

Annotation

This thesis addresses the *vocation* of a Trappist monk which I first encountered during an ethnographic stay in a monastery and later explored further through semi-structured interviews with the monk and his family. The entire thesis is inter-connected by a chronological narrative covering the course of my research which will guide the reader throughout the field notes and interviews in their proper order. Research alone follows the *vocation* of only one monk but examines it and its formation from the perspective of six family members. The analysis of the interviews made clear that the vocation of a Trappist monk formed linearly with continuous Christian guidance. This guidance had origins in his religious family and was further consolidated by Christian elementary and high school structures. His family was very supportive of his decision to lean into religious life, and while a tendency to asceticism or solitude was refuted in the interviews, it transpired that a strong positive relationship with nature was observable, in-keeping with secluded monastery life in an isolated woodland environment. This case study of a monastic vocation aims to contribute towards the investigation of religious experience and circumstance by combining ethnography and in-depth interviews. The objective is not a reductive interpretation, but instead an effort towards understanding the perspective of the actors therein.