



REFLECTION

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There is a lot of buzz surrounding the Trinity Woods venture these days with all the possibilities that could open up on campus for internships, interactions and innovations. I would like to reflect on Trinity Woods from another angle, how this move for us sisters is a profound part of our transformative process.

Ted Dunn, a clinical psychologist, offered his thoughts to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious on what work lies ahead for sisters in our society, and I wish to share some of those thoughts as we look ahead to Trinity Woods. With the rapidly changing demographics in religious communities, it is obvious that life cannot continue as it has in the past. We cannot maintain all of our properties, work harder, make slight shifts and avoid the day when the last one standing turns out the lights.

We provide avenues into the future by risking new approaches. What is the rich soil of the past that will help us nurture into being what is yet to come? How do we discern what will help us plant the seeds that the future is calling for, and what old growth needs to be composted to make the ground even richer?

Wrestling with many questions, we School Sisters of Notre Dame move to Trinity Woods to begin a new approach in intergenerational living on a college campus. This change, in itself, is not to be equated with transformation. Transformation, as Dunn notes, “is an internal process, a journey that shifts the patterns, practices, norms and values, along with the structures that support these, realigning the soul with its outward expression.”

The School Sisters of Notre Dame are at a graced crossroads where we are choosing a road that has not been traveled before. Our Constitution states, “Trusting in divine providence

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and in the community, we are freed for the service of God’s reign ... Freed and trusting, we are ready to approach others openly in dialogue, to hope against hope, to accept privations, and to welcome insecurity.”

This crossroads is what the Celts called a “thin” time, where the doorway between the present world and the world of Spirit meet. Trinity Woods is offering such a threshold, inviting us to deeper connections with the divine. This kind of transformation is beyond our comprehension, but it does not come about without our cooperation. Martin Luther King, Jr. once wrote, “Human progress never rolls on the wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of [people] willing to be co-workers with God.”

Instead of precisely planning our future, we are trying to create the conditions for grace to proceed as we pack up, discard once-treasured articles and leave the halls that we have walked for over 160 years. We are dynamically living into a new way of being for the sake of the life that is yet to be.

This is our mandate. “Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live” [Deuteronomy 30:19].