

“By their prayer and service...”

A brief introduction to
contemporary monasticism
and dispersed religious life in
the Anglican Communion

Br. Christian Ventura, OCS, SCP

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH 





Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, you became poor for our sake, that we might be made rich through your poverty: Guide and sanctify, we pray, those whom you call to follow you under the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, that **by their prayer and service** they may enrich your Church, and by their life and worship may glorify your Name; for you reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

*Collect For Monastic Orders and Vocations
Pg. 819, Book of Common Prayer (1979)*

Nice to meet you!



Brother Christian

Episcopal Dominican Friar / Deacon Postulant
Assistant Professor & Public Health Scientist

Life Profession:

11 Jan 2024, Cathedral Church of Saint Paul

Postulancy Facilitator & Spiritual Director
Order of Christ the Saviour



Religious Life is...

a vocation

requires a call from God, affirmation from community, and a faithful "Yes"

a shared promise

much like a marriage, special vows are made before the altar as a shared covenant

a sacrifice

where we offer "ourselves, our souls, and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice..."

a life-long journey

discernment and formation are always ongoing in pursuit of reunion with God

Religious Life is NOT...

a cool club

ordered life is a gift and call from God that not everyone is called to

Holy Orders

while professed religious are often “consecrated”, this is not the same as ordination

easy

ordered living is tough and praying is not always easy or convenient

independent

this journey is never taken alone

The Gist

Stages of formation and specific details vary by community

Aspirancy

- Initial Discernment
- Background Check / Safe Church
- Spiritual Direction

Postulancy

- Initial learning time
- Continued mutual discernment between postulant and community

Novitiate

- Formal “testing” of vocation
- Vestiture of the Habit
- New name

Profession

- Temporary or Permanent vows are made
- Consecrated to God through the charism



Brief Timeline

- Splitting of the Church of England (English Reformation)
- King Henry VIII suppresses religious life by dissolving monasteries, convents, and friaries.

16th Century

- Dispersed religious life are permitted to marry in some communities
- Episcopal House of Bishops formally recognizes religious life in canons
- 21st century spark in vocations, especially among younger Episcopalians

20th - Onward

19th Century

- 1830s-40s Oxford Movement
- Sr Marian Hughes makes first profession since the reformation
- CSJB is founded in England
- SSJE and OHC are founded in the US

The Earlybirds



Society of St John the Evangelist

SSJE



Order of the Holy Cross

OHC



Community of St John the Baptist

CSJB

Some of the “Newcomers”



**Anamchara
Fellowship**

AF



**Brotherhood of St
Gregoryy**

BSG



**Order of Christ the
Saviour**

OCS

*(*Newness is relative) There are so many more!*

In the Media

Social media allows us to address myths vs. realities of religious life



Why I Left My \$150,000 Job To Be A Nun

401K views • 5 years ago

BuzzFeedVideo

"There was nobody worse qualified than me to be a nun..." Credits: ...

4 moments Claudette Monica Powell | Sister...

