



My Vocation Story

I have been a Sister of Charity of St Paul the Apostle for 30 years

My early days began in a small housing estate outside Manchester. I was born in to a Catholic family. Both of my parents were from Ireland. I feel that I inherited from them, a very deeply rooted faith. This faith, as I experienced it in my early years, was strong, grounded and in many ways simple.

As a child and as a teenager I would not have considered myself as being overly religious. I did attend Mass regularly and did not really question much about God or my faith. I was happy and comfortable with the way things were.

It was during my days at teacher training college, aged 18 and onwards that I began to think more seriously about my life. I wanted to find out more about God.

I became involved in a prayer group and it was here that I began to discover more.

My faith journey took on a new dimension and I started to question my life and its direction. Something or someone was prompting me to ask:

Was my life worthwhile? Could I do something more with my life?

What that something more was, I really did not know. Whilst I enjoyed all aspects of my student life, there was a



constant searching and feeling inside me that there really was more to life.

I did not really think too seriously about becoming a religious sister. It was in April 1979, that the question of something more to life seemed to become clearer.

God was asking something of me and maybe he needed a response!

The response did come, in a way that I had not planned!

“God’s ways are certainly not our ways.”

A friend of mine who was thinking about religious life asked me to accompany her to a convent in Birmingham called Selly Park. Being a good friend, I went with her. During the weekend I met with many of the sisters and I found them all so friendly, welcoming and in fact, quite normal and ordinary!



Whilst my friend was speaking with the Novice Director, I enjoyed a walk around the beautiful gardens in the convent. At the end of the walk I was informed that the Novice Director would like to speak to me too!

I thought to myself, well that is not a problem and why not! As we were speaking, she posed a question to me. “Have you ever considered religious life as an option?” I was stunned by the question, I have to be honest.



After our chat she gave me some forms and information about the sisters. The visit to Selly Park really did disturb me in such a way that I just could not get the idea of religious life out of my head. I tried to divert the idea for a while as I was studying for my final exams for teaching and time was swallowed up revising. After the exams I started making plans about finding a teaching post but God seemed to be saying:

“I have plans for you; your plans are not my plans.”

It was while I was job hunting, I felt that God really was calling me to religious life and I just had to give it a try. So in September 1979, I entered with the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle. There was a poster, which really caught my eye in the convent, the day I entered, which simply said,

“I found what I wanted when I found the Lord.”

Over the years there have been blessings and graces too many to number. There have also been times of challenge, doubt, questions, ups and downs but I continue saying my YES to God each day as best I can, realising that he continually walks with me supporting me and guiding me along the way.

Sr. Ann Sullivan

