

WE ALL GOTTA SHINE

We are each given different gifts ... called to live different lives.

If you are thinking of becoming a sister, brother or priest in a religious community, where do you start? The information in this insert & on our website can help you determine the vowed lifestyle that best suits you.

There are many religious communities of men and women. How do they differ?

In Sarah Bauer's new song *Radiance*, she talks about how we are each given different gifts to let our light shine and to live out the dreams we dream. *Each of us is called to be unique, live different lives, yet in Jesus, we all gotta shine!*

It's the same when looking at religious life. There are differences – different lifestyles, different ministries, different places and different people! It's through these differences – through each of us in our diversity – that God's love shines across all of humanity.

Finding where you feel "at home" among so many different people and paths can be a challenge. Don't worry! Pray, listen and explore with

a spirit of adventure. Try out different possibilities. See which feels "right" to you. Place your trust in God to lead you to experiences that will challenge you, bring out the best in you, and ultimately reward you with the kind of joy and peace so elusive in today's world.

Road maps can often help ease the frustration of journeys. People discerning religious life can find "road maps" in the advice and experience of those who have walked similar paths. This insert is offered in the same spirit. So, pick it up, look ahead with hope and excitement, and journey on knowing that God's love and our prayers surround you each step of the way.

Religious Life – Our Common Road

RFirst of all, there is a common road that each of our four major religious lifestyles: contemplative, apostolic, monastic, and evangelical communities travel. The common road we share is that we live a God-centered life of deep prayer in a community of persons who have vowed to love one another and all others celibately. This is the primary and common commitment of any religious man or woman.

Religious Life – Our Different Lifestyles

RThough we travel a common road, religious communities journey in different ways based upon their history, traditions, ministries and other ways they discern God's call. These differences – lifestyles – shape the shared daily routine of members, guide them in their ministries and sustain them in their commitments. These lifestyles often took shape because of specific social needs of the times and endure because of the meaning they continue to bring to everyday life. Today, we find four main religious lifestyles – contemplative, evangelical, apostolic, and monastic – four different but rewarding ways of sharing the love of Jesus.

Following are brief descriptions of these four major religious lifestyles. Each description uses a lens that differs slightly from the others. Each is written by a person living that lifestyle. Each is an invitation to learn more, to ask questions, to go deeper in gaining a better sense of what religious life, and your life are all about. You are called. Pray. Listen. Explore. Shine.

Contemplative Lifestyle by Sister Joanna Hastings, OP

Contemplative religious, nuns and monks, leave everything to give their entire life to seeking God in the monastic tradition of the Church. Each one of us responds to a call from the God Who is Love. Our choice is grounded in love for God, in faith, and in trust that He will guide our journey with Jesus Christ, our way, our truth, and our life. (Jn 14:6)

When one enters a contemplative community, one finds a simple, disciplined, liberating life style that is based firmly in reality. It is a way that sustains our search for God by freeing us from all that is not God. We separate ourselves from the world; but the most difficult separation is from the self: from self-concerns, the demands of the ego, personal desires, ambitions, and prejudices. We need to know ourselves as weak, and sinful beings dependent on God's mercy and grace for growth in holiness. We will spend a lifetime dying to self in order to live for God.

www.HowDoIKnow.org



Most contemplative communities live enclosed or cloistered, remaining within the monastery or convent, leaving the cloister only if necessary, in a medical emergency for example. The enclosure helps us to live hidden in God, open in our silence and solitude to the Word speaking within us, to the presence of God.

Contemplative religious work with their hands, freeing the mind and heart for God. Everyone does ordinary household tasks, cooking, cleaning, sewing. We also maintain our buildings and grounds. Many communities supply altar breads to local parishes, hospitals, and nursing homes. Nuns and monks may be farmers, beekeepers, craftsmen, artists, writers, and even computer technicians.

The vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience until death, bind us and at the same time free us. Together with vows and enclosure, silence, solitude, and work, the contemplative's structured daily schedule provides a foundation for a life devoted to prayer focused in the mystery of God and the salvation won for us by His Son Jesus Christ. Our God dwells in unapproachable light; yet he seeks a dwelling place in the human heart.

