

# RITUAL OF THE RELIGIOUS PROFESSION OSM

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## I

### RITE OF INITIATION TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

#### IN THE ORDER

#### OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY

**Servites** are **Servants**.

**Servants** of the new word  
proclaimed by Jesus  
in perfect revelation.

**Servants** of God's Mother,  
first witness of this message.

**Servants** everywhere of the one Church  
and the people of this holy worship.

### INTRODUCTION

1. According to an ancient custom, confirmed by the norms of the Church and by the *Constitutions* of the Order, those who desire to follow Christ closely and to serve our glorious Lady in the Family of the Servants, are received into the novitiate, where they spend an appropriate period -at least one year<sup>[1]</sup>- during which they may gain a deeper knowledge and experience our religious life.<sup>[2]</sup>

The time of novitiate has a great importance, both for the novice and for the Order. In fact, the novice seeks to discover if God is calling him to the religious life in our Order and if he is really able to assume our style of life. The friars, as they support the novice in his human and religious development,<sup>[3]</sup> examine his ability to insert himself fully in our family.

The novices, who are «new shoots of the Order of our Lady»,<sup>[4]</sup> pray with us, meditate the Word of God, consider the nature of the religious life, seek to know more about Mary's mission in the design of salvation<sup>[5]</sup>, study the history, the Constitutions and the customs of the Order;<sup>[6]</sup> they share our meals and take part in some moments of our chapters,<sup>[7]</sup> and participate in some forms of our apostolic service.

#### NATURE OF THE RITE

2. Admission to the novitiate is marked by a simple and joyful rite during a community *célébration*;<sup>[8]</sup> in fact, the friars are happy for the increase of the Order, but are not ignorant that the novitiate is only a period of experiment and probation, a humble beginning of religious life.

3. Because of the particular nature of the novitiate, the celebration of the rite of admission does not foresee the participation of all the people of God, but is reserved to friars, parents of the candidates and friends of the community in which it takes place.

#### PLACE AND DAY

4. The rite preferably takes place in the Chapter room or in an other appropriate place; if it is seen as necessary, in the chapel or in the church of the community.

5. The rite appropriately takes place on saturday, the weekly memorial of Saint Mary, our Lady, on a liturgical feast of the blessed Virgin or of Saints of the Order.

#### MINISTER

6. The celebration is presided by the Prior provincial or his delegate.<sup>[9]</sup>

#### PREPARATION OF THE CELEBRATION

7. In the place where the celebration takes place, there must be prepared:

- the book of the Holy Scriptures;
- the texts which will be read in the Liturgy of the Word;
- the book of the *Rule of Saint Augustine* and the *Constitutions of the Servants of Mary*, to be given to each novice, unless this delivery will be done at the temporary profession;
- the Rite of the religious profession of the Servants of Mary;
- a lectern for the proclamation of readings;
- a container of holy water.

8. The image of Saint Mary is adorned with flowers and candle or lamp.

#### ABOUT THE DELIVERY OF THE HABIT

9. The *Ordo professionis religiosæ* of the *Rituale Romanum*, promulgated by the S. Congregation for the Divine Worship on 2nd february 1970, has introduced a significant change about the moment to deliver the religious habit: it has re-established the old use, common in the East and the West, to confer the religious habit at the moment of profession, excluding its anticipated conferral at the beginning of the novitiate. Different reasons have induced the Holy See to re-establish this ancient practice:

- a) the meaning of the religious habit, which -as recalled by the Vatican Council II- is a sign of consecration,<sup>[10]</sup> that is the offering in which the disciple of Christ dedicate his whole life exclusively and radically to the service of God;
- b) the meaning of the undressing: when making his profession, the candidate undresses himself of everything in order to live the communion; therefore he leaves his own clothing behind (undressing) and puts on those which his new family gives him to wear (dressing);
- c) by analogy with other liturgical rites, in which the delivery of the distinctive sign, follows the new reality created with the sacramental act (by example, after the baptism, the neophyte receives a white cloth; after the ordination, the new priest receives the stole and the chasuble);
- d) by the experimental nature of the novitiate, it is not a suitable a sign of permanent profession/commitment.

10. The Order, conforming itself to the general ordering of the rites of religious profession, has in its own *Proprium*, promulgated on 22nd April 1973, the transfered the delivery of the habit to the rite of first profession.

But this change should not become an abolition of the ritual sequence of the delivery of the habit, which is especially significant and characteristic. It should have its entire reality and expressiveness in the rite of the first profession (cf. nn. 66-69. 101-104. 131-134).

