

ASPECTS OF THE PERSON

THE HUMAN DIMENSION

- a) being human as such
- b) being human in a family
- c) being human and working
- d) being human and in society

THE CHRISTIAN DIMENSION

- a) entering into the world of faith
- b) the need for suitable catechesis
- c) the journey of faith

THE FRANCISCAN DIMENSION

- a) the way
- b) the means
- c) the guide

PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR FORMATION

Holy Spirit

The Candidate/[The Professed Member]

The Entire Fraternity

The Minister with the Council

The Formation Director

The Spiritual Assistant

The Sponsor

Higher Levels of Fraternity

CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMATION

- 1) Active**
- 2) Communal**
- 3) Centered on Jesus Christ and his Gospel**
- 4) Ecclesial**
- 5) Secular**
- 6) Franciscan**
- 7) Joyful**
- 8) Spirit of Simplicity**
- 9) Open-ended**

These must be present in any program of Initial and Ongoing Formation in order for it to be authentic and effective.

A New Glance at the Formation Process

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The Three Components

There are three components of formation, informational, formational and transformational, that are interwoven with the four stages of formation. There are different agents of formation who share the primary responsibility of each of these components. A layout will make this more understandable. Formation is the work of the entire fraternity, not just the formation director!!

The Informational Component supplies basic information so that the person coming to us in formation is able to make an informed decision concerning his/her vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order.

It answers the question: What do I need to know?

Persons primarily responsible for this component of formation are the formation director and the formation team.

Necessary for this component are the numerous and varied formational materials that are available to us, biographies of Francis and Clare and Secular Franciscan saints, the writings of Francis and Clare, and the primary sources.

In Orientation, these questions might be delved into:

- What is the Order?
- Who is Francis in your life? How does he fit?
 - Read three books on Francis; where does his life intercept with yours? If you have nothing in common with Francis, he might not be the best guide for your journey
- Brief intro to the Rule and your life:
 - which three articles will be easy for you to assimilate? Which three will be hard?

In Inquiry, these topics will be discussed:

- the call of the Holy Spirit in our life; how are we to be guided?
- the lives and writings of Francis and Clare
- the history of our Order and how it fits into the history of the Franciscan Family

- the history of our Rule
- the Gospel as our way of life
 - including ways of making it pertinent to our life, ex. Lectio Divina
 - Clare's suggestion to Gaze, Consider, Contemplate, Desire to Imitate
- Community as our basis
- Church as our anchor

In Candidacy, we flesh out all these points and focus on:

- aspects of our Secular Franciscan life as found in Chapters Two and Three of our Rule
- focus on the lives and writings of Secular Franciscan saints

In Ongoing Formation, we continue to update and deepen our understanding of all aspects of our Secular Franciscan life.

The Formational Component immerses the prospective member into the living community that is the fraternity.

Article 22 of our Rule reminds us that

the local fraternity . . . is the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan family and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.

In Article 23 we are reminded that

the entire community is engaged in this process of growth (formation) by its manner of living.

It answers the question: How do I live this life in community?

Persons primarily responsible for this component of formation are the fraternity members and the fraternity council, and the sponsor during Candidacy.

Necessary for this component are the numerous and varied aspects that make up a healthy fraternal life: its sharing, its apostolates, its socializing, its praying, its learning, its business. All that enables a fraternity to BE and DO. Important guidelines to keep in mind:

- What does the fraternity have to offer me?
- What do I have to offer the fraternity

In Orientation

- the local fraternity is the basic unit of the Order, not the individual member
- we stress that family is the basis of Franciscan life
- Francis in his Testament:

And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel (14).

- Clare in her Testament:

After the most high heavenly Father saw fit in his mercy and grace to enliven my heart, that I should do penance according to the example and teaching of our most blessed Francis, a short while after his conversion, I, together with a few sisters whom the Lord had given me after my conversion, willingly promised him obedience. . . (24, 25).

