

Blessings

SACRAMENTORS™ : A Process of Sanctification for Catholic Men and Women

October, 2005

How to Discern God's Will

by Fr. Bob Camuso

Upcoming Events

Community Meeting Schedule

on website
www.sacramentors.org

Sacramentors Breakfast

October 15th
See flyer for details

*For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord,
plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope.*
—Jeremiah 29:11

God has plans for you, but what are those plans? I had lunch recently with a friend who has had a number of jobs in the past 25 years since I first met him. Frustrated that he never found a job that suited him, he said, "Rather than look for a job that pays a lot, or has prestige or power, this time I'm looking for work that God wants for me, work that is in sync with my faith, values and gifts."

How do we know what God wants for us so that God's plans become our plans? There are many ways to discern God's will. But I find the Ignatian method the simplest and most helpful. Basically, it is a three-step process that Tom Hart outlines in his book, *The Art of Christian Listening*, which I recommend to you:

Step One: Pray for Freedom and Guidance.

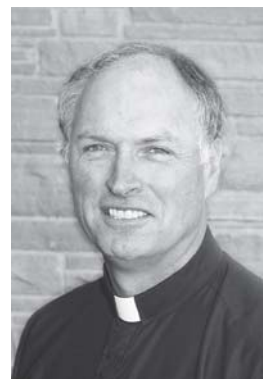
We begin by praying for freedom from the ego so that our ways, which are not God's ways, may get out of the way. This prayer allows us to place the ego in "time out" for a while and still the noise of our busy world so that God may be heard. In our prayer, we ask God for freedom from the ego so that God may be in control. We pray, "Thy kingdom come," which means our kingdom must go. Now we open ourselves to the plans God has for us. We become indifferent to our desire to "get" so that we become open to what God already got for us and wants to give us. Now our hearts and minds are ready for God's guidance. Now we are ready to receive the plans God has for us. In our prayer for freedom and guidance we desire nothing but to live for the Lord.

Here is an ego-removal prayer from St. Francis that he used to discern God's will in his life. He said this prayer before the Crucifix:

*Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart,
and give me right faith, certain hope, perfect charity, wisdom
and understanding Lord, that I may carry out your
holy and true command.*

Step Two: Assess the Data

The second step used to discern God's will is to assess particulars of your situation. If you are discerning a job, for instance, you examine what might be the results of such a move. List the pros on one side of a sheet of paper and the cons on the other side. What are the advantages and disadvantages of taking on such a job? What risks might you face and what might be the rewards. Imagine yourself living with all the pros of the situation. Then imagine yourself living with the cons. Which one is more life-giving? Which one is more of God? We are brutally honest about ourselves in this process and about the situation. And, most



Father Bob Camuso

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importantly, we ask how this new job or new choice might affect our relationship with God.

Tom Hart suggests an exercise that Saint Ignatius found helpful for discernment because it gave him perspective on the pros and cons. Ignatius would imagine that he was on his deathbed and then asks himself what he would then have chosen. This question allows detachment from the current situation and offers a lifespan perspective. It's a way to ask a question such as: "At the end of my life what will matter more: that I made more money or that I had more time for my children when they needed me most?"

Ignatius also used another technique of detachment when discerning. He imagined that another person came to him with the same question of discernment. Then he imagined what choice he would recommend to that person?

Aside from an imaginary counselor, this may be a time when a real person who is a good listener and a wise person can be helpful. It is best if this person is an active Christian and older than you. The listener is not there to tell you what to do. Rather, the listener helps you hear yourself, your deepest and truest self, which is ultimately God's very self who created you. As you listen to your true self, and all the facts surrounding your decision, you begin to sense a movement toward a right decision.

Step Three: Seek Confirmation in Peace

The third step in the discernment process, according to Tom Hart, is to seek confirmation from God about your decision. This confirmation is found when the decision leaves you feeling peace.

I remember a time years ago, before I sought to become a priest, when I was trying to discern whether or not to leave the advertising business. My business partner and I had sold our advertising firm to a larger advertising agency. I stayed on with the merged company for a year and found I was having a difficult time trying to determine whether or not I should give up a career I had pursued for 14 years. My mind was confused and so I thought I would try using my body. I then discovered what I called the "Doorknob Theory." As I opened the door to the office each morning and crossed the threshold, I sensed my entire body telling me something my mind alone did not tell me. Something was wrong. My body was not at peace.

