MSF-Java Formation Timeline & Stages

Entry Requirements for Candidates

The cadidates must fulfill specific criteria outline by the MSF Java Vocation Ministry (Prompang MSF):

- Status: Single Catholic male, aged 17 to 35 years old.
- Education: High school graduate (SMA/SMK or equivalent), university graduate, or currently working.
- Faith: Baptized Catholic for at least 3 years (or 2 years if highly active in parish/territorial church ministries).
- Health: Physically and psychologically fit, verified by a medical checkup from a Catholic hospital.
- Selection: Successful completion of the official entry exams and interview process conducted by the seminary.

The formation of an MSF missionary follows a structured, step-by-step pathway focused on human growth, spiritual depth, and communal living:

1. Postulat (Postulancy): The initial preparation stage taking place at Seminari Berthinianum in Salatiga before candidates are formally admitted into the novitiate.
2. Novisiat (Novitiate): A strict one-year canonical period focused on intense discernment, prayer, and deep integration into the congregation's charism.
3. Skolastikat (Scholasticate): Post-novitiate formation where the brothers (Fraters) move on to higher education in Philosophy and Theology.

POSTULATE STAGE

In the Missionaries of the Holy Family (MSF) Java Province, the initial propaedeutic or introductory stage of priestly and religious formation for candidates is conducted during the Postulate (Postulat) stage. This initial preparatory formation takes place at the Seminari Berthinianum (housed within the Biara Betlehem compound) located in Salatiga, Central Java.

The propaedeutic stage serves as a crucial transitional and introductory period for candidates before they enter the canonical novitiate year.

Core Dimensions of the Formation

In accordance with the MSF charism and standard Catholic priestly formation guidelines, the propaedeutic year focuses on four integrated dimensions:

- Spiritual & Human Maturity: Transitioning from secular life to community life by cultivating self-knowledge, internal discipline, prayer routines, and gradually reducing reliance on material distractions (such as heavy internet and smartphone use).
- Community & Charism Orientation: Living together in deep fraternal solidarity to learn the virtues of the Holy Family of Nazareth—simplicity, obedience, humility, and cooperative spirit.
- Early Pastoral & Vocation Discernment: Clarifying and purifying the candidate's initial motivation to serve families, youth, and marginalized mission areas ("orang-orang yang masih jauh"), which form the pillars of the MSF pastoral mission.

NOVITIATE STAGE

Core Pillars of Novitiate Training

During their year in the novitiate, novices participate in regular spiritual, community, and manual exercises designed to help them transition into religious life:

- Beginning with "*Agem Busana" Ceremony* (wearing habit/religious cassock Ceremony): Marking the official beginning of the canonical novitiate year. Novices are formally clothed in the MSF religious habit (cassock/jubah) and receive the Holy Bible and the MSF Constitutions.
- Spiritual Formation (Olah Rohani): focused on developing a profound relationship with Christ through regular prayers, scripture reflection (Lectio Divina), daily Eucharist, and devotion to Our Lady of La Salette.
- Human and Communal Growth (Olah Manusiawi & Hidup Bersama): Learning to live together as brothers, cultivating traits of emotional maturity, mutual collaboration, and community spirit mirroring the Holy Family.
- Observing the MSF Constitutions connected with spirituality and initial formation, learning the rich history of the founder (Fr. Jean Berthier), the congregation's global mission and its specific.
- Manual Work/Opera manualia : Engaging in physical labor and hands-on maintenance inside the monastery to cultivate a hardworking, humble, and simple missionary lifestyle.

SCHOLASTICATE STAGE

In the MSF Java Province (Kongregasi Para Misionaris Keluarga Kudus Provinsi Jawa), the scholasticate formation is a vital phase where young religious brothers (known as fraters) prepare intellectually, spiritually, and pastorally for their lifelong missionary calling.
The scholasticate formation takes place under a structured journey:

1. **Location and Community Life**
   The primary center for this formation stage is Skolastikat MSF Yogyakarta (Biara Nazareth), located on Jalan Kaliurang KM 7.5, Sleman, Yogyakarta. Under the guidance of the Rector, the fraters live in a community focused on fraternity, shared prayer, and discernment. They actively assist and participate in liturgical and pastoral activities at the neighboring parish of *Keluarga Kudus* (The Holy Family).
2. **The Path of Formation Stages**
   The Scholasticate is the third initial formation block, following the Postulancy (held at Seminari Berthinianum, Salatiga) and the Novitiate (also in Salatiga). It unfolds through the following milestones:
   - Temporary Vows (Kaul Perdana): Scholasticate formally begins when a novice professes his first temporary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. These vows are renewed annually throughout the scholasticate period.
   - Academic Studies: The fraters are divided into Filosofan (philosophy students) and Teologan (theology students). They generally complete their higher theological and philosophical degrees at prominent Catholic higher education institutions in Yogyakarta (such as Universitas Sanata Dharma).
   - Pastoral Orientation (Tahun Orientasi Pastoral / TOP): The academic years are typically accompanied or interrupted by intensive full-time pastoral internships in MSF-managed parishes or social ministries to give them hands-on missionary experience. Our seminarians do this TOP year on the fourth year generally for a year, then continue with theological years.
   - Perpetual Profession & Ordination: After being recommended personally and spiritually mature and completing the studies, the *fraters* make their Perpetual Profession (Kaul Kekal), committing to the congregation for life. This culminates in their ordination as deacons and ultimately as priests.

The formation at Java Province Scholasticate acknowledges the following challenges:

- The value placed on a comfortable lifestyle in today's world.
- The ease of access to various amenities/facilities.

The ideal profile we aim to cultivate is:

- An individual with adequate academic ability
- An individual with deep faith
- An individual ready to live out obedience, celibacy, and simplicity
- An individual capable of faithful commitment

During the formation period, seminarians need to be trained :

- to possess a missionary spirit
- to engage in frequent self-evaluation
- to be honest with their own hearts: "Am I happy with this choice of vocation?"

To implement this formation process:

- Each member of the scholasticate engages in daily meditation and daily reflection.
- We utilize pastoral activities at the Holy Family Parish in Banteng, Yogyakarta, as an opportunity for scholastics to live out the motivations and way of life they have chosen.
- We hold monthly recollections.
- We utilize semester breaks for pastoral training in specific parishes.
- We organize an annual retreat before the scholastics profess their vows.