

To My St. Francis Xavier Parish and School Family,

January 28, 2019

I write this to you with a bittersweet heart yet with deep peace to inform you that after much prayer and discernment I have decided to leave the convent and return home. These past six months have been a beautiful journey with the Lord - falling more in love with Him and learning much about myself. I am writing to you to share with you some of my experience.

I have LOVED both my prayer time (5 ½ hours a day!) and community life with the sisters, as I began to see a few months ago that the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, as well as the way of life for a religious, were something very objectively beautiful. However, as I tried to live them subjectively I began to experience inner frustration rather than joy and peace. In all good discernment one needs to give it its proper time. In taking such time and through the counsel of both my spiritual director and my superior, I had decided to give it another month and try to further discern this opportunity from the Lord to grow and to sacrifice, so that I might perceive this challenge in God's great love. Since the month has been completed, I have received clarity that this vocation is not what the Lord is calling me to.

I want you to know that I regret *nothing*! I knew with total certainty that I needed to enter the convent in order to further and more fully discern, and I have successfully done that! This journey has been beyond beautiful, challenging, and at times scary, but through it all I have only grown in deeper trust of the Lord's loving plan.

I am sure many of you are curious to know what life outside of the convent will hold for me. I learned with certainty that my heart is in Catholic Education. I have missed many things being in the convent and next to family I can confidently say that teaching was a close second. My plan is to come back home temporarily and substitute teach in various schools for the remainder of the school year while I discern where the Lord is leading me next.

I want you to know that I have been praying for you all daily and that I have felt the faithfulness of your prayer support (as well as your letter writing). I hope this news does not bring you disappointment, but rather much joy that I have courageously followed the Lord into the convent and am continuing to confidently follow His lead. The only thing I have ever desired is to do what HE wants, and I have confidence that He needed me here for a time, but is now asking me to follow Him elsewhere. As you can imagine this is a very bittersweet time for me. As mentioned, I love both my prayer here and the sisters. There is much I will miss about being a religious, but I trust Him and I know that He will provide and show me what's next. If you see me around the parish in the next few weeks please feel free to ask me questions if you have them! Know of my continued prayers and my abundant gratitude for all your support of my discernment... I could NOT have done it without you. I ask for your prayers as I transition home and for the grace to continue to follow Him with complete abandonment to what HE is asking.

See you in the Eucharist.

Love,

Haley Ketschke