Consider hosting an apostolic novice
As we continue our Journey of Oneness, we mark a new moment in the creation of a revised new membership model to support the incorporation of our new members. It is a model that invites all members of our Institute to claim their part in this important process. This year, we have one novice from the United States who will be completing her canonical year in August and who will then need placement for the ministry and community experience that is at the heart of the apostolic year, the second year of the novitiate.

According to For the Love of Mercy, “The purpose of this time of greater ministerial involvement [the apostolic year] is to offer the novice an opportunity for further integration of her own experience of God, her self-knowledge, and practice of compassion in ministry. Sufficient time for this is essential in order to continue her discernment and to prepare for profession of vows. Ideally this time … provides an opportunity to integrate what has been learned thus far and to consciously practice living a vowed life…” The information sheet at the end of this letter includes more details about both the process and how sisters might invest in our future by welcoming an apostolic novice into their community. For further information about the apostolic novitiate year, see pages 3-40 of For the Love of Mercy.

You are invited to consider hosting Marissa Butler during her apostolic year to provide her with a communal living experience, as well as to share in your ministry with those who have been marginalized through material poverty. What is required on your part is a willingness to share your life and ministry with Marissa as she continues to discern her call to Mercy. This includes common prayer, faith sharing and other opportunities that might be part of your life and work together. In brief, you are asked to walk with our new member in the same way we walk with each other as we commit ourselves to vibrant community life.

The timeframe for this year is September 2019 through June 2020, immediately following the completion of Marissa’s canonical year. To help us select the best option for Marissa, we ask that you let us know if you are willing to provide a communal living experience as outlined above and what ministry options are available in your area. It is especially important that you
include whether there is easy access to public transportation. If you and your community are selected, you will be notified by May 1, 2019.

**Process**
Several sisters are involved in the discernment about the placement for an apostolic novice: the novitiate minister, the incorporation minister and a designated leadership person from the novice’s home Community. At the appropriate time in the discernment process, the receiving community and ministry that are inviting the apostolic novice to join them are also included in the conversation.

This is a process of information gathering and sharing, with initial review and discernment following the submission of the application. When the discernment is moving toward a novice living and ministering in a particular place, the incorporation minister and the novice will make a visit to the places being considered.

**The receiving community and ministry**
The community will receive an orientation facilitated by the novice’s incorporation minister, who will also be an ongoing resource for questions that may arise during the novice’s stay. Otherwise, the receiving community is expected to live as it usually does, while supporting the novice by answering questions that may arise and by reflecting with her about her experience in her ministry.

The novice will be engaged in ministry four full days each week. One day each week will be a prayer day for her continued integration and discernment. The novice is expected to attend two weekend workshops for post-canonical novices and temporary professed sisters.

At the end of this experience, the sisters in the receiving community are asked to be part of a communal evaluation in which they reflect on the period of time the novice was with them. The intent of this evaluation is to provide the receiving community with the opportunity to speak of the experience, how it was for each member and to provide the novice with affirmation and feedback as she continues to discern a vowed commitment in Mercy.

It would be helpful if the receiving community would have a conversation concerning the holidays and the desire of each member in this regard. In the canonical year, the novice stays at the novitiate for Thanksgiving and goes to her home Community for Christmas.

**The ministry**
The novice will be at the ministry site from her arrival in September until June of the following year. The novice is expected to follow the usual protocol and protections required by the ministry (e.g., protecting God’s children).
Practical considerations
Budgetary needs for the apostolic novice, such as personal allotment, transportation and insurance, are provided for in the budget of the New Membership Office.

To apply for this opportunity, please complete and submit this electronic form by March 22.