

Sister Caterina professes perpetual vows

By Sister Caterina Maria Adelaide Curth

It was early in elementary school at St. Francis de Sales School in Houma that I first realized stirrings in my heart toward religious life. By the time I was in about fifth or sixth grade, I had my first vocational conversation with a religious sister who had come to a mission. After Mass, I found her in the back of the cathedral and shared my desire to be a nun. I discovered that not only did I share a birthday with this sister, but her community also hosted an annual "nun camp" for middle-school girls! With that, I was off every summer for the next several years to Ohio to hang out with nuns and other young discerners.

One year at camp, Mother Superior acquired a bag of holy medals, and one of them contained a relic. She let each of us "nun-campers" choose a medal at random to see who would get the relic. I made a prayer that went something like this: "Lord, I want to be a nun, but if you also want this for me, I want the relic!" And so it happened! I got the relic and wore it for many years as a sign of my vocation.

The next major hurdle in discernment was figuring out which religious community I was called to. There were not many options within this diocese, and resources for discernment were also very limited, so I began searching elsewhere. In 2010, as I was about to enter my sophomore year at Vandebilt Catholic High School in Houma – the Lord arranged for me to meet someone. This meeting would pave the way for truly understanding my vocation. One Sunday at my home parish of the Cathedral of St. Francis de Sales in Houma, a friar was present for Mass – a friar named Antonio who had a distinctive circular haircut and a bizarre Australian-Italian accent. I once again couldn't resist the opportunity to speak with visiting religious, so after Mass I shared with him my profound desire to consecrate myself to the Lord. He spoke a little about his community of the Little Friars and Little Nuns of Jesus and Mary, in particular about their radical vow of poverty and their hitchhiking as a means of evangelization. My heart was set ablaze with the question: *I want to radically give myself to the Lord like that! But, could I actually do it?*

The next year, I met this same friar along with the Founder of the community, Friar Volantino, again at Mass at St. Francis. Finally, as they had officially decided to open houses in our diocese, this friar returned with two sisters, and they were there again at Mass! When I saw the sisters, it was like love at first sight. On the drive home, I officially declared to my family: "I think this is the community I will join." After finishing high school and rushing through a bachelor's degree from Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, I entered this religious community in September 2016. After other powerful signs of confirmation from the Lord and over six years of formation, I had the honor of professing my perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience on Jan. 1, 2023, at the altar of this beloved cathedral. **BC**



Photos by Maegan Martin