Being at peace with a decision is a sure sign that it is of God and that it is right. We sense harmony with ourselves and with the world. But with this sense of peace we find that our difficulties have not disappeared. For instance, there will still be challenges in transition from one job to another. There will be losses to face and maybe even hard times for a while. Although we may not find perfect peace with our decision, we know deep within us that this is right because it is of God and that, in the end, all will be well.

These three methods of discernment should be considered for any important decision in your life. They are ways to find God's way, which may be different from the ways of those that do not seek God's way. If you encounter such people, who may be close to you, such as family members, and who try to encourage you to choose something based on feelings or ego needs, remember what Saint Paul wrote to the Romans:

*Do not conform yourselves to this age
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,
that you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good and pleasing and perfect. 12:2*

Doing God's will is pleasing and perfect. There is no greater peace or happiness we shall find in this life than that which comes as we seek and find the will of God.

MISSION STATEMENT

*"To create in parishes
small faith communities
of men and of women
committed to supporting
each other in living
a Christian life
characterized by
acts of love, kindness,
appreciation, and
forgiveness."*

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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

At the recent Leadership Retreat, I received an interesting message on my Inneternet – what I call the communications link to God we each possess. The message, really more a riddle, went like this:

“Knock! Knock!” said the Voice. “Who’s there?” I asked. “The Holy Spirit,” the Voice replied. “The Holy Spirit who?” I responded. “The Holy Spirit who’s asking you to ponder...”

God’s got such a sense of humor! “...OK, My Daughter,” he continued. “How about you as Sacramentors’ next Executive Director?...”

My knee-jerk response: “Thanks for asking, God, but I REALLY don’t think so!”

I repeated this in a dozen different languages, each decline supported by a dozen different reasons. But surprise! God understands the language of Love and Kindness – and He waited for the response of...well, I jump ahead of myself, so continue on, Dear Reader.

In discernment, I listened for the wise counsel of the Holy Spirit. I listened to my Sacramentor brothers and sisters including retreat leader, Pat Surseley, and our spiritual mentors, Fr. Bob and Lory. I’m blessed by the honest answers to my tough questions and the prayerful support of many during this time.

My response to the Holy Spirit and to you, My Brothers and Sisters, is that I accept God’s call and will follow in the footsteps of Jeff Smith as Executive Director of our organization.

I’m ever so grateful to Jeff for his precious gifts-of-self given so freely to Sacramentors. I’ll rely upon his role model of leadership and work to continue his gifts to the organization.

Our board members and support team members are enthusiastic and proactive; our co-founders, Lory and Fr. Bob, support us every way possible.

The commitment to Sacramentors isn’t work. Really, no special skills are needed to conduct the business of the organization – only a deep love of, and appreciation for, the life-changing process.

I know how Sacramentors has changed my life. You know how it’s blessed yours. Sacramentors needs your help for the continuing journey. Open your heart to the reality of what you can do, then call me and join in the fun nurturing the program!

Let’s all get to work to spread God’s Gift of Sacramentors to as many of our Catholic brothers and sisters as possible. I guarantee you, blessings abound!

God Bless you and yours!

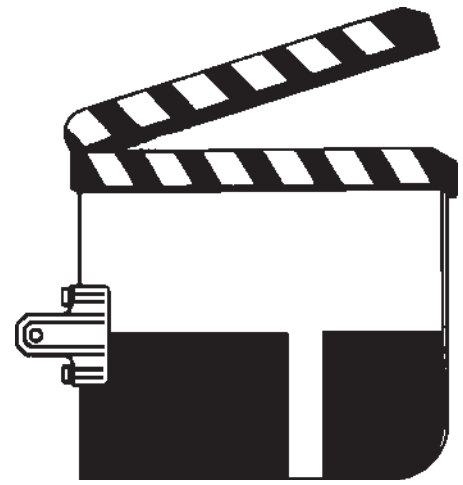
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P.S. Looking forward to seeing you at the DVD preview.

