

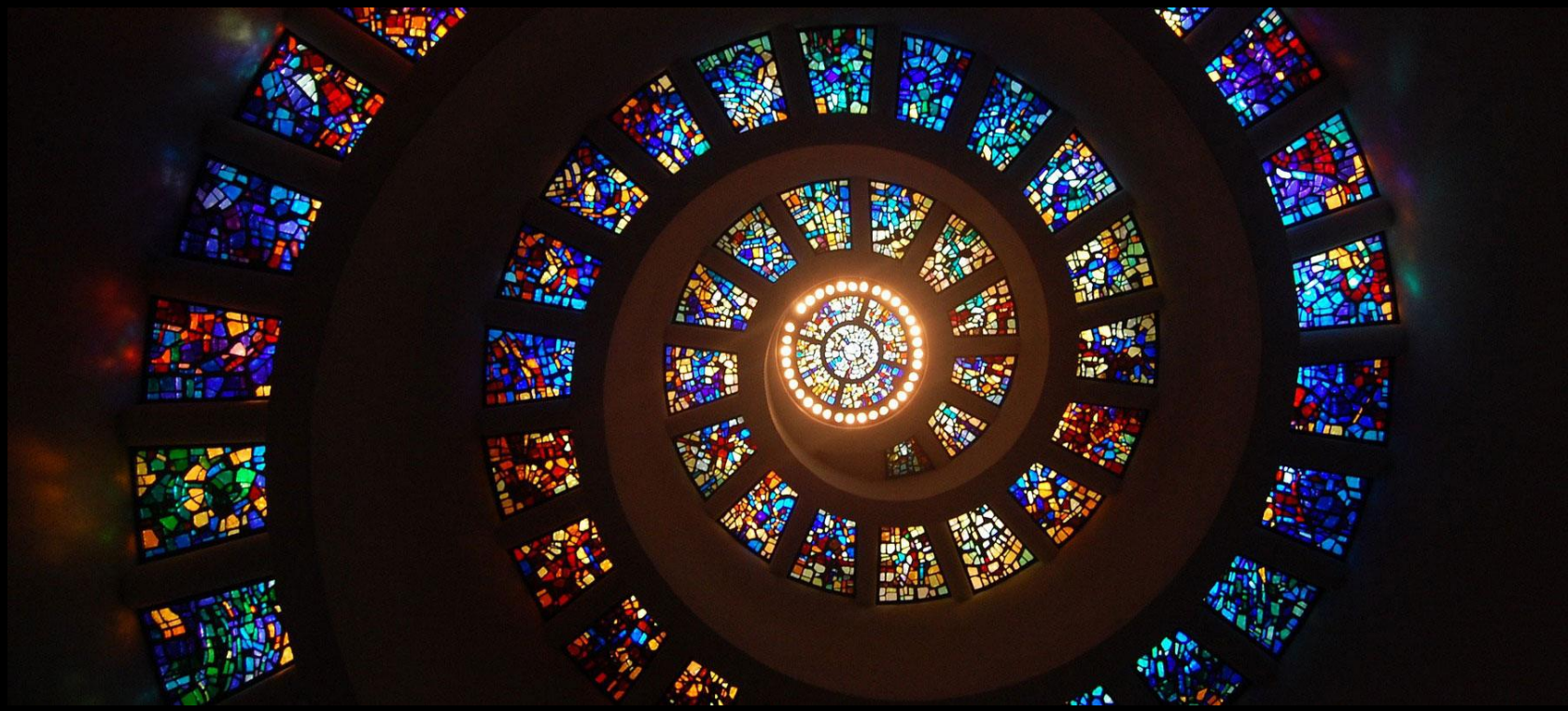
Living the SSND Charism 'Throughout The Whole'



Daniel P. Horan, PhD

*Professor of Philosophy, Religious Studies and Theology
Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind.*





Part Two

Spirituality: Experiencing the Transcendent


II. Living Spirituality

I. What is *Spirituality*?

II. The Connection between **Spirituality** and **Charism**

III. Making it **Personal**, Making it **Practical**

IV. Small and Large Group Discussions

A person with long dark hair, wearing a light-colored long-sleeved top, black leggings, and black shoes, is walking away from the camera on a paved path. The path leads through a lush green valley towards a mountain range under a grey, overcast sky. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

I. What is **spirituality?**

Use of the term 'Spirituality'



Origins of the term

Pneuma (Gr) → *Spiritualitas* (Ln) → “Spirituality”



"Christian spirituality is the daily, communal, lived expression of one's ultimate beliefs, characterized by openness to the self-transcending love of God, self, neighbor, and world through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit"

—Prof. Elizabeth Dreyer

"In Christian terms, spirituality refers to the way our fundamental values, lifestyles, and spiritual practices reflect particular understandings of God, human identity, and the material world as a context for human transformation."