- Our Rule:

- *the Secular Franciscan Order is divided into fraternities on various levels (Article 20)*

In Inquiry

in initial Formation, we focus on how the persons coming to fraternity are formed by its character and manner of being

These opportunities are to be taken advantage of:

- monthly fraternal gatherings
- social events which include all members of the families
- times of prayer
- opportunities to develop the apostolates

In Candidacy

- continue the various local fraternity happenings and apostolates
- experience formation and other gatherings with nearby local fraternities
- join in the activities of the regional fraternity
- meet members of other branches of the Franciscan Family

In Ongoing Formation

In Ongoing formation, the fraternity is formed by the various interests and concerns of the individual members

- allow individual members to share their manners of living the Franciscan lifestyle

- continue to share in the apostolates of others
- continue and expand the connections made during Candidacy

The Transformational Component supplies the bedrock of our vocation. Here we examine our relationship with God and how this becomes the alpha and omega of our Franciscan life.

It answers the question: How does my relationship with God impact my life and my relationship with others?

Persons primarily responsible for this component of formation are the Holy Spirit, the person in formation, the Spiritual Assistant, and the sponsor for Candidates.

Necessary for this component are the daily prayer life and Scripture reading that is prescribed in our Rule; spiritual writings of various Franciscan saints.

In Orientation, areas that should be explored:

- Identify how you were called?
- How is the Holy Spirit moving in your life?
- How might this life as a Franciscan help you to follow Jesus more closely?
- An introduction to a correct reading of Scripture is encouraged

In Inquiry, focus centers on the Franciscan aspect of our spirituality:

- Exactly, what is Franciscan Spirituality?
- How does it differ from other spiritualities in the Church?
- How does the Franciscan fraternity differ from other groups in the parish?
- How does following Francis and Clare help you draw closer to Jesus?
- Why are they good guides for you?
- Meditate on some of the spiritual writings of Francis, Clare and Bonaventure
- *Lectio Divina* as a prayer form should be explored
- Clare's suggestion to Gaze, Consider, Contemplate, Desire to Imitate
- Day of Recollection should be experienced

In Candidacy, focus centers on the secular nature of our spirituality:

- How is your relationship with Jesus lived out in your secular life?
- How does your vocation reach into your marriage, your home, your neighborhood, your work?

- How is your spirituality different from that of the priests and religious sisters and brothers you know?
- How does Gospel living influence your daily life?
- How do the words of the Gospel act out in your daily life?
- Examine the spiritual writings and lives of various Secular Franciscan saints. What example do they give?
- Overnight or Weekend Retreat, preferably on a Franciscan topic, is encouraged

In Ongoing formation, while continuing to explore our spirituality, inspect your prayer life:

- Is it the same today as it was five years ago?
- How has it changed?
- investigate these prayer forms:
 - Bonaventure's *The Soul's Journey into God*
 - *Office of the Passion*
 - Solitude experiences
 - Prayers of St. Francis
- How does entering into Franciscan prayer forms deepen your relationship with God?
- Continue to examine the spiritual writings and lives of various Secular Franciscan saints. Try to emulate their example.
- Retreats of varying lengths and formats are suggested.

Phases of Formation

(2005)

ORIENTATION PHASE

- **Content for this phase (OVERVIEW):**

- an understanding of discernment and vocation (cf. *To Cling with All Her Heart to Him* by Benet Fonck, OFM, page 5)
- brief review of Catholic doctrine and Christian morals
- prayer life and apostolic activity
- phases of Secular Franciscan formation and expectations
- life of St. Francis (may be in novel form)
- branches of the Franciscan family
- Rule and brief history of the Secular Franciscan Order
- an understanding of some of our Franciscan symbols
- a Franciscan prayer experience

Rite: Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming (cf. *Ritual*, pages 9-10)

INQUIRY PHASE

- **Suggested content for this phase:**

- a deeper understanding of discernment and vocation to the SFO
- agents of formation (cf. *Guidelines for Initial Formation*)
- lives of Sts. Francis and Clare (more scholarly version)
- writings of Sts. Francis and Clare
- history of the Secular Franciscan Order, including evolution of its Rules
- organizational structure of the Secular Franciscan Order
- introduction to the *SFO Rule*, *General Constitutions* and *Ritual*
- introduction to Sacred Scripture and how it impacts the life of a Secular Franciscan (Lectio Divina)
- the Catholic Church in light of the Second Vatican Council (especially *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*)
- the *SFO Rule* in light of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- an understanding of lay/secular spirituality
- an introduction to praying the *Liturgy of the Hours*
- other Franciscan prayer experiences

Rite: Rite of Admission (cf. *Ritual*, pages 11-17)