Understanding the motivations behind the original custom will lead us, on the one hand, to not neglect the ritual sequence of the delivery of the habit, and, on the other, to not propose untimely solutions which have no foundation (for example, the delivery of the habit at midyear of the novitiate).

## RITE OF INITIATION

### I. INITIAL RITES

#### GREETING

**11.** The community and all the participants in the celebration meet together in the Chapter room; the candidates to the Order enter, escorted by the friar who was their Master during the pre-novitiate.

**12.** Following the custom of the Servants of Mary, the celebration begins with the singing of the angelic greeting:

Hail, Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Or:

Ave, Maria, gratia plena,  
Dominus tecum;  
benedicta tu in mulieribus  
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.

**13.** Then all present make the sign of cross while the Prior provincial says:

In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit.

All present:

Amen.

The Prior provincial adds:

Blessed be God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has reunited us in his Holy Spirit.  
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.

All present:

Amen.

**14.** The Prior provincial addresses all present, especially the candidates, with some words of greeting.

#### REQUEST FOR ADMISSION

**15.** After the greeting, all present sit down, except the candidates who are standing. The Prior provincial addresses them in these or similar words:

Dear brothers,  
what do you ask of God  
and of our Order?

The candidates answer together in these or similar words:

We, N.N.,  
 desiring to fulfill God's design for us,  
 we ask humbly to experience  
 your life as friar servants of Mary.  
 Teach us to follow Christ closely,  
 to give witness to his Gospel  
 and to serve the blessed Virgin,  
 living in fraternal communion,  
 as did the first seven Fathers.

The Prior provincial answers:

Come and see.  
 May the merciful God sustain you with his grace  
 and give us the light of discernment.

*cf. Jn 1: 39*

All present:

Amen.

#### INVITATION TO CONVERSION

16. The Prior provincial invites all present to penance and to conversion in these or similar words:

Brothers and sisters,  
 this is an important moment  
 for N.N., who have asked to fulfill  
 an experience of religious life into our Order,  
 and also for ourselves.

Following the tradition of religious life,  
 the beginning of novitiate  
 is considered as a moment and sign of conversion:  
 the disciple of the Lord  
 abandons his old life,  
 and orders his new life  
 toward the radical following of Christ.

Knowing the seriousness of this task which awaits us  
 and our weakness,  
 let us put ourselves in the presence of our holy and merciful God,  
 let us ask him to forgive our faults,  
 to render pure our hearts,  
 and to make clear our vision.

17. After a brief period of silence, the invocations follow. These are proclaimed by the Prior provincial or by another friar. The invocations, while keeping a trinitarian structure, can be reduced in number or substituted by others:

Father,  
 you know the heart of man  
 and you give forgiveness to the one who repents,  
 have mercy on us.

*R.* Lord, have mercy (Kyrie, eleison).

Father,  
 you watch over your people  
 and you heal them of their infidelity,  
 have mercy on us.

*R.* Lord, have mercy (Kyrie, eleison).

Father,  
 you manifest your lordship in indulgence  
 and your power in gentleness,  
 have mercy on us.

*R.* Lord, have mercy (Kyrie, eleison).

Christ,  
 you welcomed the woman who was a sinner  
 and through your great love  
 you forgave her numerous sins,  
 have mercy on us.

*cf. Luke 7: 36-50*

*R.* Christ, have mercy (Christe, eleison).

Christ,  
 you called Zacheus, the tax collector,  
 to conversion and new life,  
 have mercy on us.

*cf. Luke 19: 1-10*

*R.* Christ, have mercy (Christe, eleison).

Christ,  
 you summed up the entire Law  
 in the love of God and of neighbour,  
 have mercy on us.

*cf. Matthew 22: 34-40*

*R.* Christ, have mercy (Christe, eleison).

Spirit of God,  
 poured on the Church for the forgiveness of sins,  
 have mercy on us.

*R.* Lord, have mercy (Kyrie, eleison).

Spirit of God,  
 you change hearts of stone to hearts of flesh,  
 have mercy on us.

*cf. Ezekiel 36: 26*

*R.* Lord, have mercy (Kyrie, eleison).

Spirit of God,  
 you write in hearts the new Law of love,  
 have mercy on us.

*cf. Jeremiah 31: 33*

*R.* Lord, have mercy (Kyrie, eleison).

**18.** When the invocations are finished, the candidates go to the container of holy water to sprinkle themselves; then the Prior provincial sprinkles the assembly. An antiphon such as the following may be sung.

