

How do I become a religious Brother/Priest/Sister?

Enquiring

This first step could simply be looking up the religious congregations on the web or by direct contact and finding out more about their way of life. If you find that you are attracted to a particular religious congregation then you can begin by contacting the Vocation Director and chatting with him/her about your sense of vocation and your attraction to their congregation

Accompaniment

This involves ongoing meetings with the Vocation Director, over several months, who will guide you through a process of discernment. It will also allow you to get to know the religious order and provide opportunities for them to meet with and get to know you.

Candidacy

Candidacy lasts from 6- 12 months. As a candidate you continue with your normal life and job. But you would have closer contacts with the religious community, sharing in their community life and prayer.

Novitiate

This is the stage at which you formally join the religious congregation. The first year concentrates on the inner spiritual journey as well as participating in some of work of the congregation.

The second year of novitiate involves more outward involvement in the mission and works of the congregation.

Temporary Profession of Vows

Temporary vows are usually taken for six – nine years (three years in contemplative communities). During this time you are a fully committed member of the congregation, participating fully in the life and mission of the congregation. It is also a time when you may be asked to undertake further studies to better equip you for the work of the congregation.

Final Profession of Vows

Final profession of vows means that you make a life commitment to the vows and to the congregation.

- During all these stages you will receive guidance and support in your spiritual journey towards making a final commitment.
- In the religious orders where some of the members are priests, while studies for the priesthood may commence before final profession, ordination only takes place after final profession of vows.
- The above is a general guide to the stages of formation in religious communities, but some religious communities may have a variation of the above.

*Two thousand years ago
Jesus Christ said to those who were
thinking of following him to
“Come and see...”
We are here to repeat that same
invitation today,
“Come and see”.*



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*See yourself...
in a different light*

VOCATIONS
Ireland

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What is a Vocation?

The word vocation comes from the Latin word 'vocare' which means to call.

Through our baptism as Christians we are all called to be followers of Christ and to live the Christian values that are found in the Gospels in our daily lives.

Some people choose to live this fundamental baptismal call in a more radical way in the religious life.

What is Religious Life?

Religious Life has existed in the Church from very early times and over the centuries has developed into many different forms.

The core of religious life is a radical following of Christ expressed through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and lived in community

Poverty: is a promise to live a simple way of life shared in community.

Chastity: is a promise to commit your whole life to the love and service of Jesus and therefore not marrying or having a family of your own.

Obedience: is a promise to place yourself at the service of the religious community you join. This commitment to the will of God makes you available to the needs of God's people as directed by the community leader.

All religious life is centered on prayer and the Eucharist and is lived in community with others. These basics are lived out differently according to the type of religious life - apostolic, missionary and contemplative.

Apostolic: work to meet needs in many different areas such as education, healthcare, areas of social care and with those who are poor or marginalised.

Missionary: live and work with people in the developing countries of the world.

Monastic/Contemplative: their daily life centres on prayer for the whole world. They also engage in work to support themselves, e.g. farming, altar bread manufacture, printing writing, etc.

How do I know if I have a Vocation to religious life?

Most calls to religious life are not dramatic or direct. It may be

- A desire for a deeper relationship with Jesus
- A desire to do something more with your life.
- Wanting to find a deeper purpose in life
- Wanting to help others

Every person is different, some people may experience the above but it may not mean that they should become a religious brother, sister or priest. It's always good to check this out through prayer and conversation with others, a good friend or perhaps a person you know who is already living this kind of life or you can contact the Vocations Ireland Office or our website.

