

Religious Life Sunday: *a template for religious communities to use as a basis for a letter to send to Associates, Oblates, friends and other affiliates*

Dear _____,

Our beloved friends, associates, and oblates are very aware that vowed religious life exists in The Episcopal Church. But sadly, you are in the minority. It is a joke among us - which is really no joke at all - that we are the best kept secret in The Episcopal Church. It is a secret we are trying to spread widely and with joyous enthusiasm. Talking up the presence of the vowed religious life in monastic orders and dispersed communities in in our branch of the Jesus Movement is what we might call good gossip.

The third Sunday in Epiphany, January 22, 2023 will be the first official Religious Life Sunday - an observance approved by the General Convention this past summer (Resolution 2022-B004.) Resources for this observance are available on our website, Religiouslifesunday.org, including our first video, a list of vowed religious who are willing to make presentations about religious life, written resources, a hymn, and information about the religious communities and orders in the church. There will be links to further resources and more to be added in the future.

Religious Life Sunday is about providing resources for spiritual life and growth to your congregation. It is about letting people know that feeling a call from God might be about ordination and can also be about living under vows in a religious community. It is about opening up conversations about living lives of service and commitment in ways many people have not had the opportunity to consider. As essential companions of [*name of community*] and as an advocate for religious life, you can have a vital role to play in introducing religious life to your friends and clergy!

Please give prayerful consideration about how you can help us to spread the good gossip on Religious Life Sunday and beyond. We would be very pleased to discuss this with you further.

Blessings,