The central prayer of the day is the Mass. In the Eucharistic Liturgy, God comes to us in the Scriptures and in Holy Communion. We in turn receive Him, offering Him worship, praise, and thanksgiving. Prayer continues as we gather for the Divine Office, the Liturgy of Hours, joining the prayer of the Church at intervals during the day. There are times set aside for personal prayer and meditation, for *lectio divina*, the prayerful pondering of Scripture, and for spiritual reading.

Contemplative nuns and monks keep silence and remain solitary for the most part, but they live within a community which Pope John Paul II described as a "God-enlightened space in which to experience the hidden presence of the Risen Lord." At least once a day we gather as a community for recreation, a time to relax, talk, and share the joy of our life in God.

While contemplative religious life focuses on the spiritual growth of the women and men who live it, it is also apostolic. Living in the presence of God who is Love enlarges the heart of the contemplative to embrace all whom God loves. Contemplative religious never abandon the world; they dwell with it, at its heart.

Our prayer is both an apostolate and a mission. We are messengers of God's love, channels of His mercy, bearers of His compassion. Whatever happens in the world concerns us. Wherever people are troubled, threatened, in need, whenever they celebrate and rejoice, we are present to them and for them in the heart of Christ whose love embraces all of creation. The contemplative life of prayer also includes penance offered to God for our own sins and for the sins of the world around us.

To some people the contemplative way of serving God may seem a senseless waste. To those who are called by God, who embrace the ancient and ever-new monastic tradition, it is a joy-filled life transcending limits of time and space to embrace the world within the heart of Christ.

Apostolic Lifestyle by Elizabeth Marie Hoell, SSND

Life in the U.S. today offers a wide variety of ways to be a disciple of Jesus. Who is a disciple? Literally, the word means "one who is able to learn."

In the time of Jesus, the disciples literally followed Jesus on their many treks through the countryside, through Galilee, down through Judea, into the desert and up to Jerusalem, for example. On the way, Jesus would stop, turn around, and gather his followers around Him. "Look at these lilies of the field; they neither toil nor spin, yet not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these!" The Master would turn and start to walk, as his followers fell into single file, and thought about what Jesus had just said as they continued their journey.

One way to follow Jesus, to be a disciple, is in religious life. Jesus was engaged in the lives of the people who met this group on their way. People came to understand that this was no ordinary person. The 600-odd prescriptions of the law were

not Jesus' primary concern: Jesus' focus was always people. He was recognized as a Man of compassion.

A person called to an active apostolic religious life style, recognizes a call within her/himself to make the major concern of life to be an active stance to help establish Jesus' kingdom. This is accomplished by action for justice, for peace, for love, best fulfilled with other people. Those called to active apostolic religious life are called to "make ONE wherever they are sent." They recognize a unity of heart and vision because they see in others the same call to make one in Christ.

As their relationship with Jesus grew, the disciples discovered that Jesus was a Man of prayer. The Scriptures record occasions when all the people were looking for Jesus, but He was nowhere to be found. Off by Himself, they would discover that Jesus had spent the night in prayer to the Father. The disciples urged Jesus back into the village they had left which still had many other people waiting to hear Him speak, or to be healed. With perhaps a realization which had come through prayer, Jesus surprised them by telling them they must go on to yet another village.

On an occasion such as this, His disciples urged Him, "Lord, teach us to pray . . ." and Jesus shared His own prayer with them using the familial term, "Abba." With their strong adherence to Jewish customs with its emphasis on the transcendence of Yahweh whose NAME could not even be uttered, these men learned yet another thing about their Rabbi. They also found that being a disciple meant an openness to a totally different way of looking at – everything!

Time after time, the disciples must have asked themselves: "Why's Jesus doing THAT?" Jewish prescriptions of the law expressly forbade any contact with lepers. They were ostracized outside the village and needed to identify themselves either by ringing a bell, or crying out "Unclean! Unclean!" When one leper presented himself, Jesus touched him and healed him. It's hard to imagine that Jesus did anything other than embrace the man. Availability and flexibility, even to law, are other factors which Jesus was teaching his followers.

As a follower of Jesus, those called to active apostolic religious life learn more and more the absolute need for prayer, especially contemplative prayer, as a support to their very active life-style.

