

SECULAR FRANCISCANS—WHAT DO YOU DO?
More important is the question:

SECULAR FRANCISCANS—WHO ARE YOU?

WE ARE: People who:

1. Live in the world
2. Pray, In Fraternity and Alone
3. Learn: Scripture is our Guide
Francis, Clare, and other Franciscans,
religious and seculars are our
examples;
4. Share with each other our successes,
failures, our joys and our sorrows
5. Celebrate with joyful abandon our
Franciscan Charism
6. Reach out to all—preaching always—
using words only when necessary

HOW DO WE DO ALL THAT?

We meet at least once a month to share with one another, to draw strength from one another, and to fortify and support each other.

We attend Days of Reflection and Retreats with each other at least once a year to help us “re-form, re-focus, and re-direct” our thoughts and lives toward Christ and our mission.

Some 800+ years ago in the village of Assisi, Italy a young man dreamed of becoming a knight. His world was much like ours; there were wars and violence. There was corruption in the Church as well. The young man Giovanni Bernadone (called Francisco because he loved to sing the French songs his mother, Pica, had taught him) was the son of a cloth merchant.

God, however, had other plans for him. One day while recovering from an illness acquired during a war, Francisco was praying in the small chapel of San Damiano. He heard a call to “go and repair My church for as you see, it is falling into ruin.” Francisco took the message to heart and began buying bricks and repaired the little chapel. Francis finally came to realize that God was calling him to heal the spiritual ills of the church.

Francis renounced his birthright, left home and began to follow Christ, living a simple life of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Soon, because of his example, other young men joined him. These men became known as the Order of Friars Minor. They are the **FIRST ORDER** in the Franciscan Family.

During this same period, a beautiful young noble woman who also lived in Assisi heard Francis preach. Her name was Clare and on a Palm Sunday night she left her family’s castle, joined Francis and the friars and vowed to follow the Franciscan ideals of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Other women joined her, and they became the Poor Clares, the **SECOND ORDER** in our Franciscan Family.

There were lay men and women who also wished to follow the ideal of the poor little man but because of family responsibilities could not. Francis formed a simple rule for the **BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE** and today they are known as the secular Franciscan order (prior to 1978 known as **THE THIRD ORDER**). The OFS is more than another group in the Church. It is an **ORDER**, whose fraternities are established according to Canon Law (303). We do not leave our families or live in friaries or convents. **BUT** we follow the Gospel in our lives everyday. . . lives of simplicity and service.

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**OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL FRATERNITY
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER**

**WHO ARE
SECULAR FRANCISCANS?**

**WHAT ARE THEY
ALL ABOUT?**



Contact Information:

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Meeting Time and Place:

Third Saturday each month
10:30 AM
Cathedral Parish Hall
Gaylord St. Mary Cathedral

THE LIFE OF A SECULAR FRANCISCAN
Is based on
FIVE KEY WORDS

1. SPIRITUALITY:

We are on a continuing journey of constantly seeking closeness with God. We ponder and study the teachings of Jesus through Scripture. We reflect and meditate privately and in groups. The lives of Franciscan Saints show us by their example how to live our lives.

2. SERVICE:

If Franciscans had a Latin motto it could very possibly be *SERVIAM* (I will serve) because that is what we do and who we are. Each in his/her own way, serve the sick, the poor, the lonely anyone who is in need of our support, our assistance, and our love.

3. POVERTY:

Secular Franciscans develop a spirit of detachment from material things. We differentiate between **NEED** and **WANT!** We strive to live a life of simplicity. Spiritual values rather than material things are of primary importance.

4. OBEDIENCE:

With the Gospels and the Magisterium as our guides, we follow the example Jesus gave us, especially the Beatitudes and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

5. CHASTITY:

Each Secular Franciscan, no matter his/her status, single, married, or widowed, lives his/her life according to the virtue of chastity according to the Laws of the Church.

TWO ARTICLES FROM
THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN RULE:

ARTICLE 4

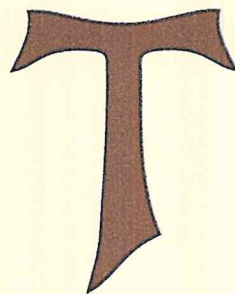
To observe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.

Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.

Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to gospel.

ARTICLE 14

Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world, that the kingdom of God might be brought about more effectively.



STEPS TO PROFESSION

There are three phases in the Formation Process:

- 1. ORIENTATION:** If a person expresses an interest or feels he/she may have a call to the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS {*Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis*}), he/she comes to a gathering and begins a time of discernment. This is a time sharing with the Formation Team, other professed members of the Fraternity and other Formatees. This phase lasts from three to six months.
 - 2. INQUIRY:** At a brief ceremony, the Orientee is accepted into the Inquiry phase of Formation which lasts at least six months. During this time, the Inquirer commits to attending the Formation Sessions and General Gatherings. This is a time of preparation. Inquirers spend time discussing Vocation, our Mission and Charism, our Identity, the Franciscan Movement, and reading a biography of Francis.
 - 3. CANDIDACY:** The Inquirer enters Candidacy in a ceremony during which each person requests admittance into the Order. For the next 18 months, at least, the Candidate focuses on such topics as our Rule and Constitutions, Penance and Conversion, Franciscan Theology and Spirituality.
If at any time during these Formation phases, the person feels our Way of Life does not meet his/her expectations, he/she may step back. There is no sin or penalty incurred.
- PROFESSION:** At the end of the Candidacy phase of Formation, the Candidate writes a letter to the Fraternity Council requesting permanent Profession into the Order. The Ceremony for Permanent Commitment occurs during Holy Mass in front of the Fraternity, a Clergy Witness, and the Spiritual Assistant. It is accepted by the Minister of the Fraternity.