

Sister Margie Davis, OP

Interviewed by Stephen Taylor



Talk about ‘your call’ and/or ‘your discernment.’

Sister Margie received her call when she was in her early 30s, shortly after returning to greater involvement in the church. At the time, she was living with a friend that she volunteered with often. She remembers talking with her roommate about their callings from God. Sister Margie always thought she would be a wife and mother; however, her focus shifted after watching a movie. The film was about Elizabeth Seton, the first native-born citizen of the United States to be canonized by the Catholic Church, and her own calling into religious life. This ignited a spark within Sister Margie that has burned brightly to this very day. After numerous conversations with family, friends, and mentors as well as extensive study of Saint Dominic and the order that bears his name, she knew this was what she was meant to do.

Do Sisters ever think about leaving?

Sisters have left before. It is never an easy decision; rather, it stems from not feeling quite right, or at-peace with the thought of the lifelong commitment. The final decision to leave is always talked over with numerous people, including spiritual directors. Sometimes, it can stem from personal tragedy. Despite the decision to leave, they always remain in good standing with the church and community. As with other commitments, someone could enter with good intentions, and enjoy religious life and the community therein, but something could happen and it simply doesn't work out.

Name some of your ministries you were involved in – tell about one in detail.

Sister Margie's favorite ministry was in the Dwelling Place in New York City – a homeless shelter with 16 beds. Women would remain with the community there until they were able to secure employment and get back on their feet. The shelter provided breakfast and dinner to any woman over 21, whether or not they lived there. Sister Margie lived just above the Dwelling Place alongside the other full-time employees, some of which served as case workers that helped connect the residents with the services they needed, whether it be medical, psychological, or financial.

Sister Margie then worked at Ohio Dominican in the Financial Aid office. She loved working with the students during her three-year tenure. After receiving a Master of Social Work from The Ohio State University, she began working for the Southeast Community Mental Health Center, before serving as a Social Worker for Mohun Healthcare Center as well as the Vocation Minister Director for women considering discernment. Of course, she also serves as the Campus Minister for Ohio Dominican University – a position she loves working in that has been a great growing experience for her.

It seems that religious life is 'dying' – what do you think; why do you stay?

Sister Margie does not agree with the premise that religious life is dying; instead, its rapid growth in the wake of the Second World War was an anomaly, where women were effectively left with two options: get married, or join the church. The church was very rigid in the middle of the 20th century, but changed with Vatican II, which opened alternate avenues to serving God aside from entering religious life. It's a matter of personal perspective, as many still enjoy leading a vowed life with the opportunities to live and serve in many different communities. She stays because she still hears her calling loud and clear, and loves serving God in the best way she knows how. At the moment she committed to service, she knew it would be for life.

What is one challenge you have faced throughout your ministries?

As a Dominican Sister, Sister Margie feels that women do not have the same opportunity to preach or take a more active role in the church.

What would you like to share with this group?

Once you think about discernment, or when God is calling you, it is a lifelong call. It will follow you forever. It is important to meditate, retreat, and take time for yourself to reflect on what God may be saying. It's also important to realize your gifts and how you can use them.