

MARIST BROTHERS Vocation Program: Accompaniment and Initial Discernment

If you are interested in making a difference in the lives of young people and feel called to a spiritual life centered on community and prayer, then welcome!

First, it is important for you to get to know yourself and our community before applying to enter the Marist Brothers. Our Vocation Process, ACCOMPANIMENT and INITIAL DISCERNMENT, is designed to help you explore your own calling and determine if the MARIST Brothers are the right “fit” for you.

Accompaniment (Inquirers)

This first phase of our Vocation Process invites a man in college (or a recent graduate) to initially examine the vocation to the Marist Brothers. Through regular Accompaniment with a Brother, a young man learns how the discernment process can be part of his life. Accompaniment is a flexible time which can last a few years – depending upon the needs and interest of the Inquirer. It could also include community and ministry visits, known as Come and See Experiences *. Anyone in this preliminary stage of looking into the Marist Brothers is considered an *Inquirer*. During this time, an Inquirer can request, or be invited to move into INITIAL DISCERNMENT.

Initial Discernment (Discerners)

A man who continues to feel called by God to the Marist Brothers would be eligible to begin INITIAL DISCERNMENT. This phase of our Vocation Process is primarily for the college graduate who is ready to process his call. After meeting with the Vocation Director, he may be invited to be a *Discerner*. He would be in INITIAL DISCERNMENT for at least one year, meeting with the Vocation Director on a regular basis. A flexible yet focused plan of discernment would be established. Once INITIAL DISCERNMENT has begun, the Discerner would be asked to have a Spiritual Director as another help in his discernment. During this time, the Discerner and the Vocation Director will mutually arrive at a decision regarding his potential application to the Initial Formation Program of the Marist Brothers.

During the stage of INITIAL DISCERNMENT, the third C&S experience (see below) will be required before the Discerner applies to the Initial Formation Program. This experience invites him to continue his reflection on our Marist charism and a preliminary presentation on the application process.

Requirements

To consider entering the Marist Brothers and in order to be a part of our Vocation Process, you must be:

- a practicing baptized and confirmed Catholic
- between the ages of 21 and 40
- a college graduate (or be in the process of obtaining a degree)

In addition, an individual should possess:

- a desire to know and serve God
- an ability to get along with and live with others
- a willingness to develop a prayer life
- an enthusiasm to serve young people

To be accepted as a Marist Postulant in Initial Formation, one must be 21 years of age.

***Come and See Experiences**

The Marist Brothers offer Come & See Experiences (C&S) to those men who have shown an interest in our community and are looking to deepen their involvement with us. As far as possible, the C&S is tailored toward what the individual (Inquirer) is seeking and can last a day, weekend or longer.

These experiences generally fall into three categories:

1. During the first C&S, an individual would visit a community and ministry at a local site. As he gets more serious,
2. A second C&S would be available which includes a discernment process and an introduction to our Initial Formation Program. This C&S is held at the Marist Novitiate in Esopus, NY.
3. A third C&S invites those Inquirers who are ready to move forward into Initial Discernment, to learn about our Application Process in an atmosphere of retreat. This third C&S also takes place at our Novitiate.

All Come & See experiences are available depending on the individual's and community's schedules.

Initial Formation Program: Postulancy, Novitiate and Temporary Profession

The Initial Formation Program of the Marist Brothers includes three different and progressive stages: Postulancy, Novitiate, and Temporary Profession, and last from 6-8 years.

Postulancy "A Gradual Immersion into Marist Life"

The first stage of the Initial Formation is called Postulancy. This six month program offers the Postulant an experience of: prayer, community living, study, a weekly ministry opportunity, with an on-going discussion about his discernment to become a Marist Brother.

Novitiate "Deepening Marist life"

The Novitiate is the second stage of the Initial Formation Program. The novice continues to discern his vocation to the Marist Brothers through this 18 month program. Continuing the experience of Postulancy, the novice seeks to

deepen his commitment to the Brothers by his study of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience; as well as the study of the life of the founder, St. Marcellin Champagnat. The Novitiate also includes: participation in the Intercommunity Novitiate Program (with other novices from men and women's communities), and an international experience with Marist Novices from other parts of the world. At the end of the Novitiate, the novice may apply to take temporary vows of poverty, chastity and obedience for a period of one year.

Marist Novices are alive and well around the Marist world and are presently receiving formation in 16 different Marist Novitiates. They total 150 novices worldwide!

Temporary Profession "The Life of a Marist Brother"

The time of Temporary Profession is 4-6 years. As a Professed Member of the Marist Brothers, the Brother in Temporary (annual one year) Vows lives in one of the 30 (?) communities of Marist Brothers in the USA while serving in full-time ministry. He is supported in his brotherhood through regular mentoring and by programs for those in Initial Formation throughout the year. As the discernment continues, ultimately the Brother in Temporary Vows will make his decision – along with the Brothers – to apply for Final Vows as a Marist Brother.

“Love your vocation...”

**FROM THE SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT
OF
ST. MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT
FOUNDER OF THE
MARIST BROTHERS**

For more information please contact a Vocation Co-Director at vocations@maristbr.com