

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA
AFFILIATE HANDBOOK

“Loving God and Neighbor Without Distinction”

Welcome to our Affiliate Spiritual Formation Process!

We rejoice in the fact that our God has sent you to us to grow and learn more about living in this world as a Christian, and living out the special charism of our Congregation: that of union and reconciliation. You are the next in a long line of strong, committed women who came from LePuy, France, to give themselves for the “salvation and perfection” of their neighbors in Florida.

Your presence with us on a regular basis is a living reminder that God is with us and continually challenging us to share that charism through our lives of prayer and ministry throughout the state!

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES

Our Affiliate process is one of obediently listening for the voice of God. Sisters who work with our Affiliate Process will help you discern what God is saying in you and in the community. We believe that we, Affiliates and Sisters, are called to give and receive from each other in love, in justice and in charity. We model a life of personal responsibility, balanced with interdependence, and look for that model within you.

PURPOSES OF OUR AFFILIATE PROCESS

The purposes of our process are

- To assist you in your desire to grow in intimacy with God.**
- To provide opportunities for you to begin to know us as a Congregation and as individuals, for us to come to know you and your gifts, and to work with you to discover whether or not God is calling you to live in community as a Sister of St. Joseph of St. Augustine.**
- To assess your readiness to live in community as a Postulant.**

THE PROGRAM

As an Affiliate you will be asked to

- **Meet regularly with our Affiliate Director for vocational direction concerning prayer, personal growth, ministry, social life and relatedness to the community.**
- **Grow spiritually through daily prayer, Eucharist, regular spiritual direction.**
- **Continue to update yourself in theology, spirituality and scripture through reading, workshops, classes, etc.**
- **If possible, collaborate in some apostolic activity of our community while continuing to participate in your parish.**
- **Share in some informal times of community relaxation, as well as celebrations and days of prayer.**
- **Participate in community-sponsored events for Affiliates.**
- **Continue the life of a single person professionally, and ordinarily not reside in a SSJ Community.**

Our community, through our Affiliate Director, will

- **Invite you to activities specifically designed for Affiliates.**
- **Invite you to participate in appropriate regional community days of prayer, assembly and celebration.**
- **Introduce you to the regional community.**
- **Facilitate visits with our local communities.**
- **Provide you with appropriate congregational communications.**
- **Assist you through regular meetings to assess your affinity with the congregation and your readiness for Postulancy.**

FINANCIAL GUIDELINES

Financial resources are not criteria for admittance.

Congregational Financial Commitment

Our congregation finances the various activities that are normally sponsored for you as an Affiliate. You will be asked to finance any additional programs or activities in which you may choose to participate.

Affiliate Financial Commitment

If you and your director decide that you are ready to apply for Postulancy, you will be asked to cover the costs of the steps required for entrance: medical, eye, and dental examinations, psychological testing, room/board cost, and insurance coverage for your period of Postulancy. Our congregation will bear half the cost of the psychological testing.

EVALUATION

You and our Affiliate Director together will evaluate

- How well our mutual expectations have been met.**
- Your growth and readiness for Postulancy.**

Ordinarily, Affiliateship will be a minimum of 7 – 8 months and no longer than three years. If mutual discernment reveals your desire and readiness, you will be invited to move into Postulancy in the congregation.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR POSTULANCY
THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA**

_____ has applied to begin a spiritual formation process with us as a Postulant in our community. A woman who is a Postulant resides in an SSJ community house and participates in ministry.

Please assist us in completing this form as honestly as you can.

Thank you.

How long have you known the candidate?

In what capacity have you known her?

What have you seen (or heard) in her that makes you believe that she has a capacity for prayer, reflective living and love for the things of God?

What do you see in her that makes you believe that she has the capacity for ministry?

Can you imagine her learning to love our style of community life? Why?

Does she seem to be capable of making a long-term commitment?

What other things have you seen in her personality that allows you to feel you can recommend her to begin the Postulancy?

Have you become aware of any area of growth for the future that you think she might benefit from through spiritual/formative direction? If so, what is it?

Other Comments

Signature _____

Date _____

DOCUMENTS NEEDED TO BEGIN POSTULANCY

The following documents are needed to begin Postulancy

- **Completed Application For Postulancy.**
- **Birth certificate (certified copy).**
- **Baptismal certificate including Eucharist and Confirmation notations.**
- **Declaration of Annulment, if necessary.**
- **Parents' marriage certificate.**
- **Letter of recommendation from the local pastor.**
- **Letter of recommendation from the Affiliate Director.**
- **Two additional letters of recommendation (excluding relatives and/or close friends, i.e. employer or school counselor).**
- **Complete physical exam signed by a physician (form attached).**
- **HIV testing.**
- **Eye exam.**
- **Dental exam.**
- **Psychological testing (MMPI, etc.) and I.Q. tests by designated psychologist.**
- **Statement of present finances.**
(Debts should be resolved before beginning novitiate.)
- **Transcripts: high school, college, universities.**
- **Personal autobiography – three to five pages.**
- **Essay on the desire to become a woman religious in the congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine, Florida.**
- **Copy of Social Security Card.**
- **Copy of driver's license.**
- **Recent fingerprint card – FBI (VECHS – volunteer and employee Criminal History System).**
- **Proof of medical insurance (for at least a year).**
- **Completion of the Assessment with the Affiliate Director.**
- **Interview with the Postulant Director.**
- **Interview with the General Superior.**

Our General Superior, after consultation with the sisters on her Council, will inform you, in writing, whether or not you have been accepted as a Postulant.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine, Florida require those desiring to become members of the congregation to complete the documents relevant to their application process.

These application materials become part of a confidential file that will be used by the Vocation Director and, at her discretion, by those responsible for the acceptance of the candidate into the community.

All your application materials are the property of the community and accessibility to these materials rests within the discretion of the Vocation Director acting in the name of the General Superior of the congregation.

Therefore, both the Vocation Director and the General Superior of the congregation must maintain strict confidentiality with regard to the information received about you. If you are not admitted to the community, these files will be destroyed shortly after your application is received.