



THE ABBEY OF OUR LADY OF
NEW CLAIRVAUX
VINA, CALIFORNIA

REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES

TO THE ABBEY OF OUR LADY OF NEW CLAIRVAUX

1. Practicing Roman Catholic
2. Between the ages of 22 - 40
3. Some college and/or work experience
4. Free of: debts, long-term family obligations, compulsive/addictive behavior (e.g. alcohol, smoking, drugs, eating, sexual addictions), and regularly prescribed drugs
5. Good physical, mental and emotional health

DISCERNMENT OF A MONASTIC VOCATION

Discernment is best done from a pure heart and well-formed reason. It is undertaken with the help of the Holy Spirit, wise counsel from faithful people, and utilizes one's own God-given capacity to discern. It has been said that the three signs of a true vocation are desire, ability, and call.

DESIRE

In discerning a call to the monastic way of life one should feel a longing deep within one's soul to follow Christ in all his purity, poverty, charity and radical commitment to fulfilling the will of our heavenly Father.

ABILITY

Reasonably good physical and mental health are required so as to endure the daily challenges of monastic prayer and work. Even though the fasts and vigils are quite moderate at the Abbey of New Clairvaux, the trial may be found, not in their severity, but in engaging these and all the monastic disciplines with zeal day after day for the rest of one's life. Perhaps the greatest ascetical practice of Cistercian monasticism is to live in community with true charity.

Obedience, along with charity, humility, and inner stability, are values at the heart of the monastic way. These virtues allow us to pray and work in a recollected peace which is the fruit of a personal encounter with Christ. The monk strives to hear the Word of God and respond whole-heartedly. When one hears the call of Christ to "Follow me," one responds as did the Blessed Virgin Mary, "Fiat." "Yes, let it be done unto me according to Thy Word" (Luke 1:38).

A man can finally be certain of his vocation when Christ says "yes" to him through the voice of the Church.

CALL

The life of a monk is not for everyone. It is a rigorous life of prayer and work, lived out in community, and it is not without its daily challenge. But for those called to it, the monastic way is a joyful and fulfilling life. If you think that you are ready to give up your "own will, once and for all, and armed with the strong and noble weapons of obedience to do battle for the true King, Christ the Lord," then please contact the Abbey's Director of Vocations and arrange a visit to Abbey of New Clairvaux.

STAGES OF INQUIRY AND FORMATION

1. **MONASTERY VISIT:** Getting to know members of the community and our way of life over a period of months. Discern with the Vocation Director if God is calling you to the monastery, and if the Trappist-Cistercian life is a good fit for you personally.
2. **OBSERVERSHIP:** Become a resident within the community for a period of 3 months and experience all dimensions of monastic life, including private and communal prayer, manual work, solitude, and community life.
3. **POSTULANCY:** If it is discerned that God is calling you to continue this path, you may become a postulant and be further initiated into the disciplines of our Order. The postulancy lasts for one full year in residence.
4. **NOVITIATE:** With sufficient desire and capacity to live as a Trappist-Cistercian, you may officially become a member of the Order as a novice, clothed with the religious habit, and receive formal instruction on monastic observances with support from the brothers over the course of two years.
5. **JUNIOR PROFESSED:** After two years of Novitiate, if it is clear that you truly seek God with zeal and obedience and are well-suited to monastic life, you may profess vows as a Junior Professed. You are entrusted with greater responsibilities, become more deeply integrated in community life and continue your studies and formation.
6. **PROFESSION OF SOLEMN VOWS:** After three years as a Junior Professed monk and having gained a deep understanding of the monastic life, you may freely petition the abbot to make solemn profession of vows.