CANDIDACY PHASE

- **Suggested content for this phase:**
 - the *Prologue to the SFO Rule (the Volterra Letter)*
 - a detailed study of the 1978 *SFO Rule*
 - Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels, and the opportunity to experience, interiorize and integrate Gospel values
 - Franciscan spirituality
 - Secular Franciscan apostolic life
 - a detailed study of the *SFO General Constitutions*
 - lives of Secular Franciscan saints and other Franciscans
 - Franciscan traditions and stories (e.g., Crown Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Greccio, Gubbio, etc.)
 - writings of Sts. Francis and Clare
 - introduction to Franciscan sources, including an understanding of the purpose of a medieval legend
 - continued experience in praying and leading the *Liturgy of the Hours*
 - other Franciscan prayer experiences
 - a detailed study of the *SFO Ritual*, especially the Rites of Profession

Rite: Rite of Profession or Permanent Commitment (cf. *Ritual*, pages 18- 26) or
Rite of Temporary Commitment (cf. *Ritual*, pages 27-29)

ONGOING FORMATION

- **Suggested content for this phase:**
 - the *Prologue to the SFO Rule (the Volterra Letter)*
 - a detailed study of the 1978 *SFO Rule*
 - writings of Sts. Francis, Clare, and Bonaventure
 - Franciscan history
 - papal encyclicals, apostolic letters and statements
 - pastoral statements from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
 - official documents and statements of the Franciscan family
 - *SFO Ritual* and *General Constitutions*
 - international, national and regional statutes

Rite: Ceremony on the Anniversary of Profession (cf. *Ritual*, pages 30-32)

THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION PROCESS

Part I: The Orientation Phase

When we look at the Secular Franciscan formation process, it is important to see it as a continuum, that is, each stage flowing into the next. Aspects that are essential in the first phase, Orientation, will still be essential in the second, Inquiry, the third, Candidacy, and into the Ongoing Formation of professed members.

During Orientation, it is essential that formation resources allow for dialogue and sharing since this is the ideal time to discern a prospective member's call to a Secular Franciscan vocation. If discernment is addressed early, it can save time and avoid heartache for both the individual and the Fraternity.

The materials used in Orientation should allow for comprehensive, yet nonintrusive, personal disclosure so as to discover the person's reasons for wanting to become a Secular Franciscan. We need to discern the extent to which their motivation is compatible with what we know the Order to be. In this way, potential "mismatching" can be handled early, avoiding much anguish for all concerned.

The formation resources used should encourage ample dialogue and sharing since this type of interaction is invaluable in assessing whether aspirants' life circumstances will allow them to commit to the Secular Franciscan lifestyle. Orientation is a favorable time to observe the whole person, physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and interpersonally.

While we're "getting to know them," we expect them to "get to know us," our roots and our charism. Therefore, some form of introduction to the lives of Saints Francis and Clare are appropriate as early as possible and throughout the entire formation process.

Especially useful during Orientation are resources that allow the Fraternity and the formators to gather knowledge about the individual's understanding of the Catholic faith. Remedial work takes time. If their knowledge is inadequate, perhaps involvement in the local church's adult religious education program or RCIA process would be appropriate BEFORE continuing with Secular Franciscan Initial Formation. Please make sure that these persons are fully initiated members of the Catholic faith.

- The Orientation phase of formation is critical. This is a time to watch for specific clues that the person before you is or is not suited for SFO life.
- It is a time for discerning whether or not the prospective member has the basic dispositions that are essential for entering into mature committed relationships such as those which membership in the SFO requires.
- The *Interview Guide for Prospective Members of the Secular Franciscan Order* is especially useful during this phase.
- **Time frame: at least** three to four months

• **Content for the Orientation phase (an OVERVIEW of):**

- an understanding of discernment and vocation (see *To Cling with All Her Heart to Him* by Fonck, page 5)
- brief review of Catholic doctrine and Christian morals
- an explanation of Franciscan prayer life and apostolic activity
- phases of Secular Franciscan formation and expectations
- introduction to the life of Saint Francis (perhaps in novel form, such as *Francis: The Saint of Assisi* by Mueller; or *Francis: The Journey and the Dream* by Bodo)
- introduction to the life of Saint Clare (perhaps in novel form, such as *Clare: A Light in the Garden* by Bodo)
- branches of the Franciscan family
- 1978 Rule and brief history of the Secular Franciscan Order
- an understanding of some of our Franciscan symbols
- a Franciscan prayer experience

Rite: Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming (see *SFO Ritual*, pages 9-10)

Bibliography:

Bodo OFM, Murray. (1992, revised & expanded). *Clare: A Light in the Garden*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
Bodo OFM, Murray. (1988). *Francis: The Journey and the Dream*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
Fonck OFM, Benet A. (1996). *To Cling with All Her Heart to Him*. Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press.
Mueller, Joan. (2000). *Francis: The Saint of Assisi*. Allen, TX: Thomas More.

THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION PROCESS

Part II: The Inquiry Phase

When we look at the Secular Franciscan formation process, it is important to see it as a continuum, that is, each stage flowing into the next. Aspects that are essential in the first phase, Orientation, will still be essential in the second, Inquiry, the third, Candidacy, and into the Ongoing Formation of professed members.

The Inquiry phase of initial formation is a time for the most serious and prayerful discernment of the Inquirer's vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order. During this phase of initial formation, the Fraternity and the Inquirer continue to get to know each other more fully. Opportunities for dialogue and sharing continue to be important to ensure that the aspirant and the Fraternity are compatible.

During Inquiry and ***before the Rite of Admission***, certain aspects of the relationship between the Inquirer and the Fraternity must be examined. Prior to the Rite of Admission, the Fraternity needs to be confident that the Inquirer has an adequate grasp of the Catholic faith to sustain their deeper journey into the Franciscan way of life. The Inquirer's life should reflect a determination not only to know the faith intellectually, but also to live the faith in practice. The Inquirer must be a fully initiated member of the Catholic faith. The Inquirer should understand and be able to articulate the concept of vocation and, more specifically, a vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order.

Note the emphasis on "before the Rite of Admission." Once this Rite is celebrated, the Inquirers officially become Candidates and are admitted into a local Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order to prepare for permanent commitment. If the discernment of vocation is incomplete or mistaken during the Orientation and Inquiry phases, it must be rectified before the Rite of Admission takes place.

- The Inquiry phase, as the first formal period of initiation, is a time of discernment and choice of the Franciscan life. During this time, the Inquirer participates in the life of the Fraternity and comes to understand our way of life. At the same time, the Fraternity comes to know the Inquirer better, so that it can discern how best to respond to the Inquirer's request to become part of the Fraternity.
- The Inquiry phase begins with the Ceremony of Welcoming. This is a simple paraliturgical service that promises the support of the Fraternity on the journey that the Inquirer is about to undertake. It does not take place as a separate ritual, but as part of the regular meeting or gathering of the Fraternity.
- During this phase, the Inquirer, with the help of the Formation Director/Team, must seek to determine honest responses to these basic questions:
 - What is a vocation, and how am I called?
 - What is Gospel life, and how am I called to live it?
 - What is a vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order, and am I called to live this way of life?
- **Time frame: *at least* six months**

• **Suggested content for the Inquiry phase:**

- a deeper understanding of discernment and vocation specifically to the SFO
- awareness of the agents of formation (see *Guidelines for Initial Formation*)
- a more in-depth study of the life of Saint Francis (a more scholarly version, such as *St. Francis of Assisi: A Biography* by Englebert)
- a more in-depth study of the life of Saint Clare (a more scholarly version, such as *Clare of Assisi* by Bartoli; or *Clare: Her Light and Her Song* by Karper)
- first-hand exposure to the writings of Saints Francis and Clare (as contained in, for example, *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings for a Gospel Life* by Armstrong; *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* by Armstrong & Brady; and *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* by Armstrong)
- history of the Secular Franciscan Order, including the evolution of its Rules
- overview of the organizational structure of the Secular Franciscan Order
- introduction to the *SFO Rule*, *General Constitutions of the SFO* and the *SFO Ritual*
- introduction to Sacred Scripture and how it impacts the life of a Secular Franciscan (the practice of *Lectio Divina* as contained in, for example, *Too Deep For Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina* by Hall)
- the Catholic Church in light of the Second Vatican Council (especially the documents *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*)
- the *SFO Rule* in light of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- an understanding of spirituality which is both secular and (for most aspirants) lay
 - the family (*SFO Rule*, article 17; *Constitutions*, article 24)
 - work (*SFO Rule*, article 16; *Constitutions*, article 21.1-2)
 - social and political involvement (*SFO Rule*, article 14; *Constitutions*, article 22)
- introduction to praying the *Liturgy of the Hours*
- other Franciscan prayer experiences

