

**VOCATION NEWS
FROM THE DOMINICAN SISTERS OF PEACE**

December 2018



Dominican
Sisters *of Peace*
Sisters and Associates
in Mission

**Vocations Office
2320 Airport Drive
Columbus, OH 43219**

Dear First name,

We hope your Advent season is filled with many blessings as you await the Christmas celebration of Jesus' birth.

This month, we're excited about introducing you to our Vocation Director, Sr. June Fitzgerald, who has been with the Vocations team for five years now. Following her interview story, you can read about Sr. Elizabeth Jackson, making her perpetual vows, and about two vocation events we attended in November.

May you find love, hope, and inspiration in your comings and goings. May God's peace surround you in your search to understand God's will for you.

*Sr. June Fitzgerald, OP; Sr. Mai-Dung Nguyen, OP; Sr. Bea Tiboldi, OP;
Mary Ellen George, OPA*

**Meet Sr. June Fitzgerald, OP
Vocation Director, Dominican Sisters of Peace**



Where were you born? My dad was a Marine serving at Camp Lejeune, NC and I was born in the Naval Medical Center on the base. My Mom still laughs that even giving birth was an exercise in the Marine way because after regaining consciousness from the delivery, a nurse popped in, put me in the crib next to her, and announced, “She’s all yours - you’re on your own!”

How many siblings do you have? Are you the youngest, oldest, middle child, only child? I am the middle child of three. I have an older brother Paul and a younger sister Amy with whom I am the best of friends.

Did you attend Catholic elementary school or high school? There were not a lot of Catholic schools in the South where I was raised, so I attended public schools growing up in North Carolina and Virginia. I made up for it after high school by attending Chestnut Hill, a small Catholic women’s college run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia. It was a welcome change after my experience at a very large public high school.

What post-high school education did you receive? I majored in Biology with the intention of entering the medical field, but when I moved back to Virginia, I worked as a purchasing agent for a hospital, then for my local county government office.

After entering the convent, I earned a Masters in Christian Spirituality from Creighton University in Omaha, and I am certified in Spiritual Direction and Directed Retreats.

How old were you when you felt the call to religious life? Well, having gone to public school, I did not know any Sisters before college, and while I liked the Sisters of St. Joseph, that wasn’t really my home. I was actually introduced to the Dominican community when I attended a retreat for young single women. I was on summer break from college, as were my siblings, and the idea of three days of peace and quiet sounded good. So I went and I kept going.

I got more serious about religious life after I graduated from college and began to attend not just retreats but also to volunteer at the retreat center in McLean, VA. I loved volunteering because I saw the “behind the scenes” of community life - the intelligence of the Sisters, their interests and involvement in contemporary social issues, and the way that they examined those issues through the lens of their faith; it was a revelation to me.

When I was about 24, Sr. Anne Lythgoe, then a Dominican Sister of St. Catherine of di Ricci, started a discernment group for young women, and my interest really blossomed. The opportunity to explore religious life, to understand the vows, to experience the community, and to get really serious about my faith, all in the company of like-minded women, was invaluable to my formation.

Who was most supportive of your becoming a sister? Did anyone try to convince you to take another path? My sister Amy’s support for my vocation never wavered; she was always happy for me and supported my decision to enter religious life. My parents were

apprehensive at first because they wanted me to be happy. They were not really familiar with consecrated religious life either, and they were concerned that I would be cloistered, away from my family and friends, and lonely. But as my discernment and formation continued, and they became familiar with community life, their fears were dispelled, and they started supporting my new life.

What attracted you to the Dominican order? Definitely the preaching. I had never seen women preach, and honestly, I was a little unsure about it. But watching how the Sisters examined the Bible, how they broke open the Word from a feminine perspective, it just made me feel alive.

What attracted me to the Dominican Sisters of Peace was their connection to the world, their concern for and involvement in the issues of the day, and their desire to sow peace and encourage justice, in the way that Christ did.

What do you like about being a religious sister? Being part of something larger than myself. As a Dominican Sister of Peace, I am one of a network of Dominicans and religious around the world. This network of Sisters may not be politically powerful, but we are powerfully persuasive when we join together to take action. As an individual I may feel very small, but with religious Sisters and Brothers around the world, I am part of a mighty voice for the voiceless and hope for the hopeless.

What has been the most challenging aspect of being a religious Sister? I am lucky because the most challenging thing about being a religious Sister is an issue that I am directly involved in improving. Like my own parents, many people misunderstand religious Sisters and religious life. They lump all religious together and assume they know about religious life from movies or TV shows. As a Vocations Minister, part of my job is to teach people about religious life, and show those both in and outside of the Church that every congregation, every order, and every Sister is unique.

What ministries have you been involved in? I served in our retreat ministry full time for 18 years. I led and directed retreats, conducted spiritual direction - whatever was needed. I was a member of Leadership for the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine di Ricci during the time that we were discerning and then transitioning to become part of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, and cared for our retired and infirm sisters at the time. As the transition moved forward, I became what I called a "relocation administrator," helping more than 25 Sisters move from one Motherhouse or convent to another.

Today, of course, I am a member of the Vocations team. I describe myself as a "talent scout and recruiter" for the Dominican Sisters of Peace. That means a lot of travel, a lot of meeting with new people, and a lot of educating, whether face to face at presentations and retreats, or online with blogs and social media.

