

## **The Story of a Vocation**

Once upon a time a little girl was born on 8<sup>th</sup> December in the north of France while the snow still covered the earth with its white mantle. Her parents called her Zoe in thanksgiving for the gift of life.

This is how the story of my vocation began, rooted in a happy family life with brothers and sisters where the memory of family prayer before an icon of Christ was normal.

One day while I was still only 11 years old, a Sister came into class to speak of her vocation ... Deep within my heart resounded the words: **“Why not me?”**

Whilst at Secondary School, I couldn't understand what was happening within me but I continued to pray intensely: **“May your will be done”**.

I made my confirmation, participated in Church activities – little by little my faith was being nourished. The Lord scattered little signs along my path:

One Summer evening whilst on holiday, whilst I prayed in the local village Church, I heard interiorly a mysterious “word”: **“It is not you who have chosen me, but I who have chosen you”**. This phrase overwhelmed me and I experienced a deep conversion like St. Augustine in the Garden.

Later on I discovered with great surprise that the phrase came from the gospel of St. John and when I continued to read the text, **“what I want is for you to bear fruit, fruit that will last”**.

Little by little I understood that God was calling me to a life of fruitfulness.

I understood that my name “Zoe” which means “life” already contained the meaning of my vocation: to give ones life to the One who has shown us how to give our lives to the very end ...

I studied in Paris and at the University of Essex. During this time the Holy Spirit continued to work within me and I understood that the Call of God is a call to life and inexpressible joy ... that the Lord lives in my deepest soul and consequently knows me and what is best for me. I began to understand the degree to which giving ones life to Christ liberates us.

Certain things were enormously helpful to me in following this path to God: Spiritual direction; retreats, pilgrimages, witness of others, the sacraments, and underlying all this: the Word of God.

The Word of God became more and more important: “Don't be afraid” - “Rise” - “He is calling you ...” - “Cast your net deep” - “You will be the joy of your God” – “Enter into the joy of your Master” .... I gave thanks for all these little “lights” on my path which led me to the conviction: **“I will be a Sister”**.

It was at this point that I arrived, whilst still continuing my Teacher Training to a

community of **The Oblates of the Assumption** – a community of Sisters and young women “in vocational discernment”. Here, too, I discovered the masculine branch of the Order whom the community joined for daily mass. I experienced an extraordinary convergence between the Charism of the Assumption lived among the Oblates and my own aspirations:

- a love for Christ, The Virgin Mary and the Church – to be deepened continually and taken “to the world”
- an ardent desire for the coming of Gods Kingdom between us and around us
- lived internationally and inter-generationally in our communities
- an openness to the modern world with a passion for mission

I became a Postulant. This first step created harmony within me and I experienced joy. In September 2000 after having completed 2 years Noviciate, I made my first vows and subsequently my Perpetual Vows with enormous trust, not counting on my own strength, but on God, my Rock and my Citadel. May the Lord continue in me the work He has begun.