

Someone once said, “There are two great days in our life; the 1<sup>st</sup> is the day we’re born, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> is the day we understand why.” Well the first day is easy, we have no control over it. But the 2<sup>nd</sup> is more difficult to predict when or even if it will come. Although many of us eventually just accept our destiny, we never really understand the why of it.

But all of you are gathered here today because have taken a huge step in your journey to understand why. You have heard someone whispering your name in the night and recognized it as the voice of the Holy Spirit. The call may have been the result of a faith experience that lingered and caused you to prayerfully discern where this new path would lead you. Or you may have had a “Nike Just Do It!” moment. Whatever the case, it’s your responses that have led you to this moment of commitment to something that goes beyond careers or life achievements. You have each accepted a sacred invitation from God to serve and heal God’s people as Faith Community Nurses.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus says, **“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”** Jesus reveals a God who no longer wants to be invisible or seem unapproachable; through Jesus Christ, God becomes accessible to everyone, no exceptions! You as FCN’s have been empowered as his surrogates to go out in the kingdom and boldly spread this good news by word and action.

Each of you have been given unique gifts to take into your parish communities. The Holy Spirit will guide you and allow you to heal the sick and cause signs and wonders through the name of Jesus Christ. Let this work become the predominant theme of your life. Be respectful and empathetic to all those you encounter and always be kind – perhaps our biggest challenge these days.

Spiritual needs apply to people of all ages, so strive to let everyone have a sense, a belief, from the work you do that God never gives up on them. As FCN’s, you are ideally placed to give hope to your parish community; this is something nurses do well, often without realizing it.

Victor Frankl, in writing of his experiences in a Nazi concentration camp said, “*We are not destroyed by suffering; we are destroyed by suffering without meaning.*” One of the most difficult challenges you’ll face is helping people find meaning in the midst of physical as well as spiritual suffering. Try to be short on answers, and long on support. Be compassionate! And always listen!

Compassionate service will call you to walk with people in the midst of their pain, to be partners with your patients and to be attentive to all dimensions of their care: body, mind, and spirit.

Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen says that helping, fixing, and serving represent three different ways of seeing life. When you help, you see life as weak. When you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole. Fixing and helping may be the work of the ego, but service is the work of the soul.

And always remember, she says, that physical care and spiritual care are not exact sciences nor a matter of your own expertise. You have been given healing gifts from the Holy Spirit to be paid forward. As medicine women know too that though your own wounds can make you vulnerable, they will allow you to gently treat the wounds of others and trust the mystery of healing, not as a theory from nursing school but from your lived experience.

Vulnerability is fertile ground for love and belonging. People who know they belong usually display great degrees of compassion and generally connect well with others. Vulnerability is letting our self be seen without pretense; it loves whole-heartedly; it practices gratitude and most importantly, it knows that by the grace of God, **I am enough!**

My friends, let today be the 2<sup>nd</sup> best day of your life because today you said yes when, **God called you by name to become a FCN!** Thank you good and faithful servants.