



“Most fulfilled and spiritually fruitful by remaining unmarried and celibate for the sake of Christ”

Celibacy Story

I have spent a large proportion of my adult life caring for my elderly and disabled parents. This was not always an easy task, but I believe very much that through the Charism of Celibacy I was able to give of my time to them freely and joyfully in spite of the difficulty of the task.

I also felt a strong call within me to give my time and talent to my local parish as a pastoral worker. I stepped out in faith and gave up my full time job as a teacher to explore this further. I worked part time as a teacher and gave the rest of my time to caring for my parents as well as working in my local parish as a catechist and general helper. I found this work schedule very satisfying and I felt very much that God was part of this process allowing me time to work for him and at the same time care for my parents. I could never have done this if I had been called to marriage.

After my Father died, my mother chose to move into a nursing home since I was not able to care for her physical needs at home any longer. With the help of a spiritual director, I began to discern that I had perhaps been called to a celibate life. Initially I discerned that my particular calling was possibly to become a consecrated virgin - an ancient order restored after Vatican II. I went to see my local bishop and we worked out a rule of life for me in which I could live the celibate life but also at the same time give service to the church as a catechist and pastoral worker in my local parish. I had many friends who supported me in this venture and were present on the day of my consecration 25 years ago. Their friendship became my constant strength. My life became increasingly fulfilled and my spiritual life grew into a deeper relationship with Christ.

When my friends around me started to fall in love and get married, I realized that I just did not have this instinct of settling down and making a home and a family. It

just did not appeal to me. My natural instinct was to be there for others particularly in friendship. It was never a problem for me that I remained unmarried. I had never felt the call to marriage and I was in no way disengaged from life. I had an active social life and good friends. I often went on holiday with them, we would go to the pub on a regular basis and go out for meals together. Being celibate freed me to be with my friends and perhaps help them to grow in their own relationship with God and in their own calling in life.

I often hung around with others who were single. We became great friends, meeting for Sunday lunch and a time to share our faith together. Two went on to become priests and the rest remained single, becoming good teachers, nurses and carers. Eventually I discerned that being a consecrated virgin was a natural step towards entering a fully consecrated life as a sister, and I myself eventually became a religious.

I remember when I first told my mum that I was considering moving away from the area where I had lived most of my adult life to take a “different job” which would mean I would not see her so often (I had not yet gained the courage to tell my mum what I was really planning!) She responded with a cheerful grin “You are going to become a sister aren’t you I am so pleased !!”. I was dumbstruck that she already knew what I was about to tell her! She had watched me grow in my relationship with God and was now confirming for me that this was right for me.

At my mother’s funeral in 2008 I also received a specific confirmation of this charism. In the eulogy given by my brother, he recalled how mum was always worried about what would happen to me once she died, since she felt I had made a sacrifice for her which may have prevented me from getting married. When she knew I was to become a religious sister she told him how glad she was that I had chosen this way of life since it confirmed for her that I had made the right choices in remaining unmarried and was able to bring joy into her life and in the lives of others. She sensed it was all part of God’s plan for me.

Being celibate gives me much freedom to serve in the world and helps me to follow my vocation from God to lead others to him. It does not isolate me from the world and normal life as some would perhaps think. I am effectively married to Christ and have many spiritual children to whom I minister in a variety of ways. I have great joy in my life, having accepted the call from God to become a celibate religious sister.



**CALLED
&GIFTED**

Celibacy Charism