

FORMATION GUIDELINES – USA DISTRICT
Updated Summer 2015

1. A DISCERNMENT MODEL

- Listening deeply to discover God’s will/desire in your life
- Praying to get a sense of the movement on the Spirit in your life.
- Why and in what ways are you drawn to Voluntas?
- How do you think Voluntas will help you to deepen your relationship with the Lord? Your ministry? Your marriage and family life?

2. GOALS OF EACH PHASE OF FORMATION

- Aspirancy: To learn the spirituality of the Institute through the Aspirant’s Guide and Fr. Parent’s books (Especially In the Footsteps of Jesus)
For Discernment: Now do you understand (Head), live and integrate (Heart) Voluntas spirituality?
- Probation: To study the Constitutions and the Vows
Probation Guide and continue Fr. Parent’s books
For Discernment: Do I feel called to live the way of life of Voluntas as outlined in the Constitutions? Are there areas that you are uncomfortable with?
What does living a vowed life mean to you? Do you feel called to live in this way?
- Vows/Stability: To live and deepen what you learned in Aspirancy and Probation for a period of five years
Vowed/Committed Members Guide
For Discernment: What challenges do you experience in living Voluntas? Has Voluntas helped you to grow in holiness? Has Voluntas brought you deeper peace and a sense of joy?

3. WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN PRIESTS REQUESTING TO TRANSFER TO VOLUNTAS?

- Voluntas Dei or Voluntas Mei?
- Does he sense a call to consecrated life living the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience?

- Does he have a sense of fulfillment in his present ministry? Is his attitude positive or negative?
- Do you see joy in him?
- If you had to, would you want to live with him or minister with him?
- Is Voluntas a good fit for him and is he a good fit for Voluntas?

4. THE PROCESS FOR TRANSFER

- For Diocesan Priests: Letter of permission from his bishop to begin a process of formation that will last 7 years. Aspirancy: 6 months-2 years; Probation: 2 years; 5 full years in vows; Stability after the fifth year
- For Religious: CURRENT PRACTICE: His provincial grants permission and petitions his Father General who then petitions the Holy See; On our End: The USA Council approves and recommends to the Central Council. If there is approval of both councils, our Father General writes to his General indicating that we will accept him. His General presents all the materials to the Holy See. If approved, the Holy See will grant an indult of exclaustation for three years. The date on indult begins his five years of formation. He then begins Aspirancy. He is received into Aspirancy at the liturgical celebration at the August Congress. (The application and forms required for the transfer contains all of the necessary documents to enter into aspirancy upon reception of the indult from the Holy See)
- After one year, he petitions the council with a letter of support from his team, to begin probation. If approved, he enters into the probation phase of his formation at the liturgical celebration at the August Congress
- Once the Probation period is completed, he continues with the annual review and letter to the Formation Team / Council.
- He reflects on the meaning of the vows and how these are understood in the context of a secular institute and how this differs from the understanding in a religious community. He does this by praying with and studying the Guide for Vowed members. Since he is already in vows with his congregation, he does not take annual vows. He does this only after receiving stability in the Institute.
- After five years from the date of the Indult he can petition to receive stability.

For Religious: NEW PRACTICE as of June 2015. The Holy See has ruled that the period for transfer will be three years. When a religious comes to us, he will spend one full year as an observer. After one year, he petitions the USA council to begin the process for transfer. He follows the protocol as listed above. The date of the Indult from the Holy See begins his Aspirancy. After one full year in Aspirancy, he applies for Probation. After two years in Probation he then can apply to take vows and to receive stability.

Note: For Religious in the process of the FIVE YEAR rule for transfer: Those in this situation may discern with the council whether to complete the five years or opt for the new three year rule for transfer.

5. Annual Reviews and Petitions: For all members in formation and in stability (See separate form)

6. TEAM AND NATIONAL EVENTS

Purpose of the Team: The place of the regular monthly gathering and the primary place for formation. (Required for All)

Purpose of the Annual Congress: The primary purpose of the Congress is the ongoing formation of all the members and the place where the business of the District is done. (Required for All)

Purpose of Annual Retreat: To provide an opportunity for prayer, reflection and spiritual growth and development of the members. (All invited; Required for priests in formation and those moving to next steps)

Purpose of the November Recollection Days: A mid -way gathering for spiritual growth and fellowship in between the August Congress and the March Plenary Gathering.

All are encouraged to attend one of the Recollection Days preferably at your sector location.

Purpose of the March Gathering: Spiritual Formation of members and to do the business of the District (All are strongly encouraged to attend; priests in formation must are required to attend)

REQUIRED

- All members and those in formation are expected to participate regularly at the team meeting
- Everyone is expected to attend the annual Congress
- All moving to next steps are required to attend the annual retreat (Required by the Constitutions)
- ALL PRIESTS IN FORMATION: Required to attend and fully participate in the March Plenary Gathering, the annual Retreat and the annual Congress

STRONGLY ENCOURAGED FOR EVERYONE

- The March Plenary Gathering (Absent only with a good reason)
- The November Recollection Day (Absent only with a good reason)
- The annual retreat

7. FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

PROFESSED MEMBERS (Priests and Celibate Laymen): 7-10% of net income

COMMITTED MEMBERS (Married Couples): 2% of net income)

PERSONAL PROJECT OF POVERTY: All professed and committed members are required according to the Constitutions to have a personal project of poverty

ASPIRANTS, PROBATIONERS AND AFFILIATES: Are asked to make contributions to the Institute according to their means

8. PRIESTS ASKING FOR A CHANGE OF MINISTRY

Any priest who wants to change his ministry and accept a new assignment must present his request to the District Council for approval