Rite: Rite of Admission (see *SFO Ritual*, pages 11-17)

Bibliography:

- Armstrong OFM Cap., Regis J. (1993, revised & expanded). *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*. Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications.
- Armstrong OFM Cap., Regis J. (1994). *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings for a Gospel Life*. NY: Crossroad.
- Armstrong OFM Cap., Regis J. & Brady OFM, Ignatius C. (1982). *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Bartoli, Marco. (1993). *Clare of Assisi*. Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press.
- Englebert, Omer. (1965). *St. Francis of Assisi: A Biography*. Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books.
- Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Order in the United States*. (1985). Lindsborg, KS: Barbo-Carlson Enterprises.
- Hall RC, Thelma. (1988). *Too Deep For Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Karper PCPA, Karen. (1990). *Clare: Her Light and Her Song*. Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press (now available from Franciscan Press, Quincy, IL).

THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION PROCESS

Part III: The Candidacy Phase

When we look at the Secular Franciscan formation process, it is important to see it as a continuum, that is, each stage flowing into the next. Aspects that are essential in the first phase, Orientation, will still be essential in the second, Inquiry, the third, Candidacy, and into the Ongoing Formation of professed members.

The time between the Rite of Admission and the Rite of Profession or Permanent Commitment to the Gospel is the Candidacy phase of formation. This is a time for assisting and promoting the growth of the Candidate as a human person, as a Christian person, and as a Franciscan person. All three dimensions are interrelated and, if the vocation is true, will blend into one harmonious human being.

As in all phases of formation, it is essential that resources allow for dialogue and sharing between the Candidates and the Fraternity as well as among the Candidates themselves. This is a time for the Formation Director/Team to encourage the Candidates' growth in Franciscan spirituality and the practice of Gospel values. It is the time for the Candidates to take on a gradually more active role in the Fraternity and in society, especially by means of participation in Franciscan apostolates.

During Candidacy the Secular Franciscan Rule supplies the path, the approach, and the guide. Therefore, considerable emphasis is placed on reading, understanding, digesting and incarnating the Rule. The living out of the Rule is crucial in preparing for Profession since it provides the structure for growing in the spirit of penance and ongoing conversion within the context of the local Fraternity.

- Candidacy is the most important stage in the Initial Formation process since its purpose is to prepare the Candidate for a life-long commitment to live the *SFO Rule*, a mature and enduring decision to participate as fully as possible in the Church's life and mission according to the manner of Saint Francis.
- This period of formation begins with the Rite of Admission into the Secular Franciscan Order, the public acceptance by the Order of the Candidate's request and intention to live the Gospel life in the manner of Saint Francis as contained in the *SFO Rule* which has been approved by the Church.
- During Candidacy, the entire Fraternity participates in and nurtures the growth and development of the Candidate's evangelical living out of the *SFO Rule*.
- It is important that the Candidate be given opportunities to experience, interiorize, integrate and live out the Gospel values presented in the *SFO Rule*.
- **Time frame:** an extended period, ***lasting a minimum of eighteen months and up to a maximum of three years***. In particular circumstances, it may be prudent to extend the actual time of Candidacy beyond these norms to broaden and deepen the Candidate's formation experience.

• **Suggested content for the Candidacy phase:**

- the *Prologue to the SFO Rule* (the *Volterra Letter*)
 - a thorough study of the 1978 *SFO Rule*
 - Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels, and the opportunity to experience, interiorize and integrate Gospel values
 - Franciscan spirituality
 - Secular Franciscan apostolic life
 - a detailed study of the *SFO General Constitutions*
 - lives of Secular Franciscan saints and other Franciscans
 - Franciscan traditions and stories (such as the Franciscan crown rosary, Stations of the Cross, Greccio, Gubbio, etc.)
 - writings of Francis and Clare
 - introduction to Franciscan sources, including an understanding of the purpose of a medieval legend
 - continued experience in praying and leading the *Liturgy of the Hours*
 - other Franciscan prayer experiences (for example, the *Transitus*)
 - a detailed study of the *SFO Ritual*, especially the Rites of Profession
- A retreat may serve as a fitting formation experience prior to making Profession

Rite: Rite of Profession or Permanent Commitment (see *SFO Ritual*, pages 18-26) or
Rite of Temporary Commitment (see *SFO Ritual*, pages 27-29)

THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION PROCESS

Part IV: The Ongoing Formation Phase

When we look at the Secular Franciscan formation process, it is important to see it as a continuum, that is, each stage flowing into the next. Aspects that are essential in the first phase, Orientation, will still be essential in the second, Inquiry, the third, Candidacy, and into the Ongoing Formation of professed members.

