

My Call and the Holy Spirit's Sense of Humor

How did the Holy Spirit get me into this?

A priest colleague reports that he went to an ecumenical prayer service in the late 1960's. When he walked out, he knew he must work for Christian Unity. He is still serving as a consultant for Catholic and Protestant seminaries.

A Pentecostal acquaintance had been resisting involvement in the movement toward Christian Unity for years. Finally, perhaps in exasperation, the Holy Spirit woke him up in the middle of the night and told him to get moving. He is now an international leader in ecumenical friendships and dialogue.

My personal call was not so dramatic.

The Holy Spirit spoke to me through two Episcopalian friends. Each encouraged me to put my name up for consideration as Director of the Consortium. Several years previously, I had helped initiate the Consortium strategic plan—I never, ever, thought that I would be implementing it.

The Spirit's little joke on me. I believe that the Holy Spirit has a 'wry' sense of humor. Humor is an aspect of the joy of the Spirit. ***The Spirit had a plan—for me.***

Of course there is more to it than I just mentioned. After the question was raised I entered into a period of discernment.

Today there is a fairly commonplace tendency to 'throw the mantle of the Spirit' over our own thoughts or wishes. We say that the Spirit made us do it.

On the other hand, we can have the tendency *to overlook or avoid* the guidance of the Spirit—as I do sometimes.

I wanted to avoid these dangers. I was open to ecumenical administration.

- But was this the call or should I perhaps return to full-time teaching? I love teaching.
- The Consortium was in transition. I wasn't sure I was the right person to lead.

One way to aid our judgment is to consult spiritual friends. They bring a greater objectivity about the talents we have and a broader view of the overall good of the community.

My friends affirmed that I was not being self-serving. They helped to calm my fears. They also raised an important question: **Why wouldn't you do it?**

I know that the Spirit often leads me on paths that I would not have chosen. These paths challenged my tendency to want to be comfortably settled and in control.

I decided to apply and to commit myself for a few years and see what happened. I had a sense of inner peace and joy in becoming executive director.

I am now in my eleventh year. The Consortium has prospered and expanded—in ways I never anticipated. I have done much more teaching—for the Consortium and its members—than I ever expected.

How did the Spirit get me into this? The Spirit spoke through the inner movements of grace and the wise counsel of friends.

Be careful. ***The Spirit may be calling you, with humor and irony, to work for Christian Unity.***