



# Novitiate Overview: The Times of Inquiry and Final Discernment

## Leading to Profession

This document outlines a process for welcoming seekers and discerning how God may be calling you into the Order of Saint Luke (OSL). *The process is not designed to be rigid. It is a pathway to guide. The Holy Spirit leads!*

The Order uses the traditional term *novitiate* but adapts it into two stages: the Time of Inquiry and the Time of Discernment. Initiated in August 2018, this process continues to evolve, and feedback is welcomed. See [GUIDE FOR TIME OF INQUIRY](#) and [GUIDE FOR FINAL DISCERNMENT](#) for more details.

## Key Terms

- Registrar: Oversees seekers, inquirers, and discerners; appointed by the abbot.
- Companion: An OSL member who mentors inquirers or discerners, assigned by the Companion Coordinator.
- FBSID: *Facebook Seekers, Inquirers, and Discerners* — a private group for seekers, companions, and members. Contact the Registrar for admission.

## 1. Initial Contact

- The Registrar welcomes the seeker, answers questions, and explores interest in the Order.
- With permission, the seeker may be added to the Facebook Seekers, Inquirers and Discerners page and directed to the OSL website and key resources.

## 2. Second Contact

- The Registrar helps the seeker discern next steps:
  - Continue reading, exploring, and praying,

or

- o Begin the Time of Inquiry by completing the application form.
- If the application form is completed and returned to the Registrar:
  - o The Companion Coordinator assigns a companion.
  - o The Novitiate Team Leader is notified.
  - o Initial resources are provided and progress is tracked.

### 3. Time of Inquiry (Postulancy / Exploration)

A several-month period to “try on” OSL life. Inquirers practice the Rule of Life and Service, engage with a companion, and explore the Order’s mission and life.

This period or time begins with *A Service of Welcoming an Inquirer*

Activities may include:

- Keeping a journal
- Praying the Daily Office
- Participating in five cohort sessions (monthly Zoom gatherings)
- Working through formation modules with a companion
- Reading *Food for Pilgrims* and other OSL documents
- Joining chapter meetings, retreats, or online prayer offices
- Attending Eucharist and reaffirming baptismal covenant

The Novitiate Team Leader ensures each inquirer has access to core resources: *Rule of Life and Service, Constitution and Bylaws, The Customary, Food for Pilgrims, Book of Offices and Services, Lukan Book of Hours*, and optionally *Lukan Book of Feasts*. WADO, the Web Amplified Daily Office, is an online resource for use by inquirers. See the OSL website.

### 4. Conclusion of Inquiry

The Time of Inquiry ends when:

- The inquirer discerns readiness for deeper exploration and enters the Time of Discernment,

or

- The inquirer discerns a call elsewhere and withdraws.

## 5. Time of Final Discernment (Novitiate)

An extended period (several weeks to a year) to discern vocation and prepare for first public annual vows.

The period begins with the *Service of Admission to Final Discernment*.

Goals:

- Deepen relationship with God
- Live fully into the Rule of Life and Service
- Grow in knowledge of OSL traditions and religious life
- Experience Lukan spirituality through prayer, sacraments, and service

The Discerner and companion share in study, prayer, and practice. Time with a spiritual director is encouraged.

Content & Experiences may include:

- Rule of Life and Service: accountability and reflection
- Religious Life: study of monasticism and OSL history
- Lukan Spirituality: Daily Office, worship, service
- Communal Life: retreats, fellowship, shared prayer
- Call to Service: discern gifts and connect with your mission fields

Discerners may withdraw at any time and may remain a Friend of the Order.

Readiness for vows is mutually discerned with the companion.

## 6. Membership

Upon profession, the discerner becomes a member, reaffirming vows annually as outlined in the Constitution.

Commitments include:

- Making first profession at a retreat, chapter meeting, or Covenant Community session
- Completing the online Affirmation form
- Reaffirming vows annually, especially on the Feast of Saint Luke (October 18)