

Moments of Peace

Jenny Counard Boeckman '01

A personal reflection on vocation

Throughout my life I have sought to live a life that honored God. Early on I clung to the image of a God who had a set plan for my life that I simply needed to figure it out. Life and life decisions soon became more complex, and I struggled to find peace with a life full of more grey than black or white. As a person who tends to worry and second guess herself, I have found that I know God is blessing a decision when I have a moment of peace and clarity. In every major decision (marriage, career, and children) there has been at least one moment of absolute peace and clarity. Without a doubt that moment passes, and I again question my decision but I always go back to that moment, a gift from God.

“ . . . And the God who gave me that gift, I believed, would give me the insight to somehow bring it to life. Because I wanted it? No, because it could not be otherwise and still be me.”

Joan Chittister

Scarred by Struggle, Transformed by Hope

One of my moments of peace came three and a half years ago when my husband, Brian, and I decided to open ourselves up to children. Everyone around us told us we would be great parents so I silently figured that we would get pregnant rather quickly. Well after a year of “trying,” we discovered that our dream of seeing a child with my eyes and Brian’s hair would not be realized. We took time to grieve the loss of a biological child and found peace with the idea of building our family through adoption. We decided on adopting a domestic infant with the hopes that we would know the birthparents and incorporate them into our child’s life. After a year of waiting, we were blessed to meet Michelle and be in the delivery room when William Michael was born on January 22, 2006. Will was in

our home for three amazing weeks when we got the phone call that Michelle decided that she wanted to parent Will. Words cannot come close to telling what it was like to place Will in Michelle’s arms. We walked away as a mom and dad without our baby and few answers as to why. Our family and friends rushed in as we tried to make sense of the senseless.

I began to wonder if I really could trust my moments of peace. Everything was perfect. We loved Michelle, and she loved us. Will was even born on Molly’s first wedding anniversary.



AJ, Brian and Jenny in Ethiopia

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(Molly, who loved children, was one of my closest friends who died only six months before Will was born.) Through much pain and searching I have come to believe that my moment of peace was not something I made up. God was in this journey, and I believe that God wanted what was best for us, Michelle, and Will. However, Michelle was free to make her own decision. God didn't take Will from my arms. God's arms held me as my heart was torn apart.

Brian was ready to resume our journey before I was, so he took the responsibility of searching out different options. We both decided that we could not go through that pain again, so adopting a domestic infant was no longer an option. Brian emailed me the website for Children's Home Society and Family Services in Minnesota and my moment of peace came as I looked at the children from Ethiopia. By the end of June 2006 our paperwork was complete and we were awaiting our referral. On September 11, 2006, we learned that our son, Aklilu, was twelve months old. With Brian at work and me at home recovering from rotator cuff surgery, we saw our son's picture at the same time through an email. Huge, deep, beautiful eyes and a sweet, sweet face. Two and a half months later we were on a plane to Addis Abbaba, Ethiopia to meet AJ (Aklilu James). We have been together for over five months now. AJ may not look like us but he has Brian's silliness and my gentleness. I am deeply honored to be his mom.

After we returned from Ethiopia and settled into

life as a family of three, I thought about one of my favorite quotes and how it really captured my belief that adoption is a vocation. Frederick Buechner said, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." How better could adoption be explained? Simply put, I had a desire to be a mom and AJ needed a forever mom. I have found no greater joy than being AJ's mom and seeing him grow in confidence and trust because of our love and commitment to him. My deep gladness and his deep hunger meet every day. I see this happening all the time, but among my favorites happens when I rock him to sleep. He takes my cheeks with his little hands and brings my face close to his so he can kiss me on the lips. Yep, this is the life I was called to.

The other night, I was rereading one of my favorite books, *Scarred by Struggle, Transformed by Hope* by Joan Chittister. I came across a paragraph that so beautifully captures my journey toward becoming a mom as well as the sense that being a mom through adoption is my vocation. She writes this regarding a decision, made for her, that changed the course of her life, "Never for a moment... did I think that God had changed my life. I knew exactly who had changed my life. All I knew is that I had been born with something God-given. And the God who gave me that gift, I believed, would give me the insight to somehow bring it to life. Because I wanted it? No, because it could not be otherwise and still be me."



Intersections is an occasional newsletter published by the Program of Faith, Learning, and Vocation.

The editor invites your comments, suggestions, and contributions.

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AJ and Jenny enjoying AJ's first trip to Zestys!

2007-08 ALIVE Team Interns and Apprentices Announced

Rebecca Welch, Assistant Director FLV

The Program of Faith, Learning and Vocation is excited to announce the names of our '07-'08 ALIVE Team. ALIVE (Active Leaders In Vocation Exploration) Team Members serve in the residence halls on campus as peer ministers. They plan programs and events that engage fellow students in discussions on spirituality, prayer experiences, community building activities, etc.