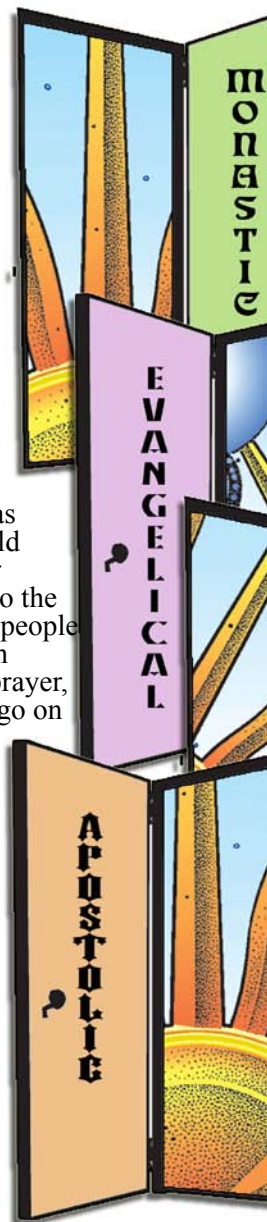
In summary: Active Apostolic Religious Lifestyle contains these elements:

- Ministry has primary determining influence over schedule
- Flexibility and ability to deal with change is essential
- The need to find and to serve God in ALL activity is basic
- Central to all is the need for availability and mobility
- Prayer of the apostolate is key – raising up needs daily encountered
- Members come together primarily to be sent out in ministry

Monastic Lifestyle by Paul-Vincent Niebauer, OSB

Benedictines: the way of Christian Monasticism. Benedictines are men and women characterized by their desire to take root in a particular place and, through the culture and needs of a specific location, serve to witness God's glory in all things.

We carry on an ancient but living monastic tradition that flows directly from origins of the Christian monastic movement beginning late in the third century with Saint Benedict. He is our founder and guide even though he did not establish a Benedic-



tine Order as such. Instead, he wrote a Rule for his monastery at Monte Cassino in Italy that spread widely as monasticism flourished in the Middle Ages. His wisdom was to craft a rule and a way of life that could be applied across time and culture in such a way that, even now, it touches deeply the lives of men and women who, themselves, are not vowed to religious life.

Even so, the Rule is the foundation for vowed Benedictine life. Though we share the same Rule, Benedictine houses vary widely in the type of monastic life they lead. Some pursue an enclosed life with little involvement in the local Church and society; others insist on various degrees of involvement such as education, parochial ministry, evangelization, publication, health care, etc.

Regardless of our diverse monastic styles, daily prayer and service to others represent our common response to the tremendous wealth of blessings we receive each day from God. We humbly recognize that our prayer and service are an unequal exchange for such blessings. But, through prayer and service, we reveal God's glory in even the most ordinary aspects of life.

The way of Saint Benedict draws individuals to one another through the experience of monastic life. Each novice is asked, "What do you seek?" and replies, "The mercy of God and fellowship in this community." The novice's own search for God occurs among his or her brothers/sisters in a particular monastery. In this way, the novice's insights and experience become part of the community's. In helping others to bear their burdens, the novice in turn receives the "help of many brothers/sisters."

After a period of time and prayerful discernment, a person is ready to make a life commitment to the three vows that define our monastic vocation: stability in community, conversion through a monastic way of life, and obedience. Monastic stability means that a monk belongs to a particular monastery – the monk casts his or her lot with a particular group of brothers/sisters for spiritual and material needs, shares the community's work and embarks on a common journey towards the future. The vow of conversion embraces the essential aspects of monastic Christianity – dedication to prayer, celibacy, simplicity of life and a sharing of material goods in community. Benedictine obedience is a willingness to live according to the guidance of the Rule, steady listening to the teaching of the abbot or abbess, and attentiveness to our brothers/sisters in community.

Though Benedictines are spiritually nourished through our attachment to a particular place and community, we nonetheless discern opportunities to sink roots elsewhere by establishing communities that later become independent monasteries. Our monastic families — or congregations — are united in a loose Confederation but each Benedictine monastery is autonomous. Individual communities are grouped into congregations according to their origin or geographic situation, largely for purposes of mutual assistance and common discipline. In 1893 Pope Leo XIII provided the "order" with an abbot primate to oversee Saint Anselm College in Rome and to provide spiritual leadership for the Confederation of Benedictine Congregations.

We, as followers of Saint Benedict, vary much in the way we live out our common Rule. Nonetheless we uphold and celebrate the essential features of St. Benedict's vision – we gather as men and women monastics endeavoring to experience and share God's love through a life of common prayer, reading and service.

