

## EVANGELICAL COUNSELS

A diocesan anchoress professes public vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in the hands of her bishop, and lives according to her approved Rule of Life.

She lives a Eucharistic-focused solitary life in silence, humble work, and earnest prayer for all, especially for her bishop and the clergy of her diocese. Her profession of vows places her within the consecrated state.



In aspiring to live the vows she professes, she extends welcomed access to the Holy Spirit to continue the creative work of fashioning her identity in Christ. Paul's words may one day be her own: "I have been crucified with Christ, and the life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me" (Galatians 3:19,20).

Keeping her heart for Him alone, she is blessed with that unearthly peace and holy joy as she keeps the lamp of silent prayer lit before His Almighty Presence ... for all.

## Canon 603 (Church Law)

- 1) *Besides institutes of consecrated life. The Church recognizes the eremitic or anchoritic life by which the Christian faithful **devote their life to the praise of God and salvation of the world through a stricter separation from the world, the silence of solitude and assiduous prayer and penance.***
- 2) *A hermit is recognized in the law as one dedicated to God in a consecrated life if he or she **publicly professes the three evangelical counsels, confirmed by a vow or other sacred bond, in the hands of the diocesan bishop and observes his or her own plan of life under his direction.***

The diocesan anchoress seeks to follow in the footsteps of Mary who heroically trusted and kept the eyes of her heart upon her Son. Our Lady's mystical presence as silent companion and model is a steady support and source of joy.

*Our Lady of Tenderness,  
pray for us!*

*Sister Nilma*

Diocesan Anchoress  
Diocese of Metuchen

## EREMITIC VOCATION: CONSECRATED DIOCESAN ANCHORESS



**My love  
shall never leave you.**

~ Isaiah 54: 10

## CONSECRATED EREMITIC LIFE

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A call to Consecrated Eremitic Life is a call to journey intimately with God alone. Through prayer, reflective reading of the Word, reception of Eucharist, and entrusting oneself to a wise spiritual guide, the one called more clearly learns what along the inner path needs to be surrendered or nurtured.

The inward journey places one in the “desert.” It is the desert of one’s heart. We remain silent before the face of Unconditional Love, and are invited to look deeply within ourselves. Humility is the pilgrim friend of the anchoress upon her “desert” journey.



The one called by God to the desert life freely chooses to physically remove oneself from the distractions of life outwardly, in order to acknowledge the distractions taking up residence and space within one’s heart.

This intimate call and mission is a gift for oneself and for all peoples. It is a call in service to God for the Universal Church and for the praise and glory of God.

## FRUITS OF THE DESERT

Our inner desert blossoms as we persevere in openness and trust through the inner struggles; remaining vigilant of heart for the delicate sway of the Spirit.



As one listens for and obeys the movements of grace within, purity of heart, humility, peace, and inner freedom guide the journey, where formerly one’s false identity influenced one’s thoughts, words, and actions.

## SIMPLICITY OF LIFE

In all aspects of one’s eremitic/desert walk, it is wise to desire simplicity of heart and simplicity in matter.

One’s living space is to house the necessities of living without undo accumulation of things. A peaceful outer living space harmonizes with one’s inner goal to house and hear the one essential Presence - the Divine Indwelling God.

A diocesan anchoress is responsible for her own financial and temporal needs. One’s work is to flow from the creative energies within. A work that aligns with one’s inner peace is healthy spiritually and permits the flow of God-given gifts to surface through prayerful attention in the silence of solitude.

## SOLITUDE AND SILENCE

A “desert” call is not an escape from people, but rather an embrace of all people. We witness outwardly to a consecrated life of prayer and work radically lived.

A desert dweller learns the discipline of setting boundaries to authentically live the desert call without forfeiting tender care and love. God’s wisdom guides, so that our choices do not contradict our true identity and our call as Christ’s disciples to “love one another.”

