

SAID ED September 24, 2017

Donna DeJoode

A Penske truck, a few friends, and nearly one thousand miles...

It began with a generic search of a few surrounding dioceses for job openings. I didn't have to move and the reality was, I didn't really want to move. I loved my little town, my little house, and my parish work. I was okay just looking, you know—window shopping in hopes of finding the perfect fit without having to invest. Over time however, there seemed to come a deeper unexplainable longing to be closer to family, but there were no viable open positions in my areas of passion. And then, the prayer. You know, the one you pray seemingly wholeheartedly, yet secretly hoping what you are hearing and discerning is not really God's will... Yes—that prayer. That was the prayer I offered: "If you are really calling me to move to New York, you are going to have to open the doors. I don't really want to go but if it's your will, I am all in." I ended my prayer wondering what I had just done. Historically, this never ends the way I plan (thank God!). And, of course as only God can, there were many new viable job postings listed that very evening.

It was through the help of my friends and encouragement of my son, Aaron, that I was able to even tape closed a moving box. Their recommendation was to reward ourselves for our packing efforts—pack a box, drink a bottle, pack a box, drink a bottle... We started with one bottle of Iowa wine (which we did not finish), shed tears, and immediately packed the entire living room. These same friends spent endless hours praying, keeping me moving forward, loading the moving truck, even travelling with me across the country in a hysterical comedy of errors (ask me sometime). Driving off my property on Sunday afternoon, August 6th, I began my new journey of faith to New York and Church of the Assumption as Assistant

Director of Faith Formation. It has been twenty-seven years since I have lived in New York, having moved away to attend college. New York is where my Christian journey began but it was my time in Iowa that solidified my faith and my love for the Church.

The readings this weekend resonate with me as I reflect on the toughest decision of my life so far—leaving a life I loved, leaving friends, leaving my adult son. My ideas, my thoughts, are not God's, nor are my ways His. I am trusting His ways: as high as the heavens are above the earth... and this is not always easy for me. I am independent and strong-willed and, in all openness, not always trusting. But, I also know that God provides as promised. He does not cheat; He is not unjust. Sometimes, I find myself feeling much like the vineyard workers who worked hard all day, believing that I got an unfair deal. Other times I am the worker who arrived at the end of the work day, grateful for everything received. Still other times, I am the landowner (not God) trying to be fair and just with others. Each week I try to reflect on what part of the reading is mine to hear. What is God communicating to me this weekend? That He provides; He is bigger than anything I can do on my own; He calls me to trust and to be strengthened through the Eucharist, and to know that answering my prayer of being "all in" is going to be better than I can ever imagine.

A Penske truck, a few friends, and nearly one thousand miles... a journey of faith, trust, love, gratitude, and strength.

Donna DeJoode
Assistant Director of Faith Formation