The following upper class students will be serving their peers in their assigned halls:

Rachelle Barina '09	Student Coordinator
Kate Botsford '10	MMM Hall
Caitlin Froemming '09	Sensenbrenner Hall
Sam Hanson '10	VMC and Michels Hall
Alexa Hollnagel '10	VMC and Michels Hall
Angie Knutson '09	MMM Hall
Lindsay Koeppel '09	Bergstrom Hall
Jesse Sandmeier '10	Mad/Lor Hall
Melissa Schisler '10	Burke Hall
Sarah Sportiello '09	MMM Hall

Nearly forty incoming SNC students applied for ALIVE apprenticeships. Apprentices live and work in the first-year halls with the intern assigned to that hall. We are excited that so many students were interested in a position of spiritual leadership on campus and welcome the following students to the ALIVE Team:

Beth Baumann	Sensenbrenner Hall
Erica Behm	Bergstrom Hall
Cody Comerford	Burke Hall
Kevin Funk	Bergstrom Hall
Ashley Gill	Mad/Lor Hall
David Gusloff	Mad/Lor Hall
Karen Henao-Carbonell	Burke Hall
Janelle Wanta	Sensenbrenner Hall

Summer Ministry Awards and Ministry Interns

Julie Massey, Director FLV

When describing the work of the Program of Faith, Learning & Vocation to those new to our campus, we often talk about two distinct, though equally valued, areas of focus. On the one hand, we are significantly invested in the process of helping all members of the college community to explore their significant life commitments through the lens of vocation. This focus applies to all potential professions, committed relationships, and community involvements. At the same time our Program is invested in work that applies to a smaller sector of the campus. That is the work of supporting students seriously contemplating professional ministry, either lay or ordained. Students exploring a call to ministry may apply to become involved with our program, either as academic year ministry interns or as recipients of a summer ministry award.

Students who will be spending a significant portion of their summer in a ministry setting, and participating in pre and post-summer reflection experiences, are awarded a modest scholarship. Our 2007 Ministry Award recipients are:

Terra Alvarez
Rachelle Barina
Billy Korinko
Linda Maier
Ann Pederson
Tanya Simon

Students who will work in ministry internships in the community during the academic year, and participating in ongoing formation activities, are awarded a scholarship and small stipend. Our 2007 - 2008 Ministry Interns are:

Rachelle Barina
Billy Korinko
Justin Krueger
Linda Maier
Tanya Simon
Jacob Sircy

You can learn more about either opportunity on our website at: <http://www.snc.edu/vocation/exploring/>.

Look what we're up to!

Summer Retreat-Seminar 2 — June 11 thru 13, 2007 —
The Norbertine Center for Spirituality, St. Norbert Abbey.

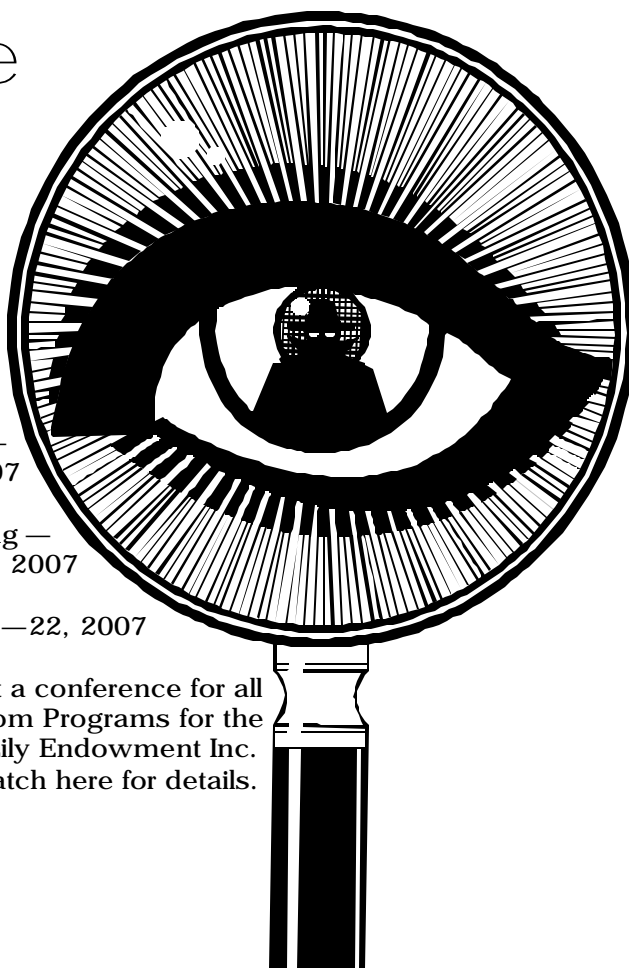
Alumni Retreat on Vocation — June 15 & 16, 2007 — The
Norbertine Center for Spirituality, St. Norbert Abbey.

ALIVE Team Interns return for fall training —
August 19, 2007

ALIVE Team Apprentices arrive for fall training —
August 21, 2007

Ministry Intern formation retreat September 21—22, 2007

The Program of Faith, Learning, and Vocation will host a conference for all
Catholic Schools who have received grants from Programs for the
Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV), an initiative of Lily Endowment Inc.
Please watch here for details.



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