I will sprinkle clean water upon you,

and from all your uncleannesses and idols I will cleanse you.  
A new heart I will give you. *Ezekiel 36: 25-26*

**Or:**

I will pour clean water over you,  
and cleanse you from all your sin.

**In Eastertide:**

This is the water, *cf. Ezekiel 47: 1-12*  
which flowed from the holy temple of God, alleluia;  
and those who will be reached by this water will be saved,  
and they will sing: alleluia, alleluia.

**19. After sprinkling, the Prior provincial says:**

Merciful Father  
and God of all consolation,  
who has chosen us in Christ before the creation of the world,  
to be holy and pure before him,  
may he purify our hearts,  
convert them to the radical following of Christ  
and fill them with the gifts of his Spirit.

**All present:**

Amen.

## **OPENING PRAYER**

**20. The Prior provincial invites the assembly to prayer:**

Let us pray.

There follows a brief period of private prayer.

God, holy Father,  
the beginning and fulfilment of every vocation,  
look kindly upon **N.N.**,  
who desire to experience  
the life of the friar servants of Mary.  
Grant that, through your grace,  
living together and searching together for your will,  
they may know your plan of love.  
(We make our prayer) through Christ our Lord.

**All present:**

Amen.

## **II. LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**21. In preparing the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word, take care that:**  
- there be a thematic unity;

- it not be prolonged either by the number or by the length of the readings;
- it be the fruit of a search done together by the candidates;
- it respect the necessary proportion between word, song, silence;
- it reserve the main place to the proclamation of the Gospel.

## READINGS

**22.** One or more texts of Holy Scripture can be read here, preference should be given to those indicated in the *Lectionary for the religious profession* (cf. Appendice II, nn. 241-340); a Psalm, a song or response, or a brief period of silence should separate the readings.

Some texts from the Magisterium on the significance of religious life in the Church and in the world could be used; or texts concerning the history and the spirituality of the Order, extracts especially from the *Rule of Saint Augustine* and from the *Legenda de origine Ordinis*; passages of Holy Fathers or of other authors of valid doctrine, above all of the Order.

## MEDITATION ON THE WORD

**23.** The Prior provincial comments on the readings, explains the sense and the value of the religious life and portrays the particular charism of the Order.

If circumstances permit, the reflection on the Word may lend itself to a fraternal dialogue, under the direction of the Prior provincial.

## III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE NOVICES

### ACCEPTANCE OF THE REQUEST

**24.** The Prior provincial, standing up, addresses the novices with these or similar words:

Dear brothers,  
in light of the Word on which we have meditated,  
in the name of the provincial community,  
I accept your request  
to be admitted to the novitiate  
of the friar Servants of blessed Virgin Mary.

Novices:

Thanks be to God.

The Prior provincial continues:

Here the blessed Virgin will be for you,  
as she was for the first seven Fathers,  
«special Refuge, singular Mother, proper Lady».<sup>[11]</sup>

As the novices come forward, he embraces them or makes an other sign of acceptance, according to the local custom.

### DELIVERY OF THE RULE AND OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

**25.** The Prior provincial sits down. The novices come, one by one, to him to receive the book containing the *Rule of Saint Augustine* and the *Constitutions of the Servants*. As he presents them to the novice, the Prior provincial says:

Brother **N.** Mary,  
 receive the Rule of Saint Augustine  
 and the Constitutions of the friar Servants of Mary:  
 they will help and guide you  
 to live the Gospel of Christ in fraternal communion.

The novice answers:

Amen.

The novice returns to his seat.

26. If it is opportune, the Rule and the Constitutions can be given during the rite of the temporary profession.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE MASTER OF FORMATION

27. Then the Prior provincial entrusts the novices to the formation Master in these or similar words:

Brother **N.** Mary,  
 together with the community of **N.**,  
 will be your guide in your journey of searching  
 and your brother in this time of experimentation.

The Master welcomes the novices with a fraternal sign.

## IV. CONCLUSION OF THE RITE

28. The rite ends with a community prayer; for this, two different forms are proposed: the first one follows the model of the *General intercessions* (**A**); the second one appears to be like a *Psalm for novices* (**B**).

### A. GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

29. The formula proposed here is only a suggestion. It is possible to choose the intercessions which seem more appropriate, to make others more suitable, and to add new ones.

30. The Prior provincial invites the Assembly to prayer:

Brothers and sisters,  
 today, in memory of ...,<sup>[12]</sup>  
 the family of Servants rejoices  
 at the admission to the novitiate of brothers **N.N.**  
 Let us present to God the Father  
 our fervent supplications  
 for these men, for the Church, and for the world.