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“Quiet on the Set!...”

By Cyndie Ulrich,
formerly known as Marketing and Communications Coordinator



“0 dark 30” wake up calls are never easy, but early morning alarms on Monday, August 8th put a group of enthusiastic people in motion at the Palisades for a good day’s work to benefit SacraMentors.

We’re blessed that SacraMentors is growing and receiving inquiries for training series from all across the country. But with growth, comes need for change. A number of months ago, it came to the board’s attention that a more efficient training method is needed to meet economic, travel and trainer availability factors for series held outside Western Washington. The board prayed, discerned and decided that, for parishes outside our Archdiocese, there needed to be an alternative method of presenting a series.

A DVD planning committee was formed and I thank SacraMentors Maryanne Reynolds, Denise Smith and Seamus O’Brien for their dedication to our organization, their creativity and attention to detail, senses of humor and their willingness to participate in the development phase of the production. We were especially blessed by the participation in the planning process of Larry Cali, retired KING5 TV editor and reporter. Larry was a member of one of the very first training sessions taught by Fr. Bob and Lory at St. Anne’s Parish back when SacraMentors was known as “Men of the Upper Room.” The committee decided the DVD should feature SacraMentor co-founders Fr. Bob Camuso and Lory Misel. They would deliver the essence of each training topic so that the DVD and one, maybe two, trainers could be sent to a parish anywhere in the country for a weekend retreat training session.

The Holy Spirit guided us to Mike Carter of Redmond’s MBC Video. God-incidentally (rather than “coincidentally”), Mike was a long-time cameraman and engineer for KING5 TV where he and Larry worked together for many years. SacraMentors benefited greatly from their re-union and work on this project.

Fast forward to a bit later than “0 dark 30” on August 8th. Among members of the film team arriving at the Palisades were “our stars,” Fr. Bob and Lory, and crew members Mike Carter, Denise Smith, Larry Cali and I. After a quick pre-production meeting over coffee (caffeine and “0 dark 30” go hand-in-hand, right?) we headed outside to pre-determined shoot locations on the Palisades property. Filming went very well. It won’t be news when I tell you that the chemistry between Fr. Bob and Lory was powerfully charged with the Holy Spirit. We had estimated that we would need almost two full days of shooting, but the team pulled it off in less than eight hours. Remarkably, our Dynamic Duo accomplished all but one of the segments in one take! The Holy Spirit certainly surrounded us and blessed us throughout the process.

In addition to the training topics, we also filmed two thirty-second public service announcements. One focused on the men’s program and featured Fr. Bob and Lory; the other focused on the women’s program and featured Fr. Bob and Denise Smith. Scripting of the announcements was the effort of marketing expert Gary Graf of McFarland, Richards and Graf, Seattle. PAX TV’s Seattle affiliate has assured me that the spots will run here in the Seattle market. The station representative suggested that once the announcements run in Seattle, they could easily be picked up by PAX TV affiliates all over the country.

I thank SacraMentors Don Grainer, Margaret Birchem, Ann Trepus, Clyde Hill, Jeff Smith and Anne Martin for volunteering to film a witness talk. Clyde, Jeff and Ann did a wonderful job spontaneously expressing their personal experience and heart-felt feelings about SacraMentors. I am also thankful to Larry Cali and Mike Carter for their professional expertise and easy-going attitudes, their attention to excellence and senses of humor. Their expertise alone was crucial to the successful outcome of the project and I thank them for mentoring and blessing us in this project. I have great gratitude for Fr. Bob and Lory for their commitment to this project and their assistance to help get SacraMentors to its next level of growth. You, Gentlemen, are, indeed, the wind beneath our wings. Finally, a special word of thanks to Dave Jones and his staff at The Palisades Retreat Center in Federal Way. Their attentiveness to the crew’s needs, the delicious meals and gorgeous backdrops made filming seem effortless.

It suddenly strikes me that the last paragraph seems like an appropriate thank you speech at the Academy Awards. Join me as I reflect upon the possibilities...

... the crowd grew silent and pressed forward in their seats with excitement as the presenter exclaimed “...and for best actors in a spiritual training film, the Oscars go to.... Fr. Bob Camuso and Lory Misel!!!”

