

GRADE

Before a Jesuit is assigned to his final grade has to pass through three grades or stages. The first stage is the Novitiate, lasts two years and may embrace persons, already promoted to ecclesiastical orders, or lay persons who are destined for the priesthood or merely lay persons, who have no intention of ever becoming priests. The second stage begins with the pronouncing of the first vows, embraces the approved Temporal Coadjutors, of which none is priest and the approved Scholastics, of which some may be priest already, and extends either to the final incorporation or to the moment of death. The third stage is the third probation, lasts one year and occasionally may embrace men, who have not been promoted to the priesthood. By taking the vows in the grade assigned to every one by the General, the approved Coadjutors become formed temporal Coadjutors, the priests who take simple vows become Spiritual Coadjutors, and the priests who pronounce the four solemn vows become the solemnly professed Fathers. All, Novices included, belong to the body of the Society and are bound by its rules: properly speaking, however, they, who have pronounced, at least their first vows, are said to have a grade: in a more restricted sense, those only who have taken their final vows are graduati or promoti ad gradum. What I wish to emphasize now is that the words "I promise to enter the same Society forever, to lead my life therein," contain a simple vow, which by General Congregations has been declared to mean, that the Scholastics bind themselves to accept the grade of either the solemnly professed, or that of Spiritual Coadjutor, when and as the General shall deem proper; and the Brothers, that of formed Coadjutor, when it shall seem proper to the General. Indifference, therefore, as regards the grade itself is obligatory for the