

Spiritual Life,” “Living the Liturgy”, “Praying the Scriptures,” “The New Catechism,” several documents of the Church on the priesthood, and the Pope’s encyclical on Mary. These courses may vary.

But these classes are “practical”, that is, they are meant to foster your spiritual life and not so much to answer your intellectual questions. Please God, that will come later in the seminary.

For now, the goal is your growth in your relationship with God. If the Lord becomes more central in your life, then you will better be able to hear his voice about your vocation.



What will your day be like? Morning prayers at 8am, breakfast, work until the noon meal. Spiritual reading in common, work until liturgy at 5:15pm. Several evenings people go back to their dorms (where you will be living) early. Other nights are spent at the main house in reading, writing letters, socializing, listening to music, or recreation. There are opportunities for hikes, outdoor and indoor sports.

Special aspects of the spiritual formation program include priests of the community sharing their own journeys to the priesthood, a pilgrimage, and other outings as the Lord provides. Spiritual direction is a very important part of growth in our life with Christ. Each candidate will be able to choose a director from among the priests of the community.

When Catherine was asked about the foundations of the program she said, “Mary and prayer.” We have a great love for Our Lady, and hope you learn to love her more. The patron of the program is St. Maximilian Kolbe, the priest who gave his life for a fellow prisoner in Auchswitz. We pray to him for the grace to learn how to give our lives for one another.



There are no financial or academic requirements. What is required is seeking the Lord’s will about a possible vocation to the priesthood, and the generous giving of yourself to growing in love for the Lord and your brothers and sisters.

The spiritual formation program runs from October 15th to Easter.

For more information, please contact:

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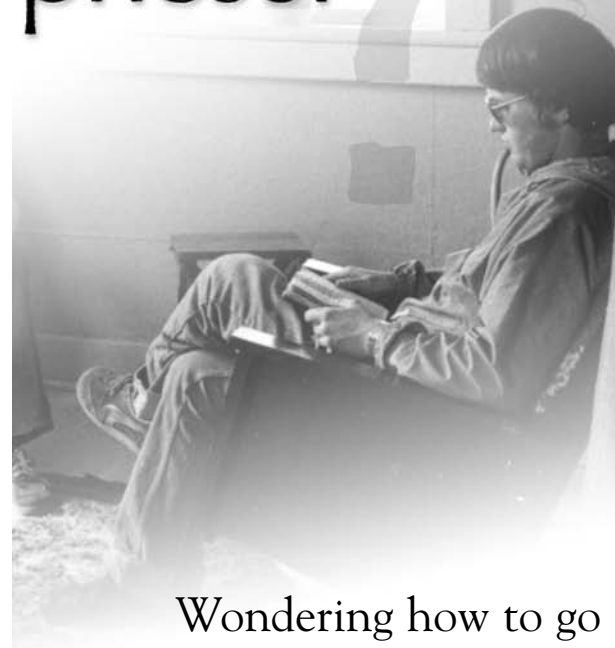
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Are you wondering
if the Lord Jesus
is calling you
to be a
priest?



Wondering how to go
about discerning
such a call?

Wondering where
you can begin?

Well, you could...

Come to **Madonna House**, a community of laymen, laywomen and priests who, with our guests, seek to live together a daily life of prayer and work, centred on Christ the Lord.



In 1978, at prayer, Catherine Doherty, the foundress of

Madonna House, received the inspiration to offer our community “as a sort of spiritual formation centre for future priests.” Since 1980, close to a hundred men have come to begin the process of discernment about a possible priestly vocation. According to their own testimonies, they found it a good place to begin their journeys when they were not sure how to get started.



Catherine’s inspiration about the need for a “spiritual centre” is precisely the mind of the Church: “Experience shows that a period of preparation for the seminary, *given over exclusively to spiritual formation*, is not only not superfluous but can bring surprising results.

“This period of preparation would benefit from being conducted *somewhere other than*



the seminary itself. It should be of sufficient duration. Thus something could be achieved at the beginning which might be very difficult or impossible to achieve later on when the seminary training is taken up with a great deal of intellectual work.” (“Spiritual Formation in Seminaries”, L’Osservatore Romano, April 21, 1980).

Through the initiative of Bishop Brendan O’Brien of Pembroke, our Madonna House program was included in the 1994 Vatican Visitation of Seminaries in Canada, thus recognizing it as part of priestly formation in the Canadian Church. Bishop Jose Martins, Secretary for Seminaries, Rome, wrote about the Visitation:



“The Visitation Team was impressed by the rich tradition of communal prayer and liturgy, including a well-prepared music ministry, in Madonna House. The pre-seminarians participate in the community liturgical schedule which includes morning prayer and a late afternoon Mass celebrated each day. In addition, once every three weeks, they experience the ‘poustinia’ which involves solitude, prayer and fasting in a secluded location.

“Each pre-seminarian must have a spiritual director, and he is free to choose from among the various priests appointed to this task.

“The pre-seminarians taking part in the programme study, work and live with priests and other laity, both men and women. In this respect it provides an environment which is conducive to the formation of future priests since it reflects the ministry and cultural context in which they may work in the future.”



What is our program, then? Basically, it is the community life itself. Education is first of all an insertion into a whole way of life, permeated by the Christian mysteries. Every aspect of our life is meant to deepen your relationship with the Lord. You would be challenged in your social relationships with men and women, in growing in your love for the liturgy, prayer and silence, in learning how to live simply, in appreciating the value of manual work, in giving up your own will in imitation of Christ, in fostering a love for Our Lady, St. Joseph, and the saints.



Aren’t there any studies? Some. One day a week is given over to classes and study time in topics such as “The Foundations of the