What particular spiritual practice is most important to you in your faith life and why? I start and end my day with centering prayer. This 20 minutes of contemplative prayer lets me unite myself with God and listen to God's plans for me. It's how I ground myself for each day and re-ground myself at night.

I also find daily prayers (the Liturgy of the Hours) with my Sisters an important way of being part of the Community.

What are your hobbies and interests? I love to read. I also love to hike, and my favorite places for hiking are our beautiful national parks. I actually have the National Parks passport, and anytime I am on the road for a vocations trip (which is pretty often!) I try to take quick little side trips to see new parks or visit old favorites.

What are your thoughts on the future of religious life? I can't pretend that I can see the future, but I am excited to see what religious life will look like in ten years. The life that we were called to continues to change and evolve, but our core values, the values that were presented to us by Jesus, remain the same.

There will always be a need for hope in our world - hope that only religious life can offer. I believe that despite the challenges faced by the Church and by our organizations, even in the worst of times, women will drop their nets and choose a religious life of faith and service.



Sr. Elizabeth Jackson Makes Perpetual Vows

On the first Sunday of Advent, Sr. Elizabeth Jackson, OP, made her perpetual vows as a Dominican Sister of Peace in Oxford, MI. The Church was filled with Elizabeth's family members, Sisters from our congregation, and local parishioners of all ages. The Sisters from her local community have been very supportive to Sr. Elizabeth during her discernment, and they welcomed everyone with open arms and with a generous heart to this special occasion. Sr. Elizabeth's profession of vows is a great witness of her faith in God, in the Dominican mission and it is a witness to the world that is very much in need of God's peace.



You Talked. We Listened.

On Saturday, November 3, 2018, a panel of young people from Canisius College in Buffalo, New York, responded to questions about what they thought of their faith and the Catholic Church today. You can hear a recording of this livestreamed event [here](#).

As you listen to the questions and responses in this YouTube video, which question(s) stand out to you? Where do you find God as you listen to the video? How would you have responded to these questions? We, too, are here to listen to you. We invite you to contact our Vocation team to engage in a conversation about what these questions may stir in you as you discern God's call in your life.

National Religious Vocation Convocation

by Sr. Mai-Dung Nguyen, OP

In early November, our vocation team attended the National Religious Vocation Convocation in Buffalo, New York. Around 300 sisters, brothers, and priests participated in this event, which brought together Vocation ministers to network, study, and explore emerging trends in the ministry and in our Church.

Keynote speakers shared with us about the increasing diversity of the U.S. church, faith practices of younger generations, and statistical data of new members in U.S. religious communities. A religious vocation is from God and God continues to call people to this life. People still enter religious life each year, and new members are more diverse, representing many different nationalities and backgrounds. This is a significant difference from 20, 30, or 40 years ago. This diversity exists also in our community of the Dominican Sisters of Peace. We have new members who were born in Mexico, Vietnam, Hungary, Nigeria, and the United States, and they hold higher education degrees in public health, engineering, education, pastoral ministry, public relations, and more. We are so blessed to live in such a diverse community, and we hope that young people from other ethnic groups will join us as well.

One evening, we listened to a panel of college students from different universities, sharing their faith experiences, followed by questions and answers, prayer, and a simple dinner. What we learned from listening to these students reaffirms our efforts to make our community visible by reaching out to younger generations through Facebook and Instagram, by reaching out to families to encourage vocations, and by attending parish and college/university vocation events.

For me, it was an informative, inspiring, and challenging conference. It gave me hope and a clearer picture of how to recognize and approach young people considering religious life

and how to walk with them during the discernment process, especially with minority groups and those in Generation Z.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayer is one of the foundations of our life and we invite you to share your prayer requests with us. Please send them to vocations@oppeace.org. Please also keep us, our congregation, and your fellow discerners in prayer.

Learn more about us via our website at www.oppeace.org or on Facebook and Twitter

You can also contact our Vocation Ministers:

June Fitzgerald, OP -- jfitzgerald@oppeace.org
Mai-Dung Nguyen, OP -- mdnguyen@oppeace.org
Bea Tiboldi, OP -- btiboldi@oppeace.org



The Vatican's Pope Video

We join the universal Church and Pope Francis as we pray that consecrated religious men and women may bestir themselves, and be present among the poor, the marginalized, and those who have no voice. You can listen to and watch this month's message via this video [here](#).



Check us out on Facebook. You'll find us by searching for *Vocations: Dominican Sisters of*

Peace.

Our daily posts offer you information on a wide range of topics about prayer and social justice issues, holidays and observances, inspirational quotes from Pope Francis and other noteworthy individuals, and stories

God Calling?? Blogs

Every Thursday, we post a reflection on a variety of topics for our God Calling?? blog. You can read our blogs by viewing our [homepage](#), and clicking on "News and Blogs" on the far right side of the menu bar. In the pull-down menu, you will see our God Calling?? blog and other blog series that we encourage you



about our sister's ministries. Don't hesitate to let us know what you think about a posting in the Comments section. We'd love to hear from you!

to read so that you can become familiar with what's important to us and what we're thinking about.



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