



# STONE

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# CORNER

## *Discovering God's Plan*

Sometime early in life you were told that you are unique – one of a kind. That is how God created you. Perhaps you have also learned, someplace along the line, that the adventure of life is exploring your own uniqueness in order to become the person you were created to be. From a more theological perspective, you have been taught that each of us was created to fulfill a purpose in God's plan, a place that only you could fulfill; without you the specific work for which you were created will never be accomplished. What does that mean in practical terms? By way of an example, let us follow the call of one Brown County Ursuline, Sister Ellen Doyle, and see how her lived vocation has developed from her God-given uniqueness.

*We become fully human when we  
become more than human, when we  
let God bring us beyond ourselves  
in order to attain the fullest truth of  
our being.*

Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*

Divine Providence has a mysterious way of moving us to the appropriate place in readiness for his plan. Although she was born in Warroad, Minnesota, Ellen's family moved to Cincinnati for her father's job at GE when she was going into 2nd grade. The family settled in Finneytown and placed the children in St. Vivian School. As a student in Sister Mary Doeker's class, Ellen was introduced to the Ursulines. After completing four years at Regina High School, she felt drawn to Religious Life and in 1967 entered the Brown County Ursuline Novitiate. She attended Chatfield College and began her career teaching science and mathematics at St. Louis School in Owensville before transferring to Xavier University to complete a BA in Chemistry. Her next assignment was as Chemistry teacher at Ursuline Academy while she began working toward a Master's degree in Secondary Education at Miami University.

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Fr. Bill Dickerson and Sister Ellen

The oldest of eight children, Ellen had early leadership training. Along with her native intelligence and ability, her natural organizational skills were honed by her father, a mechanical engineer, who made planning an interesting game to keep his large family running smoothly. As an administrator at Lourdes High School in Chicago Ellen gained experience in multicultural urban education and further developed her natural qualities by studying organizational development and earning certification in Spiritual Direction. An opportunity as Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Charlotte, North Carolina, increased her experience in strategic planning and board development. Because her administrative ability was recognized by the Ursuline community, she returned to St. Martin to succeed Sister Xavier Ladrigan as President of Chatfield College. After eleven years in that position Ellen became Director of NACPA (National Association of Church Personnel Administrators). Each of these positions further readied her for her current work as an independent

facilitator and as Manager of Training & Development for the Catholic Leadership Institute.

Working as an independent facilitator Sister Ellen occasionally travels to distant locations to assist religious communities in planning and re-organization in their preparation for their Community Chapter of Affairs. Most recently she has worked with the Ursulines of the Chatham Union in Canada and the international Tildonk Ursulines who are blessed with many young leaders from India and The Democratic Republic of Congo. Over a six year period she assisted the Members of the Society of the Divine Savior (Salvatorian Fathers) in preparation for their General Chapter and elections, which were held in Krakow, Poland. Locally she does short term work in parishes and offers spiritual direction.

In 2007 Sister Ellen was recruited to the Catholic Leadership Institute by Father Bill Dickinson, a priest who knew of her through the Cleveland Ursulines and who reached out for help with its new Good Leaders, Good Shepherds leadership development program for priests. Now she is Manager of Training & Development for the organization. Besides direct service to priests and lay leaders around the country, her position includes recruiting, training, and developing 25 Leadership Consultants and supporting the training and development of all the staff. According to their stated purpose, *“Catholic Leadership Institute provides bishops, priests, deacons and lay persons in the Roman Catholic Church with world-class, pastoral leadership formation and consulting services that strengthen their confidence and competence in ministry, enabling them to articulate a vision for their local church, to call forth the gifts of those they lead, and to create more vibrant faith communities rooted in Jesus Christ.”* Sister Ellen shares that one of the most satisfying part of her ministry is mentoring the youngest staff members at CLI, many in their twenties, who are just beginning their vocations as lay leaders in the church.



Sister Ellen with two CLI colleagues  
Martha Jordan and Karen Arata

It was while attending an executive leadership retreat in 1990 that successful businessman Timothy C. Flanagan was inspired to use his skills and experience to make a difference in leadership and personal development within the Catholic Church. As he began to network and share his ideas among Catholic leaders he came in contact with Father Charles Pfeffer, Director of the Office of Youth and Young Adults in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. At the time, Father Chuck was struggling to find a way to actively engage young adults ages 21 to 39 in the church. The two men agreed that the answer lay in quality leadership training and Catholic Leadership Institute came into being. Currently the implementation of the New Evangelization is in the forefront on the current work docket of the organization. Leaders are vital in passing on the faith.

**ON NOVEMBER 30, 2014 POPE FRANCIS WILL PROCLAIM  
2015 THE YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE.**

Catholic Leadership Institute has been invited by Cardinal Sean O'Malley to the Archdiocese of Boston to provide leadership, training and coaching for his seven year initiative, *Disciples in Mission: A Pastoral Plan for the Archdiocese of Boston*. CLI is providing leadership development, training and coaching to Pastoral Center employees, pastors, parochial vicars, deacons and lay staff and council members called to lead the collaboratives. The purpose of this program is to focus on the commission of Jesus to "Go Make Disciples." Now in the second phase of seven, it is a model of leadership formation and an example of the breadth and depth of the work of CLI under way across the country in Los Angeles, Tulsa, Detroit, St Louis, Philadelphia, and beyond. Besides serving on the Boston delivery team, one of Sister Ellen's delights has been to serve the Diocese of Winona, Minnesota, the diocese of her early childhood, where two uncles and a cousin have served as priests.



A glimpse of a Good Leaders, Good Shepherds classroom Diocese of Fargo ND

Sister Ellen, the only religious woman on the Catholic Leadership Institute's team, is using her skills as teacher, organizer, spiritual director and her experience in administration in order to train the trainers and to coach the participants in this valuable endeavor for the spiritual growth of the American Church. The scope of this position necessitates arriving at a travel rhythm. It means learning to pray and journal in airports, and remembering to check in frequently with her local community. Meanwhile, Sister Ellen's God-given gifts as well as her learned skills have been put to good use, growing toward full potential as she fulfills her Ursuline vocation. For further interesting information about The Catholic Leadership Institute check their website: [www.catholicleaders.org/](http://www.catholicleaders.org/)



Diocese of Gaylord, Michigan graduating class of Good Leaders Good Shepherds with their Bishop, Bernard A Hebda, who is now coadjutor for the Diocese of Newark, NJ

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## PROGRESS!

The Solomon's Run Project is under way! The workmen are here all day every day and we are busy watching the transformation. Pictures can hardly tell the story, but here is a sampling of what we see from our vantage point. Keep checking [www.ursulinesofbc.org](http://www.ursulinesofbc.org) for future photos!