Reader:

Let us pray together and say:

**R.** Lord, hear the prayer of your servants.

Or:

**R.** Lord, graciously hear us.



1. For brothers **N.N.**:

in order that, with the protection and the guidance of Saint Mary,  
they may direct their steps on the way of the Lord  
with a firm will and a sincere faith,  
let us pray. **R.**

2. For the parents of brothers **N.N.**,

who have given to them life, faith, education:  
in order that they may help them again by prayer and love  
to live fully their vocation,  
let us pray. **R.**

3. For the formators:

in order that they may transmit to these novices  
the values of religious life and community,  
that they may increase in them  
a love for the Word  
and a genuine devotion towards the blessed Virgin,  
that they may help them  
to be attentive to the least and the humble ones,  
and teach them how to discern the signs of the times,  
let us pray. **R.**

4. For our Order,

which is called to serve God, the Virgin Mary and the Church:  
so that, as were our First Fathers,  
we may be witnesses to Gospel values,  
a presence of mercy, and a sign of unity and fraternity,  
let us pray. **R.**

5. For the Church,

so that she may be the light, salt, leaven in the earthly city,  
she may accept the events of the world  
which call us to a renewal and development,  
she may denounce with courage what disfigures the image of God in men and women of today,  
let us pray. **R.**

6. For the youth,

in order that the choice of these brothers may indicate  
the primacy of spiritual values for them,  
let us pray. **R.**

**31. The Prior provincial introduces the Lord's prayer:**

Confident in the efficacy of the prayer of the disciples  
reunited in the Lord's name,  
let us conclude our intercessions  
with the words that Jesus, the Master, has taught us:

**All present:**

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name.  
 Thy kingdom come.  
 Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.  
 Give us this day our daily bread,  
 and forgive us our trespasses,  
 as we forgive those who trespass against us  
 and lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil.

**32. The Prior provincial concludes:**

God, holy Father,  
 in the Seven First Fathers,  
 you have given us a wonderful example  
 of fraternal charity and service of the blessed Virgin;  
 look with kindness on these brothers **N.N.**  
 who are your sons,  
 and who desire to follow Christ closely in our Family,  
 grant that we may search together for your will  
 and make our community life become  
 a source of mutual love and generous service to Saint Mary.  
 (We make our prayer) through Christ our Lord.

**All present:**

Amen.

**B. PSALM FOR NOVICES**

**33. The *Psalm for novices* is a supplication prayer composed of: some psalm verses read by the Prior provincial, texts which express some Constitution articles said by the formation Master, and a psalm acclamation sung by the Assembly:**

**Prior provincial:**

**Cf. Ps 67 (66): 2**

O God, have mercy on your servants  
 and let your face shed its light upon them.

**Master:**

**Cf. Cs 1-2**

The friar servant of Mary,  
 in order to fulfill the commandment of love,  
 commit himself to be at the service of God and all people,  
 drawing abiding inspiration from Mary,  
 mother and servant of the Lord.

**All present:**

**Cf. Ps 84 (83): 6**

Happy the one whose strength you are,  
 his heart is set upon the pilgrimage.

**Prior provincial:**

**Cf. Ps 86 (85): 4**

Give joy to your servants, O Lord,  
 for to you they lift up their soul.

**Master:**

**Cf. Cs 104, 144-148**

The servant follows Christ his Lord,  
humble and poor,  
gentle and patient,  
obedient and pure.

**All present:**

Happy the one whose strength you are,  
his heart is set upon the pilgrimage.

**Prior provincial:**

*Cf. Ps 119 (118): 124*

Treat your servants with love  
and teach them your statutes.

**Master:**

*Cf. Cs 10, 24, 109, 113*

As were the Seven First Fathers,  
the servant is a Word-keeper,  
a man of contemplation,  
a searcher of friendship,  
a peacemaker.

**All present:**

Happy the one whose strength you are,  
his heart is set upon the pilgrimage.

**Prior provincial:**

*Cf. Ps 16 (15): 1*

Preserve your servants, O God,  
they take refuge in you.

**Master:**

*Cf. Cs 3-4, 106*

Pilgrim on earth,  
the servant is thirsty for the Infinite,  
searches for the Absolute,  
travels along the way of the Beauty.

**All present:**

Happy the one whose strength you are,  
his heart is set upon the pilgrimage.

**Prior provincial:**

O Lord, hear the voice of your servants  
and show to them the marvels of your love.

