

# GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



**M**y name is Thomas, and I have been in the postulancy for about five months. It has been a very positive experience for me. Postulancy, as the first step in the formation program, I have found to be very helpful in deepening my discernment. When I entered, it was as though my full-time job became my continued discernment; I was able to step away from other responsibilities in my life to focus on prayerfully determining if Servite religious life is right for me.

As a postulant, I began to live in the community. I quickly learned the rhythm to Servite life. I wake up early for morning meditation with the formation community, then the whole community gathers for prayer and mass, and we gather in the chapel in the evening for prayers before dinner. I have found that regular community prayer keeps me anchored in my relationship with Christ and the community as I continue discernment. It has become “home base” for me, while my courses at Catholic Theological Union get more intense.

Our Lady of Sorrows, where I currently live, is a multi-generational community. Entering shortly after I finished my undergraduate degree, it was definitely a transition from living with college-aged people to men in the ballpark of four times my senior, but the older friars bring experiences, stories, and personalities that breathe life into the community. Sharing

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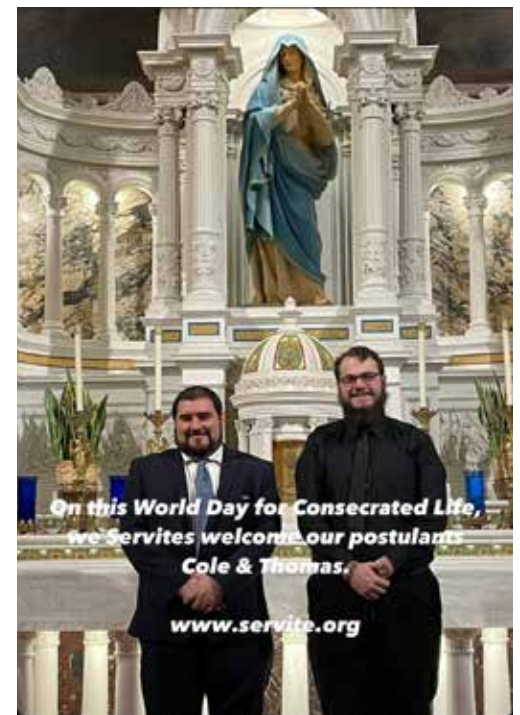
### ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY

#### Vocation Newsletter

stories and experiences over the dinner table has been an opportunity to build and experience authentic community with the people I live with, and hearing about their diverse experiences and ministries has helped me to know what Servite service looks like. My experience of community life as a postulant has deepened my discernment by keeping me grounded in prayer and showing me more about Servite life.

Another part of my experience as a postulant is my classes. I am taking philosophy courses at Catholic Theological Union (CTU) to prepare me for the study of theology to be a better minister in the future, but I also have classes with Fr. Don, my formation director. I have found these formation classes to be invaluable. In the beginning of my formation, I had a class on friendship with God. That class completely changed the way I view my relationship with God. It helped me to view God as a supportive, caring friend, encouraging me to be better every day. Another class I had with Fr. Don was on prayer, which exposed me to Lectio Divina and Mental Prayer. These methods of prayer have shown me how to encounter Christ in scripture in a

new, and intimate way. I also learned more about the order’s history and our saints and blessed in my course in the early beginnings of the order. My experience as a postulant has helped me to develop a much more intimate relationship with Jesus, which has helped my discernment immensely.





Another aspect of my life as a postulant is the various workshops I have attended. The Servites are part of a inter-community pre-novitiate (ICPN) program. In this, I get to connect with postulants of other religious communities, many of whom have similar experiences and the same questions I have as I continue to my discernment. The ICPN gathers for workshops on various topics pertinent to religious life. Two that I have found extremely helpful have been on community living and transitions. The community living workshop helped teach

and integration. These workshops have been helpful because, on top of the tools they have given me, they have also been an opportunity to see other people like myself making the next step in discerning God's call for our lives.

I am also involved, to a limited extent, in ministry. Once a week, I spend a morning working at our development office, either helping to open letters we are sent or doing data entry. Though it can sound like mundane work, I have found that reading

## Questions for Reflection:

1. What excites me about the possibility of entering the postulancy? What apprehensions do I have?
2. What can I do, in the context of my life right now, to discern more deeply the call I am feeling?

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follow



the prayer intentions we are sent and incorporating them into my daily prayer to be fulfilling. I get to help the order help people. All in all, my experience of the postulancy program has been an incredibly positive one. It has taught me a lot about myself, about the Servites, and about God. There have been uncomfortable moments, but those have always been an opportunity for further growth. The postulancy has been an opportunity to deepen my discernment, and for that I am very thankful.

us skills for living in diverse community settings, and the workshop on transitions taught us new ways of thinking and working through transition periods in our lives. As part of the formation program, I have also attended workshops with CTU in the area of sexual development

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