Bethany House Home for the Summer Reflection

As my spring semester drew to an end, I began to wonder what to do with my summer. Religious life is something I had been considering for some time, and the question had grown especially in my college years. After some providential conversations with friends who had lived in the Bethany House in the past, I reached out to the Vocations Office for more information. After talking to my Spiritual Director and the Handmaids, I decided to apply for the Home for the Summer program.

While I had been in contact with a few different communities during my discernment, the Bethany House allowed me to meet a different community every week, and really consider their individual charisms. There were a few communities that struck me more than others and I was able to take note of them and bring it to prayer. House discussions also led me to consider the other communities I have known through the years and ask what specifically drew me to them.

The eight weeks of the Bethany House were quiet weeks. Yes, I was working a job, but even that work was done mostly in silence, and that silence lent itself to prayer both during our communal times of prayer and at other moments throughout the day. Because of this, a space was opened to really discern, and ask the Lord what he wants of me. Life in community helped me see many of my strengths and weaknesses while also providing a space where I could be truly vulnerable with my sisters, myself, and with God. I often found myself thinking about a community of nuns with whom I had been put in contact by one of my professors. My sisters in the Bethany House were a great support as I realized that I wanted to get to know this community more and make a visit to see if this might be where the Lord is calling me.

At the end of the summer, the nuns invited me to visit them, which I was able to do in October. I felt at home quite quickly upon arriving and found myself to be very joyful in the simpleness of their life as I lived it with them. There were many graces from the summer for which I gave thanks during my visit, especially in returning to the virtues and Scripture verses that we prayed with through the summer. At the end of my visit, I wanted to move forward in discerning with this community. Since that first visit, I have made another longer visit with them, and have begun the application process to enter as a postulant next January if that is God’s will.

While the seeds of my vocation were not necessarily planted in the Bethany House this summer, I do believe that the Bethany House provided the fertile ground for the little sprouts of my vocation to begin to take root in a deeper way which has allowed me to cast out into the deep and make the necessary acts of faith to move forward in my discernment and for this I am extremely grateful.