Sister Monica Clare, CSJB



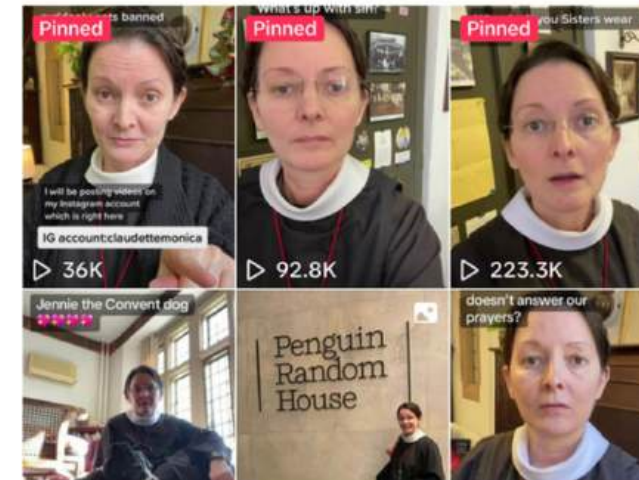
@nunsenseforthepeople

687 Following 207.4K Followers 2.5M Likes

Message

P.O. Box 240 Mendham NJ 07945
Episcopal nuns
www.csjb.org
Instagram

CSJB History Spiritual Questions The E



Brother Christian
he/him/él



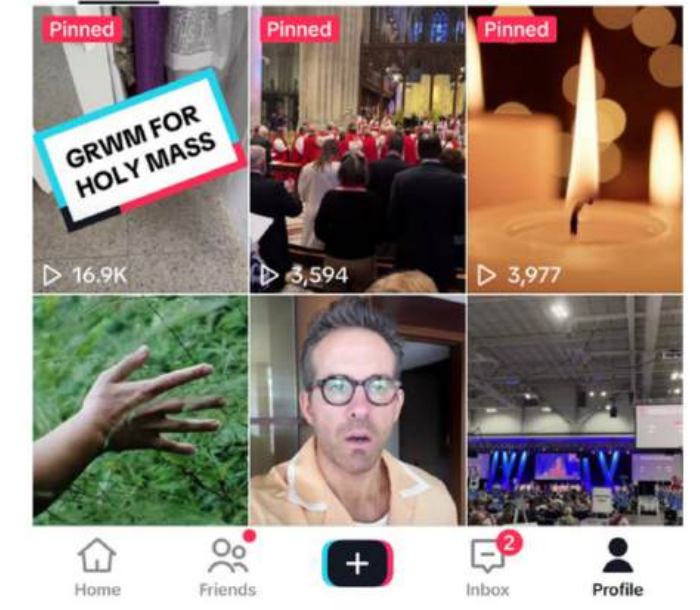
@brchristian.ocs

174 Following 1,075 Followers 7,431 Likes

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dominican friar (episcopal), deacon postulant,
professor-scientist | God <3 You!

TikTok Studio Your orders Supporting: Trevc



Some Streams

Some but not all religious communities adopt historic “streams” of monastic spirituality

Franciscan

- Care for simplicity
- Creation care
- Diaconal service

Benedictine

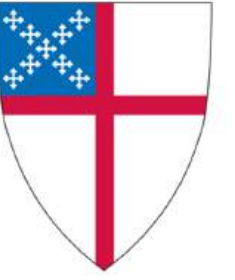
- Ora et labora
- Hospitality
- Stability + obedience

Dominican

- Teaching / scholarship
- Contemplative action
- Marian devotion

Carmelite

- Silence / solitude
- Devotion to Spirit
- Divine union



CAROA

Members of “Religious Communities” usually live together under a rule of life and share possessions in common and under vows such as poverty and chastity.

Overseen by the *Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas*

Title III Canon 14 Sec 1

NAECC

Members of “Christian Communities” are from all walks of life, live in their own homes, have jobs and families, and form unified, vowed communities.

Overseen by the *National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities*

Title III Canon 14 Sec 2

You can keep your bank account and your husband?!



Simplicity vs. Poverty

Rather than placing all possessions in common, one commits their material goods to divine service.



Living in the World

Dispersed brothers and sisters usually live on their own and work full time.



Celibacy vs. Chastity

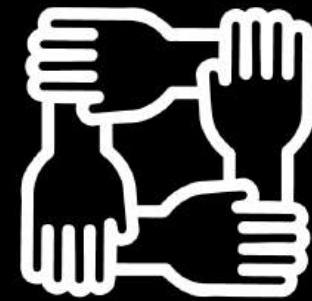
Some may or may not be married. There is an emphasis on intimacy contained within marriage than celibacy.

A THIRD THING?



ASSOCIATE

Laity who do not wish to be under vows but would like to affiliate with a community.



OBLATE

Laity who make an "oblation" and promise to pray for the Brothers/Sisters regularly.



Sunday Bulletin Insert
Sunday, January 26, 2025
3rd Sunday in Epiphany

Religious Life Sunday

Many are called to join together with others for mutual support in their spiritual journeys, for growth in their life in Christ, and for extension of mission. Religious life in The Episcopal Church takes two distinct forms under the Canons:

1. Members of **Religious Orders** live in community with each other, give up all their possessions under a vow of poverty, and are celibate.

Title III, Canon 14, section 1: "A Religious Order of this Church is a society of Christians (in communion with the See of Canterbury) who voluntarily commit themselves for life, or a term of years, to holding their possessions in common or in trust; to a celibate life in community; and obedience to their Rule and Constitution."

2. Members of **Christian Communities** live in their own homes, either alone or with their families, take a vow of poverty interpreted as simplicity and well-discerned use of resources but do not give away all their possessions, and take a vow of chastity, but chose whether to be celibate or live in committed relationship with a spouse or partner.

Title III, Canon 14, section 2: "A Christian Community of this Church is a society of Christians (in communion with the See of Canterbury) who voluntarily commit themselves for life, or a term of years, in obedience to their Rule and Constitution."

To learn more about:

Religious Orders in The Episcopal Church: caroa.net.

Christian Communities: naecc.net.

For resources and more information visit: religiouslifesunday.net. Also see our videos about CAROA and NAECC communities: <https://www.youtube.com/@religiouslifesunday>.

