

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



CALLED TO SERVE

ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY

Vocation Newsletter

In the formation of a man as a Friar Servant of Mary (Servites), the novitiate is a most important moment in the overall initial formation process. The novitiate is a year of discernment, prayer and study in the Servite tradition. The legislation of our community, the Constitutions, states that the novitiate “offers the candidate an appropriate period during which he may

gain deeper knowledge and experience of our (Servite) religious life by sharing in community living” (art. 125). The novice

is guided through this year-long moment by the Novice Master, who is a solemn professed friar of the Order. This past August, the community welcomed two novices. This month we introduce Bro. André-Marie Cibaka, OSM Novice, from the Servite Province of the Isles (Ireland & England).



“My name is André-Marie Cibaka, originally from the Congo. I am a candidate from the Servite Province of the Isles and beginning my novitiate year here in Chicago, Illinois at Our Lady of Sorrows Servite community. My vocation story is a kind of zigzag road and it will not be easy to write about it in just a few sentences. Anyway, I will do my best to keep it simple. To begin with, I do not consider myself a “late vocation.” I say that, because I have felt a call to religious life since I was twelve years old. As an altar server and member of the Legion of Mary, I developed a desire to serve the Lord early in life.

Due to the political situation and various wars in my country, I was unable to enter the major seminary or religious life compared to other friends with whom I shared membership in a vocation support



group. After being qualified as a primary school teacher, I taught for two years as a voluntary teacher in a refugee camp for victims of the Rwandese genocide. This camp was directed by the Jesuit Refugee Service under HCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.) During this time I was an active member of the justice and peace commission, speaking for the

Bro.André's vocation story helps us realize that God works with extraordinary grace in the ordinariness of our lives. The Lord calls us to serve with faith and hope. He calls us to be a compassionate presence to those who are searching for God their life experience.As you continue to discern the Lord's call for your life, we Servites welcome you to discern with us as to how

Reflection Questions:

1. How am I experiencing the grace of God working in my life today? What is God asking of me? How can I serve Him and others?
2. What about the Servites' life do I find compelling and I might want to share in? What part of the Servite life do I have questions about or need clarification about?
3. In trying to respond to the Lord's call, what questions do I have, what scares me, what motivates me to possible join the Servites?

voiceless. Along with other refugees and social workers, I was granted resettlement by the United Nations while things were getting worse in the region. This is how I found myself in Europe, something of which I never dreamt.

you can serve others with your gifts and talents to be a compassionate presence in today's world. Our Servite life doesn't require special tasks. It just takes faith in God's love, a willingness to serve others, and openness to God's grace working now, in your life. Please contact us with your questions and for assistance in your discernment. We are praying for you.

It took me some time to settle down in Europe due to several bureaucracies. I had to learn the language and participate in the integration programs. In the meantime, I worked in various jobs and this experience led me to have great respect for those who worked so hard to support their families.

You may ask then, why did I choose the Friar Servants of Mary, Servites and not another religious community? My answer is that the Servite Order has as a model for their life, Mary, the mother of Jesus, who said YES to the message of the Angel Gabriel. All human history was changed when her humanity was joined with the divinity of her Son, Jesus. When Mary listened to God in prayer and gave her consent to his holy will, the Word of God, Jesus, was made flesh in her womb and our redemption began. The challenge that the Servite Friars have is to be faithful to God and Blessed Mary along with their readiness to help wherever there is a need. This is what attracted me to journey with the Servites."



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