The purpose of the Ongoing Formation Phase is to support the professed members' commitment, and to strengthen their Franciscan vocation so that the ongoing conversion process will continue as a lifestyle.

“Begun by the preceding stages, the formation of the brothers and sisters takes place in a permanent and continuous way. It should be understood as an aid in the conversion of each and everyone and in the fulfillment of their proper mission in the Church and in society” (*General Constitutions*, article 44.1).

- Ongoing Formation is a process of renewal for the entire Fraternity by which we are encouraged and challenged to live our vocation in the actual situations and contingencies of daily living.
- Ongoing Formation is the outgrowth of proper Initial Formation, realizing that we are in a continual process of conversion and growth all the days of our life.
- Ongoing Formation necessarily includes additional information and updating in various areas of spirituality, and deepening of our commitment to the Gospel life. None of us ever completes formation; it is a lifelong process.
- Monthly Fraternity gatherings are the ordinary place for Ongoing Formation.
- Other opportunities for Ongoing Formation include:
 - retreats
 - days of renewal
 - community celebrations
 - interaction between fraternities
 - interaction with the Friars, the Poor Clares, the Third Order Religious
 - attendance at Regional and National gatherings
 - workshops and seminars

• **Suggested content for the Ongoing Formation phase:**

- the *Prologue to the SFO Rule* (the *Volterra Letter*)
- a detailed study of the 1978 *SFO Rule*
- writings of Francis, Clare, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus and other Franciscan women and men
- Franciscan history
- articles from **TAU-USA**
- papal encyclicals, apostolic letters and statements
- pastoral statements from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- official documents and statements of the Franciscan Family
- detailed study of the *SFO Ritual* and *General Constitutions of the SFO*
- International, National and Regional statutes
- other Franciscan prayer experiences (for example, the Office of the Passion)
- experiencing each other's apostolates

Rite: Ceremony on the Anniversary of Profession (see *SFO Ritual*, pages 30-32)

ADULT LEARNERS

Andragogy (adult learning)

This is based on five assumptions:

- 1) adult learners are self-directed;
- 2) their experiences are a resource for learning;
- 3) learning is linked to the responsibilities of everyday life; and
- 4) adult learners are able to apply their learning immediately to life;
- 5) adults learn in different manners: visual, auditory, kinetic, and experiential.

Lifelong Learners

Adult learners need resources and support for their self-directed learning.
Self-directed learning is a lifelong process.

Process

It is continuous.

Adult learners shape their own learning process.

Lived Franciscan faith, reflection, and personal experience are integral to the process.

Ongoing Outcome

Conversion

Metanoia

Mission (being sent forth)/Commission

TranSFOrmation

Optimal Adult Learning Conditions

Adults learn best when:

- 1) treated with respect as self-directing persons;
- 2) the learning situation is related to their past experience;
- 3) they have participated in the planning of the learning activity and set their own goals;
- 4) they are physically comfortable and can socialize with those in the learning group and process;
- 5) they are with their peers, freely learning in groups;
- 6) there are opportunities for a variety of learning activities;
- 7) problem-centered situations arise or a question needs resolving or a task needs doing;
- 8) they can see progress, immediate results and personal reward for time and money spent;
- 9) they evaluate themselves.

Movements of Shared Christian (Franciscan) Praxis

The process of shared Christian (Franciscan) Praxis unfolds in the course of five distinct but interrelated movements (Groome is emphatic that they are NOT steps!) A focusing activity leads to:

- 1) The participants are invited to name their own activity concerning the topic for attention (present action). What are you doing (your present story)? (Present action can be named or expressed through any form of human expression, such as: writing, speaking, dancing, symbolizing, gesturing, etc.)
- 2) You are invited to reflect on why you do what you do, and what the likely or intended consequences of your actions are (critical reflection). Why do you do what you do (your vision, assumptions, hopes)?
- 3) The facilitator/group leader/instructor makes present to the group the Christian (Franciscan) community Story concerning the topic at hand and the faith response it invites (Story and its Vision). What have Christians (Franciscans) done and why have they done it?
- 4) The participants are invited to look at the Christian (Franciscan) Story, internalize it, "own" it, and compare it with their own stories. Let's talk about it (dialogue between my story and vision and the Christian [Franciscan] Story and Vision).
- 5) There is an opportunity to choose a personal faith response for the future. Now, what are you going to do (future practice or resolutions)?

