

The Junior Novitiate was a high school residence program for high school students who were interested in becoming Christian Brothers. Here in California the Junior Novitiate was at Mont La Salle in the Napa Valley since 1932; before that year the Junior Novitiate and Novitiate was in Martinez, California starting in 1879. The program included a serious academic program, a spiritual element as well as a strong recreational element.

In past years, the Junior Novitiate was the primary way that high school students could follow their desire on the road to becoming a Christian Brother. The Juniorate was on the south side of the Main Chapel in a building which included dormitories, classrooms, a chapel, a common room, an auditorium and gymnasium.

Meals were taken at a refectory in the kitchen area. Morning Mass was in the Main Chapel where the Juniors, the Novices and Holy Family communities gathered.

The area also had a field for baseball and football as well as

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a swimming pool.

Because of diminishing numbers of candidates the Juniorate was closed in 1970 and turned into St Mary's Boarding School. About 10 years later the facility was updated to become the Provincial headquarters of the District of San Francisco.

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The school year was the regular 9 months followed by a month summer school. We got a 3 week vacation at home in July; we also had a week at the Russian River in early June or September before school started. Over all, it was a demanding schedule and kids soon found out that being away from home, parents and friends wasn't so easy.

Pat