**Master:**

*Cf. Cs 6-7, 319*

The servant of Mary  
recognizes in the Mother of the Lord  
his glorious Lady,  
and assumes as the model for his service  
the figure of the sorrowful Mother at the foot of the cross.

**All present:**

Happy the one whose strength you are,

his heart is set upon the pilgrimage.

**34. The Prior provincial concludes:**

Lord God,  
in your providence,  
you never cease to make richer through new gifts  
the Order of friar Servants of Mary:  
turn your merciful eyes to us and to our brothers **N.N.**  
who are new shoots on Senario's vine:  
may your light enlighten us,  
your strength sustain us,  
your love accompany us,  
on our journey of searching and mutual service.  
(We make our prayer) through Christ our Lord.

**All present:**

Amen.

**DISMISSAL**

**35. The Prior provincial addresses all those assembled:**

The Lord be with you.

**All present:**

And also with you.

**He adds:**

May almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

**All present:**

Amen.

**36. Following the tradition of the Order, the blessed Virgin is honoured with the singing of the *Salve Regina* or the *Supplication of the Servants* or another Marian antiphon.**

**37. The Prior provincial dismisses the assembly:**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All present:**

Thanks be to God.

**V. ADMISSION IN THE HOME OF NOVITIATE**

**38. If possible, at the end of the rite, the novices go with the Master to the house of the novitiate, singing the *Litany of the novices of the Servants of Mary*:**

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Lord, have mercy.                                  | Lord, have mercy.           |
| Christ, hear us.                                   | Christ, hear us.            |
| Christ, graciously hear us.                        | Christ, graciously hear us. |
| God, the Father in heaven,                         | have mercy on us.           |
| God the Son, Redeemer of the world,                | have mercy on us.           |
| God the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete,                | have mercy on us.           |
| Holy Trinity, one God,                             | have mercy on us.           |
| Virgin of the annunciation,                        | pray for us, your servants. |
| Rejoice Mary, virgin among angels,                 |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, virgin most honoured of all virgins, |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, virgin most pure,                    |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, virgin most chaste,                  |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, virgin inviolate,                    |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, virgin most lovable,                 |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, virgin most admirable,               |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, virgin most worthy of praise,        |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, virgin most venerable,               |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, virgin temple of the Spirit,         |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, Mother of God,                       |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, Mother of Jesus,                     |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, Mother of our Creator,               |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, Mother of our Redeemer,              |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, Mother of the risen Lord,            |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, Mother of the righteous Judge,       |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, Mother of Christ our glory,          |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, Mother of all people,                |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, Mother of grace,                     |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, Mother of mercy,                     |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, refuge of sinners,                   |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, health of the sick,                  |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, consolation of the afflicted,        |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, advocate of the poor,                |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, mediatrix of Christians,             |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, our hope,                            |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, queen of the universe,               |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, queen of angels,                     |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, queen of patriarchs,                 |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, queen of prophets,                   |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, queen of apostles,                   |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, queen of martyrs,                    |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, queen of faithful witnesses,         |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, queen of the virgins,                |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, queen of the elect,                  |                             |
| Rejoice Mary, queen of all saints,                 |                             |
| Lamb of God,                                       |                             |
| you take away the sins of the world,               | forgive us, Lord.           |
| Lamb of God,                                       |                             |
| you take away the sins of the world,               | hear us, Lord.              |
| Lamb of God,                                       |                             |

you take away the sins of the world,                      have mercy on us.

**39. The Master concludes the singing of the Litany in front of the icon of the blessed Virgin with the prayer:**

In your loving kindness, Lord,  
 break the chains of our sinfulness.  
 Through the intercession of blessed Mary, Mother of God,  
 our Seven Holy Fathers,  
 your servant St. Philip  
 and all the saints,  
 assist and make holy  
 N., our pope,  
 N., our brother and prior general,  
 we, your servants,  
 our communities  
 and all our benefactors;  
 deliver our parents, relatives, and friends  
 from evil and fill them with every gift of life;  
 grant us peace and health;  
 drive far from us all enemies seen and unseen  
 and repel every sinful desire.  
 Give us wholesome air and fruitful soil;  
 free the world from hunger, war, and every disaster,  
 and protect this city (country, place) and all its inhabitants  
 from every misfortune.  
 Pour out your love  
 upon our friends  
 and upon our enemies  
 and grant eternal rest to all those departed in faith.  
 (We make our prayer) through Christ our Lord.

**The novices:**

Amen.