

MERCY OF GOD COMMUNITY - PROFESSION OF FIRST VOWS

Community Servant: *Brother/Sister* _____, as Spiritual Director
what do you seek from me and from this congregation?

Spiritual Director: I ask that you, as Community Servant, receive the profession of first
vows from _____, [*novices/N, a novice*] of this
community.

Community Servant: Do you know [*Him/Her/Them*] to be fully prepared and
spiritually able to assume this responsibility?

Spiritual Director: [*He/She/They*] [*has/have*] fulfilled all requirements by:

- being faithful to Community responsibilities
- participating fully and with sincerity in the formation program
- attending plenary and other meetings whenever possible

On behalf of the Mercy of God Community I ask God to bless [*these
novices/this novice*] and ask you to receive [*His/Her/Their*] first
profession of vows in this community.

[Spiritual Director calls novice/novices forward by name]

Community Servant: For the past [*three years*] you have lived as part of the Mercy of
God Community first as an Associate, then as a Candidate and a
Novice. During that time, with prayer and in humility you have
offered yourself to Christ and opened yourself to the
transforming love of the Holy Spirit. You have sought God's
guidance and direction, sincerely discerning not what you want,
but what God desires for your life. In community you have
served gladly, working to bring about a climate of peace, love,
freedom, and hope. What do you now seek?

Novice(s): I seek to renew and strengthen my affiliation with the Mercy of God
Community - and to profess vows of detachment from material things,
responsible sexuality, and obedience to the message of the gospels - before
you as our community servant - this congregation - and our loving God.

Community Servant: Are you prepared to profess your vows as a [*Sister/Brother*] in
the Mercy of God Community?

Novice(s) [*separately*]: I am prepared.

Community Servant: Do you ask this of your own free will?

Novice(s) [*separately*]: I do.

Community Servant: Do you believe that you have been called by God and the church
to a life of service to Christ in the spirit of Saint Francis and
Saint Clare?

Novice(s): I do.

Community Servant: What is your desire?

Novice(s): I, _____, with God's help and through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, desire to dedicate my life to the service of others as a professed member of the Mercy of God Community.

Community Servant: What is your intention in this life of service and prayer?

Novice(s): It is my intention

- to live my life in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi;
- to live prayerfully, peacefully and ecumenically;
- to accept all God's children as my brothers and sisters, fostering love, acceptance, joy and inclusion by my example.

Community Servant: Before God and in the presence of these witnesses, what do you vow?

Novice(s):

- **I VOW DETACHMENT FROM MATERIAL THINGS**
 - I promise to live my life from this moment using all goods and possessions God has entrusted to me for the betterment of creation.
 - I promise to live simply, humbly and in reverence for all life and for the Earth, our home.
 - I promise to use whatever material things God has placed in my care wisely, without depriving others.
- **I VOW RESPONSIBLE SEXUALITY**
 - I promise responsible sexuality
 - I promise to strive earnestly and prayerfully for the transformation of my passions to ennoble my capacity for human affection into active love for others and complete love for God
 - I promise to devote myself to an intimate, loving relationship with Christ, from which all my relationships with others flow
- **I VOW OBEDIENCE TO THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPELS**
 - I promise to study the Holy Scriptures faithfully and regularly, prayerfully opening myself to the transforming love of the Gospel
 - I promise, through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to discern God's will for me, and with joy and faithfulness, to follow where God leads me without regard to personal cost
 - I promise to live according to the Rule of this community to the best of my ability

[The Spiritual Director hands the Community Servant the Profession Cross(es) to be given.]

Community Servant: It was not the power of others that brought Jesus to the cross, but Christ's unlimited love for the world. Jesus said that those who do not take up their cross and follow him can not be his disciples. May God strengthen you to bear your cross in love and grace,

remembering that it is worn in humility and love. In the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare, help those who suffer rejection, injustice and powerlessness; have mercy on those whose illness, hopelessness or ignorance keep them enslaved; through your life, seek to be Christ's presence in the world, bringing to others Christ's loving embrace.

[If a name in religion is to be taken, the novice(s) shall kneel...]

Community Servant: Receive the name of _____
by which you will be known in religion. Let this symbolize your dedication as you become new in the spirit of your calling. May the Lord Christ put off from you the old person and deeds and clothe you with a new life which is created by God in peace and with holiness. Arise from your former self and Christ shall give you light, for you are Christ's and Christ is God's.

[The candidate(s) stand.]

Community Servant: (Let us pray.) Almighty God, to you all hearts are open and all desires known. Look upon these our *[brothers/sisters]* who in your mercy you have called to this life of prayer and service. Pour into them the fullness of your Spirit so that what they have promised today they may, with your grace, observe faithfully and joyfully to the end. May they perfectly love you and magnify your holy name in service to this community and to Christ's church. Grant them patience that the spirit of prayer and devotion will not extinguish, but will grow with intensity as their love grows for you. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Community Servant: My *[brother/sister]*, may peace, love and wisdom abide with you always.

[The Community Servant and the professed embrace while the Community Servant says:

Community Servant: I embrace you as my *[brother/ sister]* and as my friend.