

# THE CAMALDOLESE VOCATION

*Monastic Community  
and Solitude*



## New Camaldoli Hermitage

62475 Highway 1  
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(831) 667-2456  
[www.contemplation.com](http://www.contemplation.com)



## **Thank you for your interest in our way of life.**

We are a monastic and contemplative community, in the Benedictine tradition, with an emphasis on both community and solitude.

Within the Camaldolese Benedictine life, the daily communal celebrations include the liturgy, the mid-day meal, recreation and work. Monks live in separate cottages and spend ample time journeying into God. Some monks live a more intense solitude than others, for there is a wide range of monastic forms including the life of reclusion. Each monk, regardless of lifestyle, remains united in faith, obedience and love to his brothers and to the prior who ministers to the spiritual life of the community. This is a difficult balance, and requires specific human skills and a certain level of spiritual development.

We ask that individuals considering our way of life be in a process of spiritual direction with someone to help discern the mysterious call that is the call to religious life. This is best done locally, that is, with someone near your home. We ask too that this process be an extended one, not just one or two visits. As the work progresses and the life of prayer

increases, and if it seems that God is calling you to consider a monastic and contemplative vocation, we would be happy to explore the possibility of a call to our way of life with you. Let us begin to address issues that often come up for prospective candidates.

## Formation

Monastic life itself constitutes the basic formation program. It is a life long journey on which we learn to listen with the heart to God's mysterious Word. To seek God is to search for the wisdom, which fulfills. This is a paradoxical learning which supposes a willingness to unlearn, to let go, and to trust, to be open to the transforming action of God's spirit.

## Vocation

If you are discerning a call to the monastic life, the process begins by initiating contact with our Vocation Director.

- After initial correspondence, if it seems appropriate, an invitation to visit the Hermitage is extended. There are normally a number of visits of varying lengths over a number of months. You would be staying within the cloister with the monks, getting to know the community and their way of life.
- This initial period is followed by a two to three month longer stay that we call the *observership*. During this period, the candidate lives with the community and enters more fully into all aspects of our life, joins us in choir and participates in the normal work of the community under the immediate direction of the Vocation Director. This is followed by a brief period away for discernment by both the individual and the formation team.
- Following the observership, the candidate may enter one year of *postulancy*. This year permits more of an opportunity to live a communal style

common prayer four times a day, work, various communal activities, and recreation, in addition to the candidate's personal prayer, reading and study. The year includes class instruction centering on Scripture, monastic spirituality and history. Upon approval of the professed members of the community, the *novitiate* year then follows.

- The *novitiate* year allows for more class instruction in Scripture, writings and history of the fathers of the early Christian church, and monastic spirituality and history. The opportunity to participate more fully in the communal life continues during this additional year.
- After one year of the *novitiate*, the monk may petition for simple vows. The time of simple



profession may be from three to nine years. After first profession, the new monk lives, works and prays with his brothers, learns much about the

service of love, which is a necessary foundation for, and expression of any life of loving worship and contemplation.

- During the following years, the new monk will continue his studies in these and other disciplines related to monastic life.
- Studies for the priesthood may be recommended if this vocation is indicated both by the monk's own inner attraction and by the judgment of the community. However, the monastic charism is complete in itself, with or without priestly ordination, and our community rejoices in a diversity of charisms.

## Criteria and Procedure for New Candidates

Our life is challenging and different from many other ways of life. We accept candidates from the mid-20s up to the age 45. We have found that those candidates in their late teens and early to mid-twenties do not persevere. Therefore we encourage people to wait until their mid to late twenties before seriously considering our way of life. Those who have experienced a life on their own, supporting themselves, have done well here.



We are a Roman Catholic order, and as such, candidates must be Catholic. Those considering converting to the Catholic faith are strongly encouraged to become involved in a local parish

RCIA program and recent converts are asked to be involved in their local parish for a couple of years before considering us, in order to distinguish the call of conversion from the call to religious life.

In addition, those who have been away from the practice of the Catholic faith for a period of time should become re-acquainted with the Catholic faith and involved in the life of the local church.

There are programs in parishes to help in this process. Your spiritual director can help you.

We include psychological testing during the observership period. The results are shared with the formation team in order to better evaluate the candidate's compatibility with our community and our way of life and with the candidate to further his continued growth.

Prior to beginning the observership (the last stage of discernment before beginning the postulancy) we do require that all candidates need to be free of all financial obligations, including all school loans.

## **Responding to God's call**

The life of the monk is a mystery to be experienced and lived. We come to recognize within our depths this wordless call and by grace we respond with our whole being. There is no rush in the great adventure of discerning one's God-given vocation.

If you have any further questions, or are interested in pursuing the possibility of a vocation with us, please feel free to write of Vocation Director, Father Isaiah at:

Father Isaiah c/o New Camaldoli Hermitage  
62475 Coast Highway 1  
Big Sur, CA 93920-9533

Or send an e-mail to Father Isaiah at:

[vocations@contemplation.com](mailto:vocations@contemplation.com)

You may also leave a telephone message at:  
(831) 667-2456 x108

Please know of our prayers for you in this important search for a clearer sense of God's call.

*In all things let God be glorified  
through Jesus Christ.*