DIOCESE OF PROVIDENCE

OFFICE OF VOCATIONS

485 MOUNT PLEASANT AVENUE PROVIDENCE, RI 02908-3301 WWW.CATHOLICPRIEST.COM
☎401-831-8011 FAX: 401-521-4192

VOCATION GLOSSARY

Consecrated Religious Brother: A member of a men's religious order who is not in Holy Orders but engages in the work of the order. Members typically take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Consecrated Religious Sister: A member of a religious order or congregation of women devoted to active service or meditation. Members typically take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Discernment: The process of coming to know God's will via prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Deacon, Diaconate: A third degree of the hierarchy of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, after bishop and priest. The deacon is ordained for ministry and service (but not to the priesthood). Deacons are ordained to assist the bishop and priests in celebrating the divine mysteries, above all the Holy Eucharist. They also can help distribute Holy Communion, proclaim the Gospel, preach, preside over funerals and perform charitable ministries.

Holy Orders: The Sacrament of Apostolic Ministry by which the mission entrusted by Christ to the Apostles continues to be exercised in the Church through the laying on of hands. This sacrament has three distinct degrees or orders: deacon, priest and bishop. All three confer a permanent, sacramental character.

Novice: A person who has been accepted into a religious order and who is undergoing a period of training and formation before taking vows.

Novitiate: The period a novice spends in training, usually 1-3 years, depending on the community

Ordination: The rite of the Sacrament of Holy Orders by which the bishop, through the imposition of hands and the prayer of consecration, confers the order of bishop, priest or deacon to exercise a sacred power which comes from Christ on behalf of the Church.

Priest: Someone who is ordained to minister within the Church. The main duties of the priest are preaching, leadership, and celebration of the Sacraments: baptizing, hearing confessions, offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, overseeing the exchange of marital vows and anointing the sick. In celebrating the sacraments, the priest acts in the person of Christ (*in persona Christi).*

Profession: The taking of vows upon joining a religious order.

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Seminary: A school which offers theological studies, especially for the purpose of training priests.

Sister: A member of a religious order of women (see *consecrated religious sister*).

Transitional Deacon: For men moving toward the priesthood, this is a bridge to priesthood, not a permanent state of life. They spend six months to a year in the role before priestly ordination. At this time the man makes his permanent vow to live a life of obedience, celibacy and prayer for the Church.

Religious Priest: Those who belong to a religious order such as the Dominicans, Franciscans or Benedictines. They live according to the rules of the community and under the jurisdiction of their superiors in the community.

Vocation: The calling we have in this life. God has created us to love and serve Him, and He has a unique plan for each person's life -- a vocation. As God is the source of all lasting happiness, satisfaction and joy, then living according to God's plan for us will be the best life we can lead. Courage, obedience and persistent prayer are needed for us to live our vocation, whether it is to single life, to marriage or in service to the Church as a priest or religious.

Vow: An act of devotion in which persons dedicate themselves to God or promise God some good work. It is a deliberate and free promise made to God concerning a possible and better good which must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion. Religious order vows are to chastity, obedience and poverty.

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