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Katie Gordon, left, and Benedictine Sisters Jacqueline Sanchez-Small and Val Luckey, are pictured during now-Sister Sanchez-Small's first profession ceremony with the Benedictine community of Erie, Pennsylvania, on Nov. 13, 2021. (CNS/Courtesy of Global Sisters Report/Katie Gordon)



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November 6, 2024

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One example of the change occurring in religious life is Sr. Valerie Luckey. She is 36 years old, and entered the Erie Benedictines in 2016, after completing a degree at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia and a stint as a school teacher. She made her final vows in 2021.

She joins the conversation today with Sr. Joan Chittister. In some ways, the differences between them and their path to religious life is stark. Joan first attempted to join the community at age 15. She had to return a year later when she turned 16, the earliest the community would accept applicants in the 1950s. Joan entered at a time when religious life seemed an immutable certainty that would go on forever, only to see it alter dramatically over time and arrive in this current era riddled with questions about the future.

Valerie, on the other hand, opted for religious life at a time of great uncertainty about its future and embraces the challenges ahead.

But more than a little common ground exists in the sense of calling to be there for others, in the community's outreach and ministries, and in the deep connections among members as they engage in a life of contemplation and action.

The old and the new meet in this conversation and provide a look at where tradition sparks and a new and engaging future emerges.

"Risking the Questions" is a joint project of Benetvision and NCR. This podcast has been made possible in part by the generosity of Bill and Jeanne Buchanan.

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