

Experience with the Sisters of Providence

By: Jenny Lam

Have you ever wondered what the life of a religious sister is like?

I was blessed to have attended the Come and See experience with the Sisters of Providence in July 2018. It was an unforgettable experience that helped shape my spiritual journey tremendously. Upon arriving at the Providence Centre, I was greeted by Sister Mae, the vocations director, who warmly invited me to feel at home during my stay.

I went into the experience with an open heart and an open mind. It was by God's Providence that led me there- originally, I was scheduled to work for the duration of the Come and See; however, by the grace of God, I was able to easily switch my shifts with another co-worker. As well, I was initially only accompanying a friend to the Providence Centre to help her feel more comfortable during her discernment process, but God quickly changed my perspective and allowed my heart to discern if I was called to religious life or marriage.

The week was filled with many beautiful experiences. There was a group of 9 young women that were part of the Come and See and we all became fast friends while we journeyed with each other. Every morning and evening, we would join the sisters in the Liturgy of Hours. We would also have all our meals together and had the opportunity to chat with the sisters who lived at the Providence Centre. All of the sisters were so welcoming and loving, always smiling and ready to share about their life stories.

Daily mass was always lovely, it was truly enjoyable to attend mass amongst the sisters in the peaceful chapel. After that, our program during the day consisted of various religious sisters sharing their experience in their vocation, exploring the charism of the Sisters of Providence, learning about their founder Blessed Mother Gamelin and discovering different types of prayer. We were also given lots of prayer time to contemplate the Lord's promptings that we had received throughout the week. One of the most deeply profound moments I experienced was during our day of silent retreat, where I heard the Lord's voice for the first time, speaking to me about my discernment. While I was impatient to have my future vocation revealed, God spoke to me gently and patiently, saying "not now" to show me that He was drawing me closer in order to get to know Him more and that the will of God is to be revealed in the future.

We also had the chance during the week to serve in ministries that the Sisters of Providence were involved in. Some of the young women helped out at the food bank, while I had the privilege of serving at the Marian Centre soup kitchen for those who are less fortunate. On one of our last evenings at the Providence Centre, our Come and See group put on a talent show to express our gratitude to the sisters for their hospitality and it was such a blessing to see the smiling faces of all the sisters as we celebrated our time together.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the Sisters of Providence for the Come and See experience. I cherish the memories that were made and I am grateful for the knowledge that I gained. I made wonderful connections with the Sisters of Providence to last a lifetime!

If you are discerning the religious life, I encourage you to take a leap of faith to attend a Come and See! A piece of advice that I received from Sister Joan during my stay is this: "Whether you are called to single life, consecrated life or married life, getting to know God is of importance in order to be a woman of faith". Looking back on my experience, it has helped strengthen my prayer life, bring me closer to God, and it has allowed the foundation to be built to help bring clarity in my vocational calling.

Thank you Lord for the blessed Come and See experience and thank you Sisters of Providence for hosting me!