Evangeli**cal** Lifestyle by Barb Krakora, SSJ-TOSF

The Evangelical lifestyle is a way of life that Franciscans have embraced since the thirteenth century. However, it is only recently that the Catholic Church has begun to recognize this lifestyle as a valid form of religious life. The Evangelical lifestyle is based on St. Francis of Assisi's desire to follow the

Gospel way of life. Francis wanted to follow Jesus in a radical way, and he was able to do this because he first believed in God's goodness. It was a goodness that God shared with all of creation from its very beginning, and found its ultimate expression in the person of Jesus. As Francis read from Scripture:

"In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth... And God saw that it was good." (Gen. 1: 1, 25)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things came into being through him, and without him, not one thing came into being... And the Word became flesh and lived among us..." (John 1: 1, 2, 14)

For Francis the Word became flesh because from the beginning God intended to give us Jesus who was, is, and always will be the Perfect Good. Francis focused his attention on the fact that God created the world and everything in it through the Word, Jesus Christ. Therefore, he considered all of creation as holy. Birds, trees, stars, water, and everything in nature was an expression of God's goodness. We especially bore both God's likeness and goodness. Sin, on the other hand, was a failure to see God's goodness in another person, creature, or object. Sin was also taking for oneself what belonged to God. That is why Francis showed reverence to all of creation, and all of creation in turn inspired him to give praise to God.

"And after the Lord gave me brothers, no one showed me what I should do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the Holy Gospel." (The Testament of St. Francis, 14)

Francis wanted to follow the Gospel way of life by imitating Jesus Christ. He and his followers did this in simplicity and joy. Their focus was on their relationship with Jesus and with one another, and they witnessed this in their daily lives. In other words, relationship was central to the Franciscan community. Their common bond was their relationship with Jesus and with each other. Because of this, Francis accepted neither the apostolic nor the monastic models of community that were operative in his time. In fact, Francis never asked that his followers do a particular ministry other than being good examples of living the Gospel way of life.

Today Franciscans all over the world continue to live the Evangelical lifestyle. In communion with God, each other and the world, they witness to God's goodness at work everywhere, just as Jesus did. They do this not solely through their ministries, but by their daily living in fraternity, (community) with each other. Itinerants by nature, they are not bound to a property (cloister), or to a common ministry. Instead, they are free to serve God's people wherever there is a need, and they do this in numerous ways. Some are professionals, some are homemakers, and some are caregivers. Some are clergy, some are parish ministers, and some are social activists. Also, because Franciscans recognize God in all of creation, they often serve in areas that address environmental and social justice issues.

Thus, Franciscans who live the Evangelical Lifestyle see God's goodness in everyone, everything, and everywhere. They believe that Jesus Christ is God's ultimate Goodness who came into the world as an innocent, newborn infant. They strive to live the Gospel life through their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and through their relationships with each other. Finally, they show reverence for the holiness of all God's creation.

The call to be a Franciscan begins with the call to follow and to be in relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. From this flows the experience of relating to others in community and of recognizing Christ in those relationships. Reverencing the Christ in one another is the nourishment that impels a Franciscan then to go out into the world to enable all people to see that gift within them that is Christ Jesus.

bsites to visit:

VISION Vocation Network: www.vocation-network.org
Archdiocese of Milwaukee: www.Howdolknow.org
Archdiocese of Joliet: www.dioceseofjoliet.org
Catholics on Call: www.catholicsoncall.org

Find links to these congregations at www.HowDoIKnow.org

CELEBRATING
175 Years
SCHOOL SISTERS
OF NOTRE DAME
Women of Vision
TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION
13105 Watertown Plank Road, Elm Grove, WI 53122
vocation@ssnd-milw.org • 262-782-9850, x716
www.ssnd-milw.org

We Have Habits...
...Prayer...Ministry
...Generosity...Community
...Hospitality...Social Justice
Come and be part of the next generation of
Sisters of St. Agnes
Contact us at: CSA Office of Vocation & Discernment
930.923.2310 • vocations@csalaters.org • www.csalaters.org

driven to serve?
thinkpriest.org

Servants of the Poor
We touch + lives
sisters of
charity
of SAINT JOAN ANTIDA
SISTER THERESA ROZGA
8560 North 78th Place
Milwaukee, WI 53223-2634
414-354-9233 • srtheresa@scsja.org
U.S. Province: www.scsja.org
International: www.suoredellacarita.org

Bringing new life to faith,
a new spark to love,
and a passion for unity
to the Church
and the World.
The Pallottines
www.pallottines.org
414-259-0688 ext. 155
The Pallottine Fathers and Brothers minister
in parishes, schools, hospitals and retreat
centers, inspired by the charism of St. Vincent
Pallotti, believing that all persons can live as
apostles of Christ.

