

Discernment



Watawa wa Taa





Discernment

Why and how did you choose the Congregation you currently belong to?

The decision to join a particular Congregation often stems from a mix of **personal experiences, spiritual discernment,** and **influential encounters.** Many Sisters are first introduced to religious life through parish priests, Sisters, and vocation promoters, while others draw inspiration from devout family members or those already living religious vocations.

For many, attending retreats and “Come and See” sessions helped deepen their understanding and connection to specific Congregations. A strong sense of belonging often emerges after meaningful interactions with members of a Congregation, particularly those whose apostolate resonates with the individual’s calling — such as education, health care, or service to the poor.

Personal prayer and reflection often play a vital role in making the final decision, though the

“
My choice was influenced by the desire to be part of a community that values strong theological foundations and prioritizes understanding our role and identity within the Church.
”

journey is not always straightforward. Some Sisters reported struggling with limited exposure to different Congregations, fear of choosing wrongly, or family opposition.

Admiration for community life, religious attire, and simplicity also influenced their choices.

One Sister said she felt a personal calling and was particularly drawn to her Congregation’s commitment to uplifting less fortunate communities, theological formation, and education.

Another experienced a divine call during prayer, while some Sisters said they were moved by



witnessing acts of faith, such as a Sister holding the Eucharist. Encounters with welcoming, prayerful communities often seal Sisters' decisions.

Other influences include the joyful, generous spirit of Sisters, Marian spirituality, prayer programs in school, and encouragement from clergy and family. One woman's childhood devotion to the Blessed Virgin was affirmed through her interactions with Marian-centered Sisters.

Vocations are often nurtured by Catholic family backgrounds, school experiences with Sisters, and missionary exposure. One young woman was inspired by a magazine photo symbolizing dedication to religious life, while others found their path through discernment groups and encouragement from friends and relatives.

Ultimately, the choice of Congregation is deeply personal, often marked by a combination of spiritual affirmation, emotional resonance, and external guidance.

During the discernment process, does your Congregation have a process that helps aspirants identify the right Congregation for them, even if it is different from your own?

Helping aspirants discern the right Congregation involves a comprehensive and supportive process that balances structure with personal freedom.

Sisters reported that their Congregations engage in various initiatives, including vocation retreats, "Come and See" programs, and parish events, to introduce aspirants to religious life. Aspirants are encouraged to explore different Congregations through visits, participation in apostolic activities, and interaction with religious members to gain a realistic sense of each community's charism and mission.

Printed materials like vocation directories and brochures are distributed to help aspirants compare the spirituality, ministries, and lifestyles of different Congregations. Vocation promoters and spiritual mentors offer personalized guidance, taking time to discuss each aspirant's values, spiritual journey, and sense of calling. Some Congregations also include psychological and vocational assessments to better understand each candidate's suitability for their way of life.

The discernment process is intentionally open-ended and non-committal at the start, allowing aspirants to explore without pressure. Aspirants are reassured that they are free to change Congregations if they feel called elsewhere. Some communities offer extended and flexible discernment periods, enabling aspirants to live independently while still engaging with the community in a structured way. Others organize events in collaboration with diocesan vocation teams, where multiple Congregations present their charisms, providing aspirants with broad exposure.

Aspirants are also invited to take part in real-life experiences like teaching, health care, and service to the poor, which helps them see how a Congregation lives out its mission. Testimonies from religious members, peer sharing, and prayerful reflection are encouraged to help aspirants grow in self-awareness and spiritual clarity.

In some cases, Congregations conduct home visits and involve the aspirants' families in the discernment process to foster a more

supportive environment. Sisters involved in vocation promotion often guide young people through parish activities and encourage engagement across different communities. There is also a keen awareness among vocation promoters of signs that may indicate a candidate is not suited to their specific Congregation.

Ultimately, the process is rooted in building trust, openness, and a commitment to helping aspirants find where they can most authentically serve God, whether within the initial Congregation or another.

“
I emphasize the importance of aspirants feeling a sense of belonging and being able to integrate into the community’s spiritual and social life.
”



How does your charism/spirituality distinguish itself from others and in what ways does your charism/spirituality influence how you live and minister?

Sisters reported that the charisms or spiritualities of their Congregations consist of a blend of spiritual devotion, adaptability, and a strong commitment to serving humanity; each is shaped by distinct theological foundations and traditions.



Botswana

The Sisters of Calvary are deeply inspired by Mary at the foot of the cross, serving the vulnerable with love and courage.

The OLA Sisters emphasize missionary flexibility, openness to the Holy Spirit, and the use of diverse talents in evangelization and social justice.

The Sisters of St. Paul and others focus on service to the marginalized, with a spirituality grounded in resilience and deep faith.

Many are influenced by Franciscan values of humility and simplicity, integrating joyful service into education and health care. Across these Congregations, community life, simplicity, and an open, compassionate approach define their ministries and relationships with those they serve.



Ghana

Congregational charisms are varied and spiritually rich. One Sister said her Congregation is guided by Marian spirituality, particularly the Annunciation, which informs her community's openness to different ministries.

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit draws its identity from the Trinity and adapts to the cultural needs of mission areas.

The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary combine daily adoration with missionary outreach, fostering a life of humble service.

Other communities focus on evangelization through family outreach, adoration of the Eucharist, and Marian devotion, promoting unity and charity.





Kenya

The charisms of various Congregations are deeply rooted in service to the poor and marginalized, education, catechesis, and a balance between contemplative and active spirituality. Ministries focus on evangelization, social justice, and spiritual formation, often guided by a commitment to simplicity and humility.

Sisters strive to live out their spiritual mission through teaching, health care, and pastoral service, while navigating the challenges of balancing prayer life with active ministry in a changing world.



Nigeria

The Sisters of Saint Louis live by a charism of unity, inspired by Christ's call for oneness. Their spirituality influences their work in fostering harmony and solving social issues.

The Sisters Servant of the Holy Spirit emphasize the love of the Holy Trinity, integrating faith and simplicity in their mission, often adapting to local cultures.

The Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Church, model their lives on hospitality and maternal care, while the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary embody self-offering, Eucharistic adoration, and devotion to Mary.

Other congregations, such as the Sisters of Charity, practice universal charity with humility and focus on serving the poor with a spirit of spontaneity and volunteerism rooted in community life and faith.



Watawa wa Taa Consecrated Women of Light

Watawa wa Taa can be loosely translated as “Consecrated Women of Light” in Kiswahili. The name was chosen as an ode to the remarkable presence and works of women religious in Africa.

Whether as members of international, missionary or local Congregations, holding pontifical or diocesan status, African Catholic Sisters can be found at the forefront of society, working for sustained and systemic change in the areas of health care, education, social work, pastoral care, agriculture, and many more.

Watawa wa Taa acts as an incubator of ideas, thoughts, and inspirations of African Catholic Sisters from around the continent as they reflect on this shared and unique way of life and together seeking the Holy Spirit’s invitation as to how to move forward together.



Connect With Us

Watawa wa Taa



Phone +254 115 507353

Address Hekima University College, Nairobi

Website watawa.org

Email watawawataa@gmail.com
director.watawa@hekima.ac.ke

Facebook Watawa Wa Taa

Instagram watawawataa

X watawawataa