

A SERVICE WELCOMING AN INQUIRER / INQUIRERS

Introduction & Rubrics

This service is used when a seeker enters the Time of Inquiry. The person being welcomed is expected to have:

- reviewed introductory information about the Order,
- communicated with the Registrar,
- been affirmed as an Inquirer, and
- been paired with a companion.



Through this rite, the Order of Saint Luke invites the seeker to “come and see” and begin discerning a possible vocation shaped by the Rule of Life and Service. In traditional terms, this marks a period of postulancy or “pre-novitiate.”

If, during the Time of Inquiry, the Inquirer and companion discern a call to deeper testing of vocation, the Inquirer may enter the Time of Discernment (novitiate) through the Service of Admission to Final Discernment.

Note: This text uses the singular “they/them” in keeping with current inclusive language practice.

Planning the Rite

This service welcomes and blesses a new Inquirer and introduces them to the community. It may be adapted for multiple Inquirers.

The rite may be held in a chapter meeting, via Zoom/Meetings, or by conference call, though face-to-face settings are preferred. It should be communal and include:

- words of welcome,
- commitments from the candidate, companion, and community,
- prayer for God’s blessing on the Inquirer’s formation.

Leaders should feel free to adapt the service according to the setting and other considerations.

Participants include a leader representing the Order, the Inquirer, and the companion. The leader may be the abbot, another general officer, a chapter prior or officer, the Registrar, or someone designated by the abbot, a prior, or the Novitiate Team Leader.

The rite may be placed after the evangelical canticle in Morning or Evening Prayer, or following the sermon in a Service of Word and Table. It should remain simple and may be followed by a time of fellowship.

The prayers and blessing acknowledge the Inquirer's beginning journey of discovery and discernment.

After the reading(s), the Lukan canticle, and the exhortation, the rite proceeds with:

1. Introduction
2. Commitment
3. Blessing and Prayers
4. Greeting of the New Inquirer(s)

THE RITE

INTRODUCTORY

- 1) *The Officiant, in these or similar words, addresses those present:*

Today we welcome ___ NAME(S) ___, who ask(s) to be received as an Inquirer / as Inquirers in the Order of Saint Luke [and in the ___ NAME OF ___ Chapter].

- 2) *The candidate(s) come forward and stand before the Officiant, who asks:*

What do you seek?

- 3) *The candidate(s) respond:*

God's grace and your support. *(Or another brief prepared response.)*

COMMITMENT

- 4) *The Officiant says these or similar words:*

Do you desire a season among us to keep the Rule of Life and Service and to learn our customs and traditions, for the glory of God and the living out of the baptismal covenant?

- 5) *The Inquirer(s) respond:*

I do, with God's grace.

- 6) *The Officiant addresses the companion(s):*

___ NAME(S) ___, will you support and guide the Inquirer(s) in your care during their Time of Inquiry? Will you pray for them and help them come to a recognition of God's call?

The companion(s) respond:

I will, with the help of God.

Then, if other members of the Order are present, the Officiant addresses them:

You have heard the response of ___ NAME(S) ___ and the declaration of support from their companion(s). Will you surround them with your prayers and friendship, that they may come to a true sense of the Spirit's call?

They answer:

We will, God helping us.

BLESSING

7) The candidate(s) may stand or kneel. The Officiant, accompanied by the companion(s), extends hands and says:

___ NAME(S) ___, drawn by God's mercy and grace, you have come to this moment to learn our way of life. Following the example of Saint Luke the Evangelist, [strengthened by participation in this Chapter / this Covenant Community], and with the attending care of your companion(s), we call you to know our way of life, to explore our life of prayer and service, and to discern whether our Rule of Life and Service is in harmony with God's call to you.

Then, with a gesture of blessing, the Officiant says:

May the blessing of God, the Holy Trinity, be with you always, and may Christ grant you light and peace.

Amen.

PRAYERS AND PEACE

8) Then the following may be led by the companion or another member present, praying (with a hand on the Inquirer's shoulder, if in a face-to-face setting):

Loving God, you have called your servant(s) to baptismal living and to a deeper sense of vocation in the Order of Saint Luke. Grant that through the grace of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of our community, ___ NAME(S) ___ may be faithful in discovering our Lukan way of life and in heeding your call in this Time of Inquiry. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

9) *Here all may join in praying the Collect for the Order of Saint Luke:*

The Holy One be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

O Shepherd of us all, who inspired your servant Saint Luke the Physician to set forth in the Gospel the love and healing power of Jesus: Grant, we ask you, your Spirit to the Order of Saint Luke, that we may proclaim faithfully the Apostolic hope, magnify the Sacraments, and embody Christ's healing grace for all creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

10) *If the setting is face-to-face, the Officiant invites all to greet the new Inquirer(s).*

11) *The service continues with the prayers of the daily office or, if a Service of Word and Table, with the Concerns and Intercessions.*