Are you
Looking for
a Life
That Matters?
Sisters of St. Joseph
of the Third Order of St. Francis
Ph. 715.341.8457
E-mail: vocation@ssj-tof.org
www.ssj-tof.org

Join us
Fathers and Brothers
MARYKNOLL
"CROSSING NATIONAL
BORDERS & BOUNDARIES
OF THE HEART."
www.maryknoll.org
(773) 493-3367
vocation@maryknoll.org

Sister Kathleen McClelland at
773.779.6011, ext. 12 or
skmc@mercychicago.com
sistersofmercy.org/vocations
FIND OUT WHO WE ARE
AND YOU JUST MIGHT
DISCOVER WHO YOU ARE.
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Hermanas de la Misericordia de las Americas

Come, Dream and Build with us!
Comboni Missionaries
The world is our parish
Fr. Dave: revdavebccj@gmail.com
combonimissionaries.org
mccjvocation.com

**SCHOOL SISTERS
OF ST. FRANCIS**
Make a difference
in the world!
Join Us!
usp.sssf.org

Related Materials:

Contemplative Lifestyle -

DVD: *Into Great Silence*, Director: Philip Groning
BOOK: *Ordinary People As Monks and Mystics*,
by Marsha Sinetar

Monastic Lifestyle -

Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of Saint Benedict Today & The Rule of Saint Benedict: Insights for the Ages, Joan Chittister
Seeking God: The Way of Saint Benedict & A Life Giving Way: A Commentary on the Rule of Saint Benedict, Esther de Waal
Praying the Bible: An Introduction to Lectio Divina, Mariano Magrassi
The Cloister Walk, Kathleen Norris
The Benedictine Order in the United States, Joel Rippinger
Prayer and Community: The Benedictine Tradition, Columba Stewart
Work of God: Benedictine Prayer, Judith Sutura
RB 1980: *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, Timothy Fry, ed.

Evangelical Lifestyle -

DVDs:
Saint Francis, by Michele Soavi, &
Reluctant Saint: Francis of Assisi
CDs:
Butterfly Blue, Music and poetry of Jon Sherman,
#2 Canticle of Brother Sun, &
Women of Faith, #5 Instruments of Your Peace, Integrity Music
BOOKS:

Francis and Clare, the Complete Works, Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap
& Ignatius Brady, OFM
Franciscan Prayer, Ilia Delio, OSF
The Way of St. Francis, Murray Bodo, OFM
On the Road With Francis of Assisi, Linda Bird Francke
In The Footsteps of Francis and Clare, Roch Niemier, OFM
Tales of St. Francis: Ancient Stories for Contemporary Living, M. Bodo, OFM

Listen and
respond to
the call of
Christ.
thinkjesuit.org

Jesus Chooses
Faithful Women
SDS
sistersofthedivinesavior.org
414.466.0810 ext. 229

World-wide need.
Limitless possibilities.
SALVATORIANS
Apostles for our times.
www.salvatorians.com

Racine Dominicans
committed to truth/compelled to justice
Searching for
-a new path?
Contact Karen Vollmer, O.P.
262-639-4100
vocations@racinedominicans.org
www.racinedominicans.org

Franciscan Sisters
of Perpetual Adoration
Modern Lives. Sacred Traditions.
COME AND SEE
with FSPA!
March 8-9, 2008
June 7-8, 2008
For more information,
e-mail Sister Dorothy:
dorothy@fspa.org

We invite
you
WALK with Us
to join us
on our
Faith
Journeys
Sisters of
St. Francis
of Assisi
414-744-1160
vocdir@lakeosfs.org www.lakeosfs.org
3221 S. Lake Dr., St. Francis, WI 53235

Apostolic Lifestyle -

BOOKS:
In Good Company: The Fast Track from the Corporate World to Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, Fr. James Martin, SJ, & *Friends in the Lord: Exploring Consecrated Discipleship*, Fr. Tom Feeley, CSC
DVDs:
Dead Man Walking, Romero, The Mission & Keeping the Faith