Adapted from: Dunning, J. B. (1983). Method is the Medium is the Message: Catechetical Method in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. In N. A. Parent (Ed.), *Christian Adulthood: A Catechetical Resource* (pp. 14-16). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

Groome, T. H. (1980). *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Groome, T. H. (1991). *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education & Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*. San Francisco: Harper.

Definition of Shared Christian (Franciscan) Praxis

Christian religious education (Franciscan formation) by shared praxis can be described as a group of Christians (Franciscans) sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on present action in light of the Christian (Franciscan) Story and its Vision toward the end of lived Christian (Franciscan) faith (ongoing conversion; personal and communal transFORMATION).

(Adapted by David & Thérèse Ream, S.F.O., from: Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision*, 1980. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 2005)

ENGAGING LEARNERS

- Arouse and create interest in learners:
 - begin with personal interests
 - stimulate new interests
- Build curriculum from and for learner's lives:
 - look at and reflect upon their own experiences
 - draw upon what they already know and make connections
- Pose personally engaging questions and questioning activities:
 - invite them to reflect beyond recall and logic
 - elicit feelings, insights and understandings, memories and imaginings
 - encourage judgments and decisions
- Challenge learners:
 - beyond present achievements
 - to excel according to their capacities
- Imagine ways to arouse curiosity:
 - look for the mystery in things
 - allow time for investigation
- Have enthusiasm for what you are teaching
- Vary teaching methods:
 - self-expression
 - listening to each other
 - reflection on experience
 - story telling
 - creative projects
 - research assignments
 - artwork
 - forms of ritual
 - service to human need
- Assign varied "requirements" favoring, when possible, ones that demand their own creativity:
 - students' judgments and opinions
 - learners' outlooks and sentiments
- Help them to make meaning:
 - find purpose in what is being learned
 - connect what they are learning with themselves and their world

Movements of Shared Christian (Franciscan) Praxis

The process of shared Christian (Franciscan) Praxis unfolds in the course of five distinct but interrelated movements. (Groome is emphatic that they are NOT steps!)

A focusing activity (a story, a picture, a song, an image) leads to:

1) The participants are invited to name their own activity concerning the topic for attention (present action). What are you doing (your present story)?

Def: Present action can be named or expressed through any form of human expression, such as: writing, speaking, dancing, symbolizing, gesturing, etc.

2) The participants are invited to reflect on why they do what they do, and what the likely or intended consequences of their actions are (critical reflection). Why do they do what they do (their vision, assumptions, hopes)? *It is important to establish personal ownership at this stage.* Insure that everyone has a good grasp of the reasons underlying their opinions or actions. If this is not established, they could go through this entire process as if it were a fantasy or an intellectual abstraction. Rootedness and self-knowledge are important at this juncture.

3) The facilitator/group leader/instructor makes present to the group the Christian (Franciscan) community Story concerning the topic at hand and the faith response it invites (Story and its Vision). What have Christians (Franciscans) done and why have they done it?

4) The participants are invited to look at the Christian (Franciscan) Story, internalize it, "own" it, and compare it with their own stories. Let's talk about it (dialogue between my story and vision and the Christian [Franciscan] Story and Vision).

5) Here is an opportunity to choose a personal faith response for the future. Now, what are you going to do (future practice or resolutions)?

Adapted from: Dunning, J. B. (1983). Method is the Medium is the Message: Catechetical Method in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. In N. A. Parent (Ed.), *Christian Adulthood: A Catechetical Resource* (pp. 14-16). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

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Definition of Shared Christian (Franciscan) Praxis

Christian religious education (Franciscan formation) by shared praxis can be described as a group of Christians (Franciscans) sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on present action in light of the Christian (Franciscan) Story and its Vision toward the end of lived Christian (Franciscan) faith (ongoing conversion; personal and communal transFORMATION).

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How to Ask the Proper Questions

Critical Reason reviews what is in the world, both the positive and the negative, asking the meaning of and reasons for both.

