves God and the world through prayer and stays in the monastery

monastery- a house for people in the religious life, usually monks or nuns.

convent – a house for people in the religious life, usually sisters or monks.



Sr. Agatha teaching in the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio.
Photos courtesy of the Catholic Exponent



VISUAL ART



Beautiful colonnade leads to franciscan cloister

PRAY TOGETHER

*Prayer for Generosity
– St. Ignatius of Loyola*

Lord, teach me
to be generous.

Teach me to serve you
as you deserve,

to give and not to
count the cost,

to fight and not to
heed the wounds,

to toil and not to
seek for rest,

to labor and not to ask
for any reward,

save that of knowing that
I am doing your will.

AMEN.