

with family life. Without this, it would be impossible to live consecrated chastity. Giving up the chance of marriage is not running away—it is, instead, taking it to a higher level and witnessing to the union with God which is the destiny of everyone in the world, married or not!

***Q. I have done some crazy things in my life! I don't feel very holy or religious, so how could I be a nun?***

**A.** How crazy is this—a photo of me taken on a day trip to Spain to support an Irish football team that had no chance of winning? Yes, I was a soccer fan and travelled up and down the country, and abroad, to support my team. It was fun, but it also taught me a



lot about the ups and downs of life. And so, it was an important part of me, part of God's plan. There are all sorts of characters and personalities in Carmel. That's what makes life interesting, and what brings great variety to the Community. I don't think anyone feels "holy" when they enter. That would, in fact, be the wrong attitude to join—it would be full of pride. What is important, however, is the desire to offer yourself,

as you are, to God. It is God who made each of us and it is God who loves us just as we are, no matter what crazy things we have done in our past life!



I believe that God continues to call all types of young women to the Carmelite vocation.. If you would like to read our other vocation pamphlets; if you have any other questions, or would like to find out more about the Carmelite vocation, please contact:

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# Me? A Carmelite?!

by Sr. Mary Fionnuala

Kilmacud Carmel



I didn't think someone like  
me could be a nun!  
But God had other plans!

Here are my answers to some  
common questions and  
objections that people make  
about entering religious life!

**Q. I worked hard for my degree and career—isn't it a waste to give it all up?**

**A.** Nothing is wasted in Carmel—you would be amazed how God can use the skills that are developed in college or in a working career. There are many different types of qualifications found in Carmel—accountants, teachers, lawyers, scientists, etc... My degrees were in chemistry, and of course I no longer work in a laboratory. But I often use my analytical and computer skills. My ability to investigate broken pieces of equipment and solve technical problems was certainly learnt during my working life. Only God knows how my training will be used in the future!



**Q. I love travelling the world and seeing new places! How could I possibly live in one place for the rest of my life?**



**A.** This photo was taken during a sponsored hike in the Namib desert in 2002! I travelled to

many countries before I entered—all over Europe, America, China and Africa! I loved seeing all these new and unusual places. But there came a stage when the thrill of travelling faded a bit—and I realised that I could travel for a lifetime and never see everything I wanted to see, and that there are other ways to embrace and discover the world. St. Therese went on a long trip through Europe to Rome as a young girl, and she writes in her autobiography how she carried the memories of all those places into Carmel with her. Nobody can ever take away the memories of the places I've seen, and I am glad that I travelled when I did. Now I know that I don't need to do that anymore to feel fulfilled.

**Q. What about my friends? I think I would miss going out and socialising with them..**

**A.** Yes, I miss my friends and the things that I used to do with them. My best friends have been really great at keeping in touch with me—writing, emailing and visiting. However, I have made lots of new friends. Community life is extremely sociable! You would have to experience it to believe me. There are often visitors from other monasteries, from overseas, priests and



missionaries coming to share about their work and occasional courses to attend. Also, living in constant close contact with the same group of people means that sometimes I am very glad to have a quiet day to myself!

**Q. I love children and always dreamt of getting married and having my own family. Does that mean I can't have a vocation to be a nun?**

**A.** Not necessarily. Many nuns felt this way at one point of their lives. This is a photo of me with my nephew Matthew, taken only a week before I entered Carmel. I too always thought that I would have my own family and I miss seeing my nephews growing up. But it has been a great surprise to me to realise that as a member of community, everyone else's family in a sense becomes mine too and I have met many children since I entered! Many families visit us, new babies are brought for dedications and children on their First Holy Communion day. We hear news about school trips, exams and holidays. As a religious, it is vital to have a healthy respect for marriage and family life, and to keep in contact

