

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



CALLED TO SERVE

ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY
Vocation Newsletter

On August 6, 2021, my life took a dramatic turn for the better as I transitioned from one step of formation with the Servites to the next. How did I get here and what I am doing now since that day when I entered into the novitiate?

On September 4, 2019, I entered postulancy for the Servites; the first year was in Portland, Oregon, the second was in Chicago, Illinois. Both years, I learned what it means to be in religious life through observing community life, engaging in a few ministries, and participating in various classes where I learned about Servite life, but more importantly about who I am to myself, who I am with God, and who I am to others. What I had learned in the classes has led me to reflect on God's love and His call to undergo a conversion so that I may become a witness of His mercy. For my second year in September 2020, I also began studying theology at the Catholic Theological Union (CTU). The second year of postulancy was dedicated to helping me to move on to the next step in the formation process, the novitiate. This past spring, I shared my intent to move forward with my discernment. The reason why I requested this is that I felt that God had confirmed my vocation with the Servites, and I had a deep desire to continue on my quest to search for God,



and also my desire to be like Mary. I made my feelings known when I wrote a letter of request to enter the novitiate. My request was approved, and soon I wrapped up my last year as a postulant as I prepared to move on to the next step.

Shortly before becoming a novice, I spent a full day immersed in prayer. The focal point of this day of contemplation was reflecting on the reading Hosea 2:16, 21-22. The reading is the voice of God

calling forth the people of Israel in a loving invitation to go out into the desert and listen to His promise that He will be united to us forever. I understood this reading to mean that my year of novitiate is dedicated to listening to the voice of God and dialoguing with the Word as I undergo a conversion, to unite myself with the Lord through the intercession of Mary.

On the day of the Rite of Initiation, I publicly declared before the community



and to the Provincial, Fr. Eugene Smith, my intent to become a novice. It was a small, but memorable ceremony. Fr. Eugene spoke on what the novitiate is and what I can expect. The best way he had described it was as a year of retreat where I am to listen to the Lord as I undergo conversion. The novitiate is dedicated to helping me move through this year-long retreat, to assist me in my discernment to choose in becoming a professed friar. Everything that I will learn is to help me understand God's calling, to help me undergo my conversion and to help me understand why I feel called to discern my vocation with the Servites. In a way, all of this is to help me understand what I am getting myself into and how am I to relate to the life.

As a novice, I am on hiatus from CTU, but I continue taking formation classes that are structured to help me understand all aspects of religious life, specifically the

into practice more intensely as a novice is prayer which is an integral part of discerning one's vocation at this stage.

How I understand Servite life as a non-vowed member is that our life is strengthened by community and the zeal from our charism is what drives us in our daily life serving as God's witnesses.

The meaning of being a novice is for me to come to accept who I am in light of God's love for me and be strengthened as I go through the conversion to become the man who God called me to be. I find this during my spending time with God in daily contemplation. For this reason, I am grateful to have answered the call to enter the Servites as the place where I can search for God.

- Bro Cole Dryden OSM, novice

Questions for Reflection:

1. How do I know that God is calling me to undergo a conversion to be united with Him?
2. What are my hesitations about the challenges that conversions brings to my life?

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follow



Servite life. Concurrently, every day when I am not in class or engaged in ministry, I spend some quiet time with the Lord to deepen my relationship and seek union with Him, as I continue to discern my call to become a Friar Servant of Mary. One thing I learned as a postulant and putting

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