—Prof. Philip Sheldrake

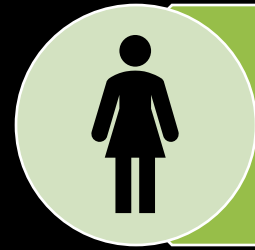
"Spirituality has to do with our experiencing of God and with the transformation of our consciousness and our lives as outcomes of that experience...It is *visionary, sacramental, relational, and transformational.*"

—Fr. Richard McBrien

"Christian spirituality, then, is personal participation in the mystery of Christ begun in faith, sealed by baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, nourished by the sharing of the Lord's Supper, which the community celebrated regularly in memory of Him who is truly present wherever his followers gathered, and was expressed by a simple life of universal love that bore witness to life in the Spirit and attracted others to faith."

—Sr. Sandra Schneiders, IHM

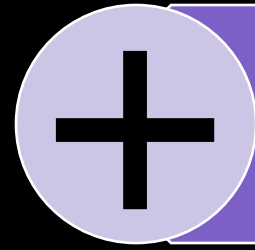
There are several core themes that emerge across scholarly engagement with the question of the meaning of “spirituality”



Human Experience



Openness to
Transcendence (*Capax Dei*)



Personal & Communal



Transformative



II. The Connection between **Spirituality** and **Charism**

Charism ↔ Spirituality

- While all people have the capacity for the transcendent (*Capax Dei*) not everyone will have the same framework, language, or vision for making sense of that experience.
- Part of what the charism of a particular religious congregation offers is a lexicon, history, and context to structure understanding of the experience of God.

Charism ↔ Spirituality

- Christian spirituality is always **personal** and **communal**, as we noted already, *therefore* the personal embrace of the community's charism helps unite the individual in a corporate sense of Christian discipleship.
- To talk about a “School Sisters of Notre Dame” **spirituality** is to refer to that way of understanding the experience of the divine through the lens of the SSND Charism.

Charism ↔ Spirituality

- An SSND spirituality is shaped by those means by which the community passes on its charism:
 - *Founder's life, witness, and legacy (Bl. Mary Theresa of Jesus)*
 - *The congregation's Constitutions and other documents*
 - *Spiritual "classics" from the tradition (Hagiographies, Letters, Prayers, etc.)*
 - *Communal discernment and occasional directional statements*
 - *Local context and expression as ongoing development*

Charism ↔ Spirituality

- A **spirituality** informed by the particular charism is **gift** and not the jealously guarded possession of the professed.
- Instead, others are also invited to “walk in the footprints of Jesus Christ” (Francis of Assisi) with one’s imagination and commitments shaped by this distinct charism.
- Therefore, the distinctive ***spirituality*** that arises is embodied by all those drawn to this way of being-in-the-world.

Charism ↔ Spirituality

- A key component—the *goal* even—of **lived spirituality** is **transformation**.
- One's increasing awareness and attentiveness to the divine in their lives, understood and framed through the charism, should lead to: (1) a deepening sense of **unity with God**; (2) a grounding in the **communion with and love of neighbor**; and (3) a personal and communal **witness to the shared mission** of the community.

A long-exposure photograph of a busy city street, likely in London, showing a dense crowd of pedestrians in motion, blurred to convey a sense of activity. The street is lined with multi-story buildings housing various shops and businesses. On the left, a green-painted building features a vertical sign that reads 'AMUSEMENTS'. Next to it is a 'Superdrug' store with a star logo and a 'SALE' sign in the window. Further down, there are signs for 'ASBC' and 'phones 4U'. On the right, a yellow 'E' logo is visible on a building. The overall atmosphere is one of a bustling, commercial urban environment.