Well, with the Holy Spirit, anything is possible, right?

My Summer Vacation

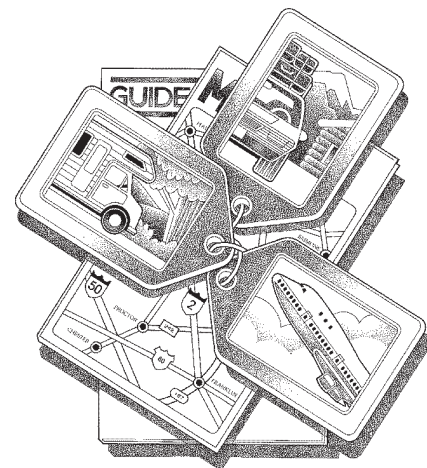
(aka My Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi...)

By Linda M. Moran, St. Charles Borromeo

If anyone had told me ten years ago that I would go on a spiritual pilgrimage to Italy, I would have laughed. Not only was I not all that spiritual, but back then I was dreaming of spending my wedding anniversary in Italy and sure I would go. Alas, as many of us know, life is not as linear as we may hope or even expect. And so I found myself at my desk at work this past February looking out the window at another day of rain wondering if I could find my way to a new place of peace and reflecting on Day 16 in the Book of Kindness which says that "I am here now. Jesus is with me and all is well." I was noting that it was my third year since starting SacraMentors at St. Charles in Tacoma and my second as a trainer. My phone rang and I reached for the receiver. I answered to hear the voice of one of my favorite people who is a great world traveler calling to say hello and see how I was. I told her I was working hard and dreaming of a getaway.

On a lark, I asked her if she had any great trips planned and could I go with her. She laughed and asked if I had money in the bank so I could buy my ticket and if I had a current passport. I answered yes to both. She told me she had several business trips in the works but her sister was tagging along to the one to Italy in June and she would check to see if she was serious about going. We chatted about other things and the call ended shortly thereafter. For a few weeks I pondered the thought of going to Rome. It was a dream and breathtaking to me as I was a Classics major in college and always wanted to go and see the art and architecture I had studied. Also, through SacraMentors and my weekly apostle group meetings I began a deeper walk with God and my faith had deepened so much since joining SacraMentors that I welcomed the opportunity to be in Rome shortly after a new Pope had been chosen. More importantly, the call to Italy felt right as I felt lost from the many phases of transition my life had taken in the last four years, including illness, divorce and recent major changes in my work place. I called my friend Evelyn back and asked her if her sister was going to Italy with her. She told me I must be really motivated if I called her back and asked to go again, so she invited me along with one request which I was delighted to fulfill. She asked me to arrange an audience with Pope Benedict.

An audience with the pope must be hard to arrange, several friends commented, but undaunted I set about getting information as I was thrilled to have this amazing trip on the horizon. Fr. Mike at St. Charles and Bernadette Hunley directed me to the Archbishop's office. I spoke to Laurel and she told me that I could attend a general audience with the Pope on a Wednesday during my trip in June and that she would send a letter on my behalf and I would get information on how to pick up my tickets for the audience



which would be held outside the Vatican in the piazza. When I left in June on this trip I was weary and apprehensive as I did not speak Italian and I was afraid of finding my way while my friend attended to her business endeavors during the day and I went sight seeing on my own. Little did I realize how much the Holy Spirit was watching over me and this whole trip turned out to be perfect in every way.

We arrived in Rome for five days with a plan to go from there to visit friends of Evelyn's in Perugia for four days. The weather was sunny with a cool breeze and the scent of Jasmine everywhere. It turns out that most people speak English in Rome, but tell you they do not. They are warm, friendly and very helpful. On our first full day in Rome, Evelyn did not need to work so we got up early and went to the Vatican and the Sistine Chapel. Mari, an American college student studying aboard, was our tour guide and she pointed out all the things we should see and gave us the great history of this church and magnificent institution. We rubbed the statue of St. Peter's foot which brings blessings, went to Adoration in a small chapel and went to see the tombs of



