

What are my options for commitment to a Josephite way of life?



Mary MacKillop and
Fr Julian Tenison Woods founded
the Sisters of St Joseph
to respond to the urgent needs
of people in their time

*How will I respond
today?*



Membership of the Sisters of St Joseph

Anyone considering membership in the Congregation as a Sister of St Joseph, after due consultation may begin a 'journey' of discernment and immersion. The woman will be accompanied on the journey by a Josephite Sister who will act as a discernment guide. Her journey will take as long as is needed for the woman and the Congregation to discover whether membership of the Josephite Congregation is the appropriate pathway. It is important that the woman also discern the other ways of 'being Josephite' in this time of immersion. The programme of the journey will be designed to suit the woman's personality and needs.

As a Sister of St Joseph she will profess publicly the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience and live them according to the Constitutions of the Congregation. With the support of the Josephite community she will express her vows in a life of joyful, loving commitment to God's mission. Her ministry will be particularly among those for whom Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods founded the Congregation – those people struggling in their lives, those with scarce resources, those on the edges and those often overlooked in our society. As a Sister she will be mobile for the sake of the mission, meaning she may be called to live and minister in places away from her hometown or country.





Josephite Associate

The Josephite Associate Movement stemmed from the teaching of the second Vatican Council with its vision of Church as community. Anyone who is drawn to the spirit of Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods can become a Josephite Associate.



Associates are people who have been called from all walks of life. The common thread that links Associates and Sisters of St Joseph is the centrality of the charism and the commitment to Friendship, Prayer and Service. The relationship is expressed by mutual support and shared hospitality. It is a spiritual and informal relationship.

Associates do not undertake any canonical obligations and may withdraw at any time.

The person is supported by local Josephite Associates during a period of induction which is followed by a formal commitment to respond to the call to live the charism of Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods in their daily life, in their own unique way, and to make a difference in their local area and so further the reign of God in our world.





Private Vows ~ Affiliation with the Sisters of St Joseph

The practice of women and men making private vows to God has a long tradition in the Church. A person, in consultation with the Sisters of St Joseph, may be called to make these Private Vows and live by a Rule of Life that reflects the Josephite spirituality, charism and mission. The person is not a formal member of the SOSJ Institute and remains financially self-supporting and independent.

The Affiliation with the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph means that there is mutual agreement about the way the persons may live the Vows in the spirit of the Josephite charism in their every day life. This is encapsulated in their writing of a personal Rule of Life which is agreed to by the person and the SOSJ. This affiliation means that there is a close, mutual connection between the Sisters and the person with a sharing together, where appropriate, of the Josephite spirituality, mission and hospitality. After dialogue and consultation the Congregation (Leader) and the person each sign a Memorandum of Affiliation articulating the rights and responsibilities of each party. This usually includes the way the person will be part of the Region's activities, communications, committees, and other appropriate groups involved in justice or spirituality.

When the person first requests to discern where God may be 'calling them' in their life, the Leader appoints a Discernment Guide to accompany them, offering appropriate opportunities of immersion in Josephite life, spirituality and mission. The discernment journey will take some time and involves a programme suitable to the 'nature and needs of the person'.

When the person takes their Vows at a formal Ritual they may choose to wear a symbol created for the Josephite Affiliate.



Covenant ~ Affiliation with the Sisters of St Joseph

A woman or man, single or married, may sense that God is calling them to deepen their baptismal call to discipleship through a Covenant with God in affiliation with the Sisters of St Joseph. The Covenant signifies a formal commitment to God “to live justly, to love with compassion and to walk contemplatively in life” (adapted Micah 6:8).

People seeking this pathway will write their promises as a Covenant with God to be lived out in the spirit of the Josephite Charism and in relationship with the Josephite Sisters. Covenant Affiliates are not formal members of the SOSJ Institute. They discern the shape of their affiliation in dialogue with the Leadership in the Congregation. This Affiliation Agreement states the rights and responsibilities of both parties and usually includes the way the person will be part of the Region’s activities, committees, communications and other appropriate groups such as justice and spirituality. There is no group of Covenant Josephites. Each person has an individual affiliation with the Sisters of the Congregation.

As a “Covenant Josephite” the person will remain self-supporting and live in their own home. The person reverences their work as “ministry” and has a consciousness of those that are vulnerable and disadvantaged.

When the person first requests to discern the possibility of the Covenant Pathway the Leadership appoints a Josephite as a Discernment Guide to accompany them. They together work out a programme that is suitable to the ‘nature and needs’ of the individual. The immersion in Josephite spirituality and life may take time. The discernment journey may end with a formal ritual of commitment: Covenant Affiliation with the Sisters of St Joseph. There is the option to wear the Covenant Affiliate symbol.



**There are four formal ways
of Josephite commitment:**

**Membership of the
Sisters of St Joseph**

**Association
~ as a Josephite Associate**

**Two ways of Affiliation with the
Congregation
~ with Private Vows
~ as a Covenant Josephite.**

Would you like to be in touch?

katrina.brill@sosj.org.au

For further information see
www.sosj.org.au



Sisters of Saint Joseph
of the Sacred Heart