III. Making it Personal, Making it Practical

The Transformative Power of Spirituality

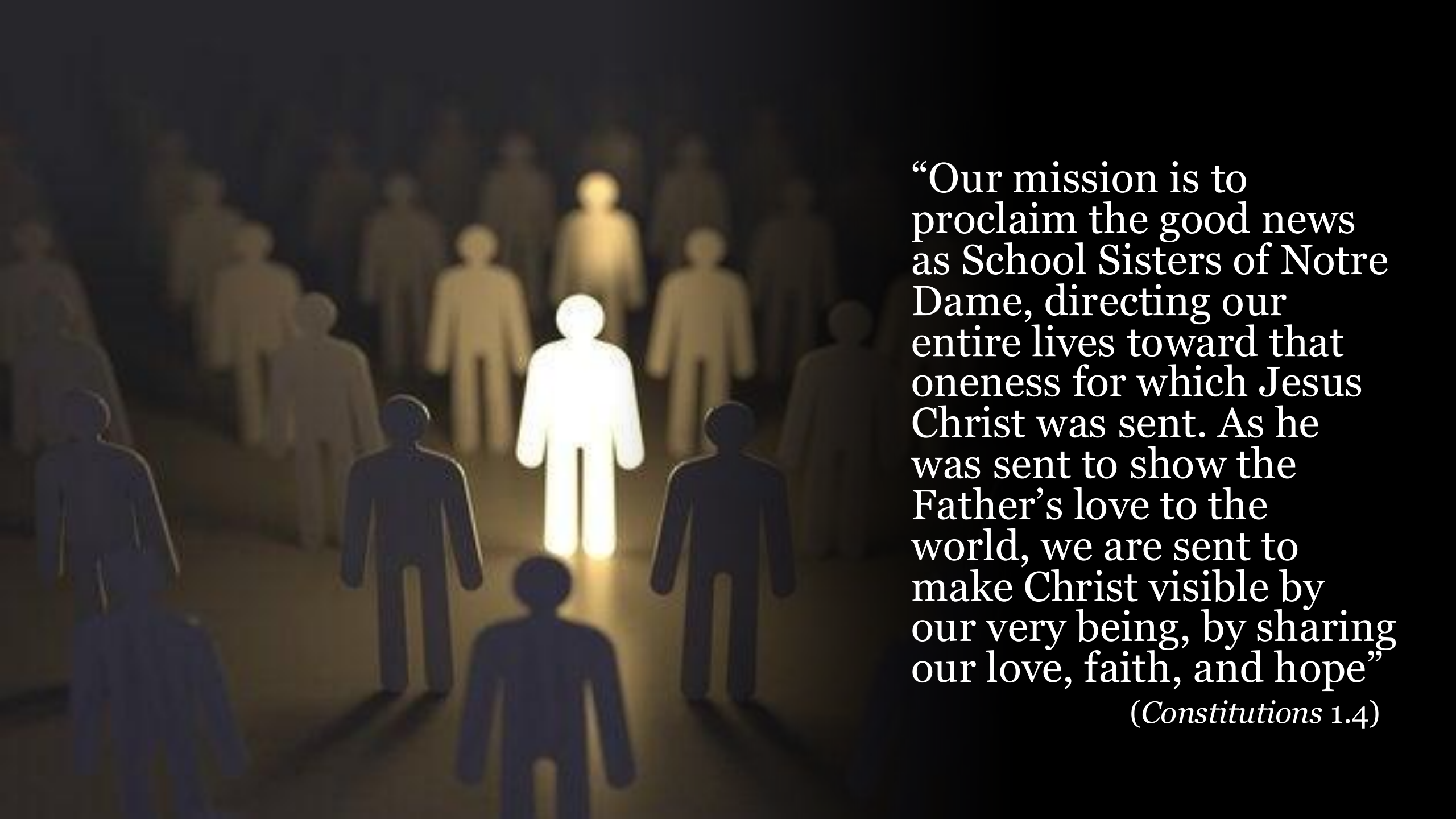
- The theme of this leadership meeting is “**responding to the call of the 25th Chapter**”
- The way I am inviting those of you gathered here to *respond* to the vision and challenge of the 25th Chapter is to think **personally** and **practically** about living the SSND Charism “throughout the whole” of your life and ministry, *and* accomplishing that through the transformative power of spirituality.

One vision of the transformation: “**Missionary Disciples**”

“In virtue of their baptism, **all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples** (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries”, but rather that we are always “**missionary disciples**” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 120)

A diverse group of people of various ages and ethnicities smiling together. The group includes men, women, and children, all appearing happy and engaged. The background is a plain, light color.

What does it look like to be a
“Missionary Disciple” in
the SSND Charism?