Collect For Monastic Orders and Vocations (BCP, p. 819)

O Lord Jesus Christ, you became poor for our sake, that we might be made rich through your poverty: Guide and sanctify, we pray, those whom you call to follow you under the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, that by their prayer and service they may enrich your Church, and by their life and worship may glorify your Name; for you reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

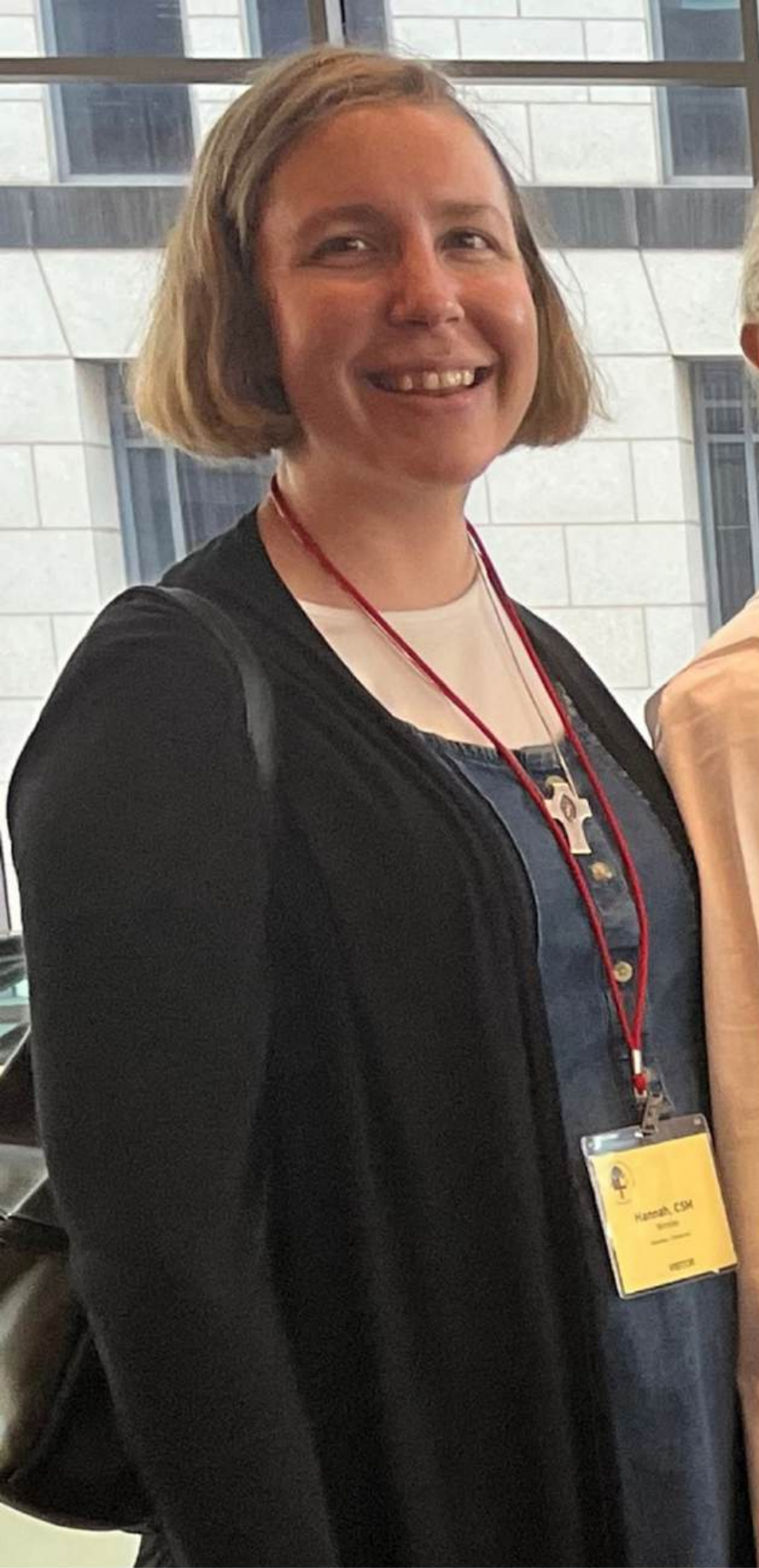
January 26, 2025 Religious Life Sunday

Celebrating the many gifts and ministries
of religious life in the Episcopal Church

For more information:

religiouslifesunday.net





SO WHY RELIGIOUS LIFE?

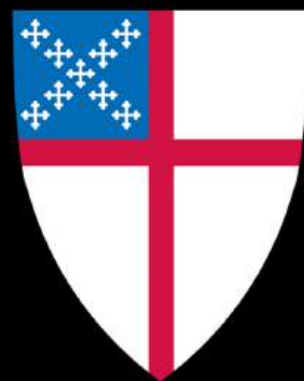
Because God calls for it.

Religious life is a unique expression of spirituality towards fulfilling our unified Baptismal Covenant.

Because the world needs it.

The world needs prayer and service.
The world is made better with healing and hospitality.





Go in Peace!

Learn more at ReligiousLifeSunday.net
cventura@anglicanocs.org