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the Popes buried below St. Peter's. We went to see the Vatican museum and Sistine Chapel which I wish I had studied more before I saw it, so I could better appreciate what I was looking up at. It was marvelous to be there when just a little time before the cardinals had been in this beautiful room selecting Cardinal Ratzinger to become Pope Benedict. Following the tour of the museum and Sistine Chapel we had a lovely lunch at an out door café, known locally by the students as "Big Mama's" and Mari told us we'd know we were in the right place by the yellow table cloths and the short and portly Italian lady with tomato sauce stains on her shirt and apron. Following lunch we went back to explore the Vatican and by the end of the day found ourselves attending Saturday evening Mass in St. Peter's with a small group of locals. There were only about fifty people at Mass and Evelyn and I felt so privileged to be there and hear the Mass said in Italian by the Italian priests. Though Evelyn and I don't speak Italian we both attend regularly at our churches so we followed along and wished everyone peace at the right time. At the end of Mass when the priests said "the Mass has ended, go in peace" they also wished "the" Americans a lovely time in Roma.

Each day was filled with adventure, delicious food, history and Mass. I walked and walked everywhere taking taxis only when I was tired and the walk back to the hotel too long. In the evenings, Evelyn and I went to dinner and enjoyed the night life in this vibrant city with some of her work colleagues and it was fun. During the days, though they were not too hot, if I was in the direct sun too long I melted which led me on an adventure to the smaller churches in the neighborhoods and always in time for Mass in a beautiful cool church. I prayed the rosary. I asked God for guidance about my life, I asked for God's blessings for all my friends and family, my co-workers, and my SacraMentor brothers and sisters. Each day I felt more rested and refreshed and each day my gratitude for all the blessings in my life increased. It's funny how sometimes we lose sight of what is wonderful in our life. I realized that my life was exactly where it was meant to be and I was grateful because I knew God had so many more wonderful things in store for me, and I just needed to trust Him and let the Holy Spirit guide me.

The highlight of Rome was our audience with Pope Benedict on Wednesday at 10 am. I had gone the day before to the North American College where all American seminary students study to pick up the tickets and get an orientation. A young priest gave me a tour of the building which had been a convent. We needed to be in line to get a good reserved seat by 8:30 am, so Evelyn and I were at St. Peter's by 8, but soon after we go there it started to rain. Now rain in Rome is not like in Seattle, it rains cats and dogs and does not stop. The Vatican security took pity on us standing in the rain so they let us in a half hour

ahead of time and through the metal detectors we went. Evelyn is the quickest, smallest person I know so she ran to the first row and saved seats for us in the second row. We had an awesome view of the Pope when he came out in front of St. Peter's in a special staging area they set up for papal audiences. There were several hundred seats set up and cordoned off and then the piazza was

opened for the others in line to enter the square and stand for the papal audience. It rained for two hours and just when I thought I would float away, the rain let up some, the "pope mobile" came out onto the staging area and there he was – Pope Benedict, the successor to St. Peter, waving to everyone. The pope mobile went up and down the aisles and Benedict smiled and waved as the crowd chanted, "il Papa and Bendicto." The crowd was mostly Italian and the piazza was filled with thirty thousand people, I was told this by a member of the elite Swiss Guard who protects the Pope. The

Pope then took the stage, the rain stopped and the sun came out almost on cue. The cardinals introduced all the countries that were represented and the special large groups who were there, including a large contingent of different Italian firefighters and policeman. The Pope spoke in many languages for forty five minutes and

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It's About Love, Isn't It?

By Jeff Virgin, Men's Senior Parish Coordinator

spoke in English last. He was so inspiring and humble. He asked all to pray for peace; he spoke of justice and unity. When the Pope was finished, the crowd of thirty thousand sang a prayer in Italian that I did not recognize and then we all held hands and prayed the "Our Father." Then the Holy Father gave us a papal blessing. The crowd took a long while to disperse after the Pope went inside. The sun was out and we were all dry by then. It was a lovely late morning and I was exhilarated.