“Our mission is to proclaim the good news as School Sisters of Notre Dame, directing our entire lives toward that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent. As he was sent to show the Father’s love to the world, we are sent to make Christ visible by our very being, by sharing our love, faith, and hope”

(Constitutions 1.4)

“We are educators in all that we are and do. We continually choose ways of living and serving that call to growth. Responding to varying needs, we engage in a diversity of ministries, specific services through which we work for the enablement of persons”

(Constitutions 1.23)



“Fundamentally in prayer we acknowledge, accept, and freely surrender to the reality of who God is and who we are, creatures unconditionally loved by our Creator. We come before God, willing to be changed and to accept our mission more intensely as we are drawn into closer union with him. Prayer brings our whole religious life into focus; it supports the rhythm of our lives emphasizing now the person, now the community, now the world we serve. Thus, prayer is our continuing response to God’s continuing call to mission”

(Constitutions 1.28)

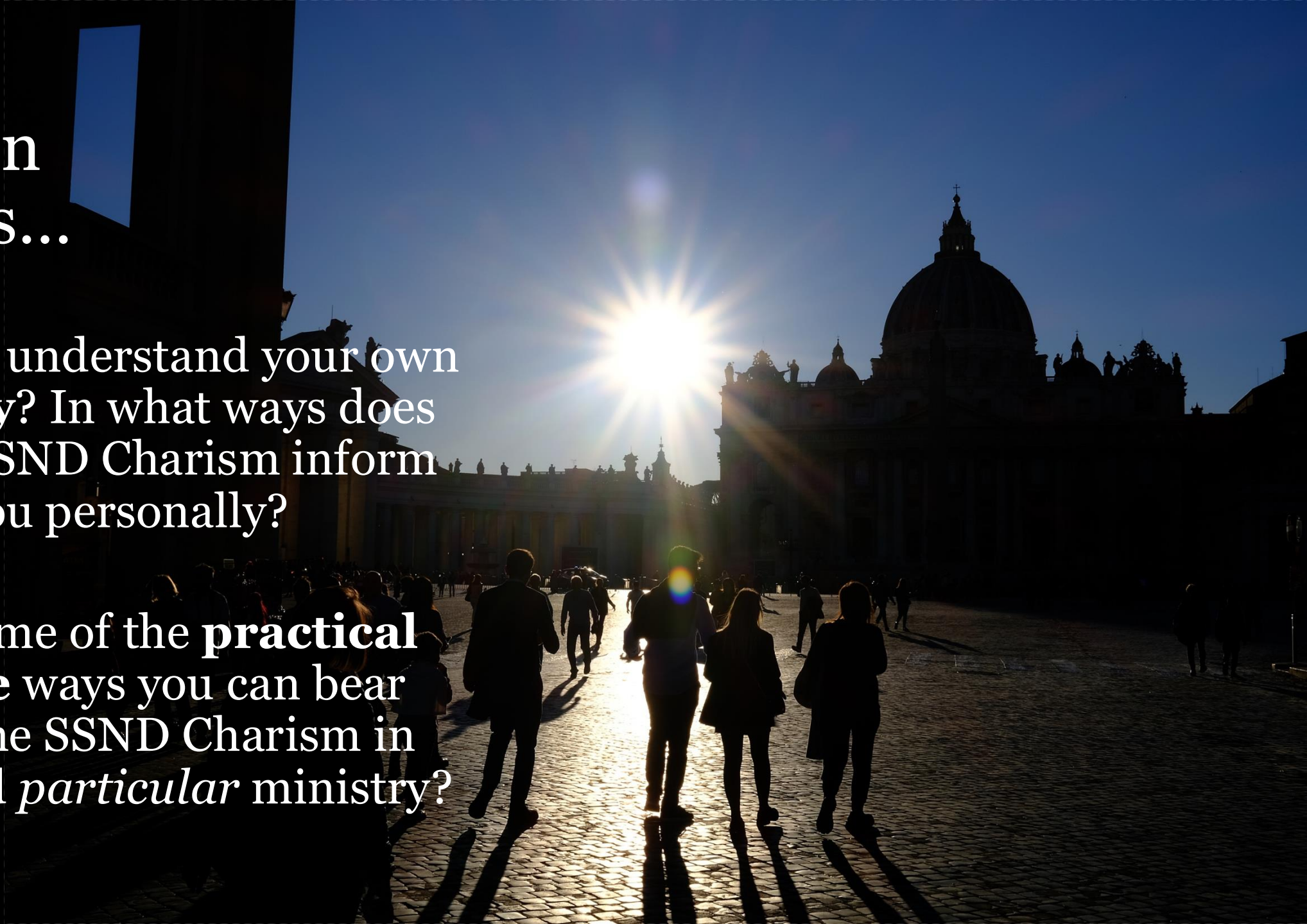




How will you *Respond*?

Some Discussion Questions...

- How do you understand your own **spirituality**? In what ways does or can the SSND Charism inform or inspire you personally?
- What are some of the **practical** or **concrete** ways you can bear witness to the SSND Charism in your life and *particular* ministry?



Living the SSND Charism 'Throughout The Whole'



Daniel P. Horan, PhD

*Professor of Philosophy, Religious Studies and Theology
Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind.*

