

Monastic Vicariate Guidelines

According to a hierarchical Grammata, issued in fall of 2015, the following are guidelines for spiritual discernment and the journey towards Western monastic or contemplative life:

Postulancy

- **The Postulancy is the initial stage of formation typically in a three-month experience.**
- **Reading and studies focus on spiritual life and monastic aspiration.**
- **The Postulant Director or Superior meets with the Postulant briefly from time to time to discuss his or her progress and challenges, as well as to offer guidance.**
- **Once readiness for the Novitiate is ascertained, the Postulant prepares for the next phase of formation, the Novitiate.**

First and Second Order monastics need to be incardinated (into our jurisdiction) prior to entering the Novitiate. Oblates (Third Order) can stay with their respective church, since it is ecumenical.

Novitiate

This encompasses usually a nine- to twelve-month period, during which the Novice explores on a deeper level what it means to live as monastic or as an Oblate. The resolve and suitability of the Novice is further discerned. There is concentration on developing a solid contemplative foundation:

- **The Novice commits to following the Rule of the respective Order or Society**
- **Depending on the Order or Society, the Novice receives the Scapular or any other religious Habit, which he or she may wear as appropriate and wanted.**
- **Otherwise, the Novice is asked to wear moderate clothing, preferably of darker hue**
- **The Brother or Sister becomes more fully acquainted with the many facets of contemplative life.**
- **Instruction by a designated Superior (Novice Master) is given on the Rule, the Monastic Diurnal (Liturgical Hours) according to individual tradition, spiritual growth and development.**
- **The Novice continues to internalize and live by the spiritual and religious principles of monastic life.**

Once ready, the Novice then goes on to the next step of Religious Profession or Oblation.

Profession or Oblations

In a ceremony, the Novice is received as full member of the respective monastic community, either in the First (monks), Second (Nuns) or Third (Oblate) Order. The monastic may now wear the full Habit of the Order as appropriate.