



LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Practical Ideas & Suggestions
to Promote Religious Vocations



Vocational Discernment... On the Run!

BY RHONDA GRUENEWALD



“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven.”—Mt 5:16

Nun Run! Convent Crawl! Monastery March!

Whatever the event is called, let your light shine to those who may be interested in joining an institute of consecrated life by inviting them into your convent, monastery, friary or home!

To be clear, I have heard of “Nun Runs” that have runners raising money for a school, church, community or worthy cause by walking or running. Religious are present and sometimes even participate in full habit which is an awesome sight. However, this month, I am discussing what some dioceses or groups call a Come and See or Nun/Monk Run, where young men or women take a tour of the religious houses in their diocese or neighboring dioceses. The purpose is to give young them time to interact and learn more about the prayer life, work and daily routine of individual communities.

Though opening one’s home may be an uncomfortable thought to some, it is such a worthwhile endeavor. We must give discerners every opportunity to find just the “right fit” for them as a consecrated man or woman. You, in turn, can meet 5, 10, 15 or more young people at a time to get an inkling if they are suited for your community, as well, giving you an idea if you would like to invite them back for a longer period time.

Additionally, sometimes the diocesan Office of Vocations coordinates this event, so reach out to your diocesan vocation director to see if such an activity is already occurring so that your institute can take part. If not, suggest they start one!

This type of vocations event can take many forms, but the main idea is to give those “running” a few hours at each stop to “experience” the orders’ different charisms and ways of life. During these visits, the youth may pray with the religious and eat meals with them, learning of their founders and variety of apostolates along the way. It is also a wonderful opportunity for religious to share personal testimonies on



how they discovered and discerned their vocation. Perhaps a young woman or man may hear their own story in a story that is shared!

Each stop should have time for learning about vocations, in general, and the particular community, for each discerner comes with preconceived notions and ideas about what this calling entails. There should be ample time for questions and answers which can dispel the myths and misconceptions that many young people have regarding religious life.

Topics of talks or reflections could include:

- Daily life of religious women or men;
- How to discern fully—and freely;
- Being a Bride of Christ or



- Brother to All;
- Our Lady–Mother & Model of Every Vocation;
- Steps & Stages of Formation;
- Life of Prayer and Union with Christ;
- The Vows–Poverty, Chastity & Obedience.

If possible, include time for prayer and reflection, and maybe a walk on the grounds, organized activities, and journaling. Each young person will process what they are learning differently, so offering



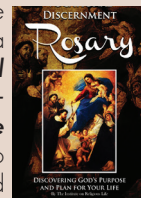
a wide variety of experiences is important.

Throughout the day or weekend, remember to invite the Holy Spirit to be present and active so that HE has plenty of opportunities to plant

seeds into the hearts and minds of those young men and women. In this way, you can truly let your light shine! ✨

FREE Discernment Rosary E-Book

The Rosary is a precious gift in our vocational journey. The IRL is making available a free e-book, **Vocational Discernment Rosary: Discovering God's Purpose and Plan for Your Life**, to help you find, follow and fulfill your call.



Visit ReligiousLife.com to download this free devotional prayer resource.

Practical Suggestions in Planning a Nun Run or Monastery March

Vocation outings such as Nun Runs, Convent Crawls or Monastery Marches vary according to the number of religious or consecrated persons within a specific area and the facilities that can be utilized. Often the diocesan vocation director or even bishop will try to be part of the event, which manifests the local Church's support of vocations. Try to include active and contemplative communities, as well as other forms of consecrated life, if possible.

When planning such an event, it is vital to be creative and encouraging to reach the young people where they are at and to provide the "bigger picture" of priestly and religious vocations in service to Christ and His Church. You must remember that it is not a recruitment event, but rather an invitation of accompaniment to encourage deeper discernment.



Here are some sample schedules to consider when organizing an event:

WEEKEND SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

- 5:15 PM Leave from a centrally located place;
- 6:30–8:15 PM Community #1, Dinner & Talk;
- 8:30–10 PM Visit to Consecrated Virgin's or Diocesan Hermit's home.

SATURDAY

- 9:00–11:00 AM Community #2 Mass & Breakfast;
- 12:15–2:30 PM Community #3, Lunch & Talk;
- 4:30–7:30 PM Community #4, Dinner & Adoration;
- 7:30 PM Return to discernment house or place to stay overnight.

SUNDAY

- 9:00 AM–NOON Mass, Breakfast,

Group Discussion & Sending Forth Ceremony.

ONE-DAY SCHEDULE

SATURDAY

- 8:15 AM Leave from a centrally located place;
- 9:00–11:00 AM Community #1, Mass & Breakfast;
- 12:00 NOON–2:00 PM Community #2, Lunch & Talk;
- 3:30–5:30 PM Community #3, Panel Presentation;
- 6:30–8:00 PM Community #4, Dinner & Adoration;
- 8:30 PM Return to have discussion & prayer before leaving.

Special thanks to the Diocese of Lansing and the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Office of Vocations for their help.