- What do you think this means, and why?
- What is life-giving here and why?
- What is not life-giving and why not?
- Whose interest is being served?
- Who is suffering?
- What are some of the reasons for this present state of affairs?
- Can you explain some of your own attitudes?

Analytical Memory uncovers the social and personal origins of how things got to be the way they are and the root of our own perspective.

- Where does this come from?
- How did this present situation arise?
- What is the history—personal or social—behind it?
- Whose interests brought things to be this way?
- What memories does this hold for you?
- What are some of the roots of your own attitude?
- Can you share some of the story behind what you're saying (or feeling, or doing, etc.)?

Creative Imagination invites seeing the consequences of our present situation, perceiving what might or should be changed, and stimulating our own creativity to change.

- What are the likely consequences of this?
- What should be the outcome here?
- What can we do on behalf of what is best for all?
- What changes can we make that are fitting?
- What consequences would we prefer and how do we help to shape them?
- How do we feel called to respond?
- What would it mean to act for life for all?

PERSONALITY TYPES AND FORMATION

We will be better formators the more we know about the people in our fraternities. Secular Franciscans, like people in general, come in all sorts of sizes, shapes and personalities. Different personality types learn in different ways and participate in groups in different ways. We will become better formators the more we understand about how people operate.

EXTRAVERTS—INTROVERTS

These first two categories indicate how we tend to get our energy and interact with others. **Extraverts** tend to get energized through interaction with others and the world around them. When an extravert has a good weekend, he or she will seek out someone with whom to share the details. In this way, they "relive" and deepen the experience. Extraverts tend to think out loud, and so when dealing with extraverts, it is important not to push them too quickly to get to the point: they may not yet know what the point is. Extraverts may prefer community prayers, such as the Liturgy of the Hours. Extraverts do not necessarily mean to monopolize the conversation. Their assumption is that everyone will just jump in. Extraverts approach discussions like the old joke about the Irish and fighting: "Pardon me, is this a private fight, or may anyone join in?" Sometimes you may have to gently remind an extravert that others may not jump in so readily. "Good point, Patricia. Let's explore this point for just a minute. What do you others think about this?"

Introverts, on the other hand, tend to get energized through the inner world of concepts, ideas, and feelings. Introverts are not necessarily shy; however, they do not tend to share their thoughts and feelings as readily as extraverts. When an introvert has a good weekend, he or she will tell you only so much. You may have to dig a bit to get the details. Introverts tend to think inside their heads, and speak only when they know what they want to say. A rule of thumb is that introverts don't speak until they know what they think, whereas extraverts don't know what they think until they speak.

Introverts may prefer quieter, more contemplative forms of praying. When dealing with introverts in a formation group, it may be helpful to "encourage" them to speak, particularly if the extraverts are really on a roll. "James, you look like the wheels are turning in your head. What do you think about this?"

THINKERS—FEELERS

These categories indicate how we prefer to process information. **Thinkers** tend to process information through logical thinking. They value consistency of ideas and the flow of thought. Thinkers are often able to look at multiple sides of an issue because they can distance themselves from their own feelings about a subject. Many times thinkers will actually argue the side they personally disagree with, just to explore those possibilities. Sometimes it seems as though a thinker is not personally invested in an issue. This is not true. They just invest themselves in different ways. At times, they may need to be encouraged to express their feelings, to reveal what is in their heart.

Feelers, on the other hand, tend to process information through their personal value system. This does not mean that they do not think logically. Feelers value harmony, both internal and external. Feelers are strong in their commitment to what they feel is true and just. They may be more concerned about how some idea or policy will affect people than about how logical the idea or policy is. Sometimes it may seem as though they are too personally invested in an issue, and may need to be reminded to explore other sides of an issue.

Our fraternities need extraverts and introverts, thinkers and feelers. Without each, we would become lopsided. It is our job, as formators, to help orchestrate these various instruments of God's peace.

THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION PROCESS

Part I: The Orientation Phase

When we look at the Secular Franciscan formation process, it is important to see it as a continuum, that is, each stage flowing into the next. Aspects that are essential in the first phase, Orientation, will still be essential in the second, Inquiry, the third, Candidacy, and into the Ongoing Formation of professed members.

During Orientation, it is essential that formation resources allow for dialogue and sharing since this is the ideal time to discern a prospective member's call to a Secular Franciscan vocation. If discernment is addressed early, it can save time and avoid heartache for both the individual and the Fraternity.