

I Am Your Song

A REFLECTION BY ELISA SCHNEIDER

Twenty-three years ago—it seems so much longer—I migrated from corporate America to the campuses of Saint John's and Saint Benedict's. My Catholic upbringing had taught me the importance and value of working hard, being honest, holding family and friends dear to my heart, and always remembering that someone needs help. Settling into this Benedictine community fit like a glove. I found this place cozy, protective, familiar, and flexible.



Risen Christ, sculpture by Catherine Smith, c. 1965. Photo: Eric Pohlman, O.S.B.

The opening verses of one of my favorite hymns that we sing frequently at our Sunday morning Mass, “Servant Song” by Sister Donna Marie McGargill, O.S.M., has always been at the forefront of my mind.

What do you want of me, Lord?
Where do you want me to serve you?
Where can I sing your praises?
I am your song.

In my early career, I struggled to discover what God was calling me to do. As I worked outside of our home, raised our three children with my husband, and volunteered in church, school, and community activities, I still wondered if I was following God's will. It took me a while to recognize, appreciate, and understand that God was speaking to me all the time. The divine voice was in every task, project, relationship, and event into which I put my time and energy. Soon I learned to trust that whatever I was doing, I just had to be in the moment, be intentional, and see God's hand working in and through me.

As our fourth child entered our lives, I really began to feel the effects of this Benedictine community. Balancing my time among work, family, church, and community started to blend all into one. For most of my life I had been driven to do more, do it faster, do it better, and only occasionally stop to take a breath. I have now learned to savor the luxury of slowing down, to take time to pray, to be the listening ear, to let go. God is in control, and as the rest of the song goes: "I hear you call my name, Lord, and I am moved within me. Your Spirit stirs my deepest self. Sing your songs in me."

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