

Hello Friends,

My name is Niambi. My calling story begins in the quaint town of Keene, NH, an urban oasis surrounded by woods and mountains. I was struggling to complete my final project of my Environmental Advocacy Masters program at Antioch University. One damp, cold spring day in 2016 I was huddled around a table with my advisor, Joy, trying to parse out how I would complete my project on time since I had missed most of my deadlines so far. We somehow had diverged from the topic of my project to talking about the Episcopal church.

“Yeah, I am a part of this community, but I am thinking of switching to that community.” Joy said passively. (I cannot remember what orders she mentioned now, only that I was extremely confused.)

“Wait, Joy,” I said, “You're Episcopalian... There are no Episcopal nuns.”

Joy looked kindly at me. “Yes, Niambi. There are.”

I felt it then, something clicking into place. *Oh, that's why I have been struggling with my project, with finding a career, with existing in this world; I'm supposed to be a nun... Uh oh.* Thus began my monastic journey.

I started by signing up for the Episcopal Service Corps. During that year, I started contacting orders and scheduling one-on-one meetings. The discernment process was straightforward. After talking to my priest, praying for many months, and talking to my therapist, it was clear to me that this was a valid call to religious life.

My setback involved federal student loan debt, and a lot of it. This barrier would lead me on a journey across an ocean to Hawaii, where I lived with two Episcopal Franciscans who ran a Catholic Worker house attached to an Episcopal church. While I was there I worked as a secretary at an Episcopal church. Since my financial situation was not improving any time soon and my call to living in community with other religious members was so strong, I started and eventually completed the process to become a tertiary with The Society of St. Francis, a Third Order. Around this time I started conversations with the Sisters at CSJB. During Covid, I moved back to the mainland and took a job as a Parish Administrator with Erie Episcopal. I remember the first conversation I had with the Bishop after telling him my convoluted discernment journey. He said, “Wow, it sure sounds like the Holy Spirit is at work within you.”

I eventually admitted to myself that I would not be able to pay off my student loan debt in a timely manner by myself. I asked the Bishop for help, he readily agreed, becoming my sponsor. The Diocese of Northwest Pennsylvania helped me get on a path to become debt-free. Now here I am, eight-ish years later, a postulant with the Community of St. John Baptist in Mendham, NJ.

I am very grateful and thankful to the Sisters of CSJB for giving me this opportunity to share in religious life and continue exploring my call. I am especially grateful for all my friends and colleagues who believed in me and continue to support my call to monastic life. I look forward to growing and becoming a part of this community.

Thank you, thank you, thank you,

Niambi