

Consecrated Life: Point #1

What is Consecrated Life?

Consecrated life is a gift given by Christ who chooses a person individually to respond to His great love in a special relationship. He asks that person to leave some aspects of the world (such as marriage and following secular goals) to put themselves at the service of their brothers and sisters.

Furthermore, consecrated life is a vocation just as marriage and diocesan priesthood are. Both men and women can choose to consecrate their lives to Christ as a way to seek an intimate relationship with Him. These men and women live the truth that only Christ can satisfy the deepest longings in a person's heart and witness that this union provides a deeper joy than the secular world can give. In effect they are previewing the way we will relate to Christ in heaven. (Courtesy of Kansas City, Kansas Office of Vocations.)

If you feel called to learn more about religious life, please contact the Office of Vocations at 417-866-0841 or visit: [Vocations - DioSCG](#)

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Consecrated Life: Point #2

Aspects of Consecrated Religious Life

Women Religious

In women's religious communities some orders wear a "habit" which identifies them as a woman religious. Other women's orders choose to wear "civilian" clothes to blend in more with the society within which they work and wear a ring to identify themselves as a "spouse of Christ." Both a ring and/or a habit are signs that let others know they belong to Christ. All women religious are called "sister." Most live in community in a monastery or convent, but some orders allow apartment living so they are closer to the people they serve. They either have a leader or are governed by a council.

Men Religious

Some men's religious live in a single community, while others are dispersed and live in smaller communities around the globe. In some orders, the men also wear a habit, which is a plain garb worn by any male or female religious, while other orders wear

black and white clerical clothes. Their leader is called the abbot or superior, and they are obedient to him and their community's rule of life, unlike a diocesan priest who serves the people of the diocese and is obedient to the bishop. ***(Courtesy of Kansas City, Kansas Office of Vocations.)***

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Consecrated Life: Point #3

Formation

Formation is the process of becoming a member of a religious community. Once you apply and have been accepted, you begin the process of initial formation which lasts several years. During formation you live with the community, begin theological studies, and participate in their prayer life and mission.

There are a series of stages to formation, which are known by several names. All conclude with professing final vows. Throughout the initial years of formation, both the novice and the community are deciding if this is what Christ wants for you before you would profess final vows.

Those in consecrated life generally join a religious order. There are scores of religious orders - some founded centuries ago by saints, and some founded more recently to fulfill a particular need. Consecrated life is most often shared in a community which is united to live out their common mission together.

Men religious are known as "brother." Through discernment and conversation with their superior, the man may either continue as a brother, or ask to further his formation in a seminary and be ordained a priest. Religious orders often help a diocese by allowing some of their priests to be assigned to a parish. ***(Courtesy of Kansas City, Kansas Office of Vocations.)***

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Consecrated Life: Point #4

The Vows

Most men and women religious take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. They do this to live more simply and not be attached to the things of earthly life which create stress, possessiveness, and distractions. In this way they can more easily give themselves to God and depend more on Him for their needs.

Vow of Poverty-Just as Jesus chose to be poor out of love for us, religious men and women choose a similar lifestyle in imitation of His great love. Poverty does not mean living a destitute life. Instead it means detaching from the lure of material goods and learning to share things in common with the community, for example living quarters, vehicles, and food.

Vow of Chastity-Chastity means giving yourself completely to Christ – body, mind, and soul. This actually allows you a great freedom to love and serve all God's people without the obligations of a family. In return, you receive love through a deep relationship with Jesus, the love and support of others in the community, and the joy you experience in doing His will by serving others.

Vow of Obedience-Those in consecrated life surrender their will in obedience to Christ and their superior to more closely imitate Him, who came to do the will of the Father. This includes actively

listening to the Holy Spirit and being open to how the Lord and the community believe your gifts and talents can best be used. They respond in faith by generously offering themselves for the common good of their community. (*Courtesy of Kansas City, Kansas Office of Vocations.*)

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