

Frequently Asked Questions

How long does it take to become a Sylvania Franciscan Sister?

In our congregation, a woman who wishes to join us moves through several stages after her initial inquiry: pre-candidacy, candidacy, novitiate, “temporary” profession, and final profession. She is first called “Sister” when she becomes a novice. Entering the novitiate can take from eighteen months to about two years from the time of the first inquiry. It can take longer, depending on the woman’s background and her readiness to enter the novitiate. The time from her initial inquiry until a Sister’s final profession generally takes from seven to nine years.

What kind of work (ministry) does a Sylvania Franciscan Sister do?

Our Sisters’ ministries flow out of our commitment to God and our love for God’s people. We encourage one another to serve in ministries that use each Sister’s gifts, talents, and professional preparation. Our range of ministry is quite diverse: teaching at all levels, nursing, administration, forest and garden management, pastoral work in parishes, hospitals, nursing homes, and extended care facilities, legal counsel (especially for the poor), psychological and pastoral counseling, and spiritual direction. Currently we have one Sister who ministers in Haiti; we hope that she will be joined by other sisters in the future. While all of us try to live as prayerful women, our senior Sisters especially embrace the needs of the whole world, civil and religious, in their extended periods of daily prayer.

Is praying easy for you? Do you spend a lot of time in prayer?

Growth in prayer is part of a life-long integration of mind, heart, and actions in right relationship with our God, people, and the world around us. We strive to be women of prayer and pray regularly with others (at Eucharist/Mass, Holy Hours for Peace, etc.) and in solitude (quiet personal prayer, spiritual reading, etc.). While in our congregation we are active in ministry as long as our health permits, prayer is very important throughout our lives. Praying is not always easy; sometimes we are tempted to stay busy about many things, or we are tired, or even feel lazy. In our daily encounter with God in prayer, and its overflow in our ministries, we are challenged to respond more earnestly to God’s universal call to holiness. Our growth in holiness (sanctity) not only glorifies God; it is a blessing to all we meet and serve in daily life.

Do your Sisters wear habits (distinguishable religious dress)?

For many years Sisters in our congregation wore a beautiful long brown dress, long brown scapular, black veil, crucifix, and ring as our identifiable habit. Today, a number of our Sisters wear a modified habit; most of our Sisters currently wear simple and modest contemporary attire. We all wear a community symbol (a crucifix or community emblem) suspended on a neck chain or worn as a lapel pin. Our fully professed Sisters wear a specially designed ring that is emblazoned with our community coat-of-arms. No matter how we dress, we recognize that the quality of our relationship with God and our Sisters, and the love that we show to other persons is what identifies each of us as women religious.