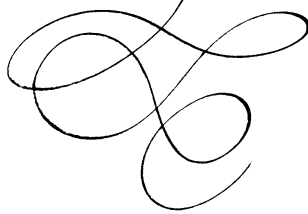
After five days in Rome, we left the next day and traveled to Perugia, which is the capital of Umbria, "the new Tuscany" I am told. It's about two hours north of Rome and the sister city of Seattle. It's a beautiful Etruscan town with plenty to see including exquisite churches and great museums. Further, Assisi is only about an hour away and Evelyn's friends took us there as we're both fans of St. Francis and we wanted to go to Mass on Sunday at the cathedral there. Rome was so boisterous and busy that Assisi was the cap to the trip, it slowed us down and it was so peaceful and contemplative. It was a blessing to visit where St. Francis lived so simply and to see where he prayed outside, looking up at the stars in the night. It was a joy to see and go to Mass in the old beautiful churches and the cathedral built in his honor.

I returned from this trip refreshed and renewed and feeling so blessed by God and so eager to share my travels with my SacraMentor sisters at our apostles group meeting. I know they prayed for me while I was away as I did for them. They have helped me see this was pilgrimage but not one that I knew I was going to take or need. That's the beauty of trusting our Lord. He always seems to provide what we need, not necessarily what we want or think we want. Ciao bella as the Italians say and God Bless as we SacraMentors say.

May 14, 2005, was the 17th wedding anniversary for my wife, Sally, and me. Our union has produced two beautiful children, Molly, 14, and Gregory, 11.

May 15, 2005, was the one-year anniversary of our separation. Over the past 15 months, as well as the three years before the separation, I have struggled to find a life that feels balanced, wholesome, and loving to my family and myself. At times the struggle has seemed unbearable, especially when faced with choices that all include pain, and trying to decide which is the most loving for everyone involved.

*All things
work together for
the good
for those
who love God.* Rm 8:2.



Ultimately, after much pain and hard work, Sally and I together reached the conclusion that neither of us was willing to give up parts of ourselves that made it seem impossible to live together in harmony. We both felt that the only way either of us could have inner peace was to separate. It was the most difficult and painful decision we will ever make. Now, our entire family has suffered deep wounds from the dissolution of what was the most stable part of our lives. When the situation reached that dreadful point-of-no-return, when we no longer had control of the situation, but it had control of us, when wounds destined to become scars were being inflicted; it was then that I wanted so much for things to be different.

Now, we live on the other side of those horrible moments of intense pain and uncertainty. We are all different people. We are strong, but with an element of deep sadness for what we have lost. Sally and I entered into a permanent bond 17 years ago, and later our children joined us. We will not live that bond in the fullness of our hopes and genuine intentions. Regardless of legal distinctions, whether based on canon or secular law, the practical and spiritual nature of the bond has been altered. But I believe that family love has an eternal nature that cannot be changed, because it is made in and of God. We are restructuring our family and our lives, trying to find new ways to interact in an unfamiliar world. There are starts and stops, fits and spats, just like when we all lived under one roof. Sometimes it feels a little easier, because there is an escape hatch. Sometimes it feels a little harder, because the sense of security and commitment has changed. My greatest hope is that through it all we stay focused on our love for each other. My belief that God's very existence is manifested in love reassures me that we will be all right. Through this trying period, my life as a SacraMentor has kept me focused on Jesus' primary instruction to "love one another as I have loved you." The challenge for our family is to love our way through the pain into a new and different, but equally loving, relationship. Teach us Lord, so we can, so we will.

SPIRITUALITY SERIES SCHEDULE

SacraMentor Series

**All Series are held on:
Sundays, 2:00 to 5:00 pm**
(unless otherwise indicated)

■ **MEN'S SERIES**

St. Andrews/All Saints, Sumner
(concurrent with women's series)
Oct 16, 23, 30
Immaculate Conception, Mount Vernon
Jan 22 & 29, Feb 5

■ **WOMEN'S SERIES**

St. Andrews/All Saints, Sumner
(concurrent with men's series)
Oct 16, 23, 30

Saturday Sanctum

**All Sanctums are held on:
Saturdays, 9:00 am to 7:30 pm**

■ **MEN'S SANCTUM**

St. Andrews/All Saints, Sumner
(concurrent with women's series)
Nov 5
Immaculate Conception, Mount Vernon
Feb 11

■ **WOMEN'S SANCTUM**

St. Andrews/All Saints, Sumner
(concurrent with men's series)
Nov 5

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