How to Become a Priest, Brother or Sister

Here are the basic steps to becoming a priest or professed member of a religious order. These steps to a religious vocation may vary in different orders or congregations.

To become a diocesan priest:

**Discernment** → **Seminarian** → **Deacon** → **Priest**

- **Discernment**: Interested men meet with a vocations or spiritual director to learn more about the priesthood and priestly formation. You then become a candidate for a specific diocese.
- **Seminarian**: After completing a requisite number of courses in philosophy, one begins four years of graduate studies in theology. During their years of formation, seminarians also deepen their prayer life, work on becoming a well-rounded person, and minister in parishes.
- **Deacon**: During your last year of theology and upon the recommendation of your bishop, you are ordained as a transitional deacon and begin ministry such as preaching, catechetical instruction, counseling, and service to the community.
- **Priest**: Having successfully completed all of your studies and deepened your spiritual, intellectual, human and pastoral understanding, you promise to be a priest forever and you are ordained by your bishop.

To become a sister or brother:

**Affiliate/Postulant** → **Novice** → **Temporarily Professed** → **Sister/Brother**

- **Affiliate/Postulant**: Most candidates start in or after college. You spend a few months to a couple years getting to know the community you want to join.
- **Novice**: For one to two years, you continue your studies, deepen your knowledge of the religious order, and prepare for the work that you will do.
- **Temporarily Professed**: In each of the next three or more years, you will take temporary vows, deepening your commitment to God and the religious order.
- **Sister/Brother**: Having successfully completed your formation, you take final vows, a promise that you will remain a sister, brother, or religious priest forever.