

SEEKING GOD: ONE WOMAN'S JOURNEY CONTINUES

Getting Reacquainted

January 11, 2019: My name is Karen Rose. I'm a Benedictine sister at Saint Benedict's Monastery in Minnesota. I made first profession of monastic promises (vows) on July 11, 2009, and perpetual profession three years later on July 11, 2012. Before making perpetual profession, I wrote a blog for six months sharing my experience of why I felt called to monastic life and the ups and downs of the road.

It's now ten years since I made first profession and I decided to write a blog reflecting on my experience as a professed sister. I'll be keeping it for six months again, so the last blog will be published on July 11, 2019.

This first week, I thought I should reacquaint you with who I am. I come from the United Kingdom. I was brought up as an Anglican, but knew from the age of 12 that I wanted to be a Catholic. I took instruction whilst a student studying philosophy and theology, and was received into the Catholic Church when I was 20. Following my BA, I worked for 18 months as a nursing assistant at a hospice in London and eventually trained as a Registered Nurse. Most of my career was spent in healthcare research, concentrating on quality of life issues for patients and families. I obtained an MSc in 1992 and a PhD in 1996. I always saw work as being something which should flow out of my faith and convictions. I guess healthcare work fulfilled that theoretically but, while I have certainly experienced great satisfaction from some of the work I did, I always felt that something was missing. I wanted more.

By 2005, I had reached a stage in my life when I knew that I wanted to simplify it, pare it down and have more space for prayer and for God. I'll just pause at this point to say that I was, in many ways, very happy. I was blessed to have close, loving and supportive relationships, opportunities to travel and recreate in ways that I found satisfying and life-giving, and work that had the potential to help others. I wouldn't describe myself as being overly religious, in the sense that I wasn't very involved in parish life and had periods when I didn't attend church. However, I spent quite a lot of time talking to God, made a retreat occasionally and was blessed with friends who, whatever their religious belief and practice, took their inner life seriously and with whom I could explore issues about faith and the meaning of life. There just kept being this inner "voice" that was saying, "There must be something more."

So, how did I get to Saint Benedict's Monastery? I will be honest and say that for the previous ten years the thought had come to me periodically that maybe I was called to religious life, but I NEVER wanted to be a nun, so I always pushed it away with a "Why would I want to do that?" I had certainly never looked for any order to enter. If I had, I would have looked in England, so the ideas of 'monastery-me-America' were not connected in my mind. I came for a two-week stay in the monastery's Studium program (details at www.sbm.osb.org) in the summer of 2005 to work on a research paper and to investigate some healthcare questions comparing US practice to UK practice. I never dreamed that I was coming to what would turn out to be my new home.

Karen Rose, OSB