

# Br Gerald's vocational experience

For some of us the decision to enter the monastery wasn't at all an easy choice. I first wrote to this Abbey requesting vocation information when I was in my early 20s. That literature got put in the back of



a dresser drawer for the next 10 years or so, but I knew that someday I would seriously address the issue of a monastic vocation and perhaps make a decision. When I was in my early 30s I was in a good job with a promising future and was pretty content overall, enjoying not only the job but my weekends especially. One day the owner of that firm asked me if I would be willing to become the operations manager. I said I would reflect on the offer and get back to him. It was as though the rug had been pulled out from under me because I knew that if I accepted that management position, I would be solid in that company for the rest of my career. Front and center loomed that monastic vocation issue again, but this time it demanded resolution: this was the either/or time for me to decide on a career path or to move toward possibly entering the Abbey here at Lafayette. I decided for the latter and gave the company my notice. They were shocked at my decision, of course, and asked that I extend my period-of-notice from 2 weeks to 6 weeks in order to train those who would be replacing me. Fine, I did that, then took a year off to reflect on and pursue the matter of a religious vocation. My parents had just retired, so the three of us spent a very enjoyable year together. Six months into that year I made my first visit to Guadalupe Abbey, soon accepting the offer to come for a month to experience the life from the inside. The monks were great, friendly and helpful, but I felt like a foreigner, not sure what I really should be doing when I wasn't at an assigned task or in church or at meals.

Nonetheless, I made the decision to enter the Community, even though I largely felt blind about where it would lead. Taking one day at a time, resolving to just focus on this day and what I'm doing now...each now...was what made the monastic journey possible for me. It seems to be working, after 35 years now!

# The matter of 'God's Will'...

Each of us generally is intent on wanting to do God's Will, of basically following the right path. With regard to deciding upon a monastic vocation, however, a person can be tempted to see 'God's Will' as more of a solid wall than a comfortable invitation. This monk faced that dilemma with an expectation of receiving some sort of sign—a real confirmation—when it came to making a decision in favor of a monastic vocation. No sign came. What did come was the understanding that **God opts for me** rather than for my choice of a path in life; He will be with me if I resolve to become a monk, or He will be with me if my decision is to remain a secular. THAT is supportive love!