

Grafted into the FCJ Society

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*A reflection by Sr Tyas, fc.J,
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Grafting is a technique in Agriculture in which two or more parts of different plants are combined to form a new one. In grafting, we need a root stalk and an upper part, so, compatibility is an important consideration. Compatibility is the capacity for union of the two plants to become a new plant. The purpose of grafting is to utilize the good qualities of the upper part and to increase the productivity of the root stalk.

Entering religious life is similar to grafting. The challenge is to integrate the candidate (root stalk) and the Society (upper part). There are specific stages in religious life, similar to the grafting process. Both entail four stages before the completion of the process.

The first stage of religious life is *aspirancy*. Here the “aspirant” is introduced to community life, like seedlings are put in a nursery. The nursery is the space where seedlings are placed until they develop roots and sprout. For aspirants, this is expressed in their ability to be involved in the daily life of the religious community.

The next stage of religious life is *postulancy*. Here the postulant, still a seedling, is provided daily maintenance through following a regular schedule of living in community and learning about the history the Society. They should be able to reach a certain height and thickness, as manifested through openness to the new life, generosity and maturity.

The third stage is *novitiate*. Here, the novices as the new root stalks are ready for treatment. This is the most important stage of religious life. The compatibility of the root stalk to the upper part and the skill of the grafter (the formator) are put to the test. The novices pass through real personal transformation by their readiness to give themselves to the other, and through their commitment to a life of prayer.

The fourth and the last stage is *temporary profession*. After novitiate, sisters who intend to offer their lives to God take the religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience as FCJs. In this stage, the sisters live as fully committed FCJ sisters and dedicate themselves unreservedly for the greater service and glory of God. The sisters will minister in their new place in the “vineyard” of God’s people, according to their potential and the “thirst” or need of the people around them. The sisters will practice all their learning about vows, the Constitutions and the charism of the Society in “real “daily life.

Similar to grafting, entering religious life is a work of collaboration between the candidate, the FCJ Society and the formator in each stage. It can be done through the grace of God in our initiative to enter the Society. This grace will be granted to everybody whom God calls, and who has the desire to be grafted into religious life and the FCJ Society.



“ Jesus is our hope. Nothing—not even evil or death—is able to separate us from the saving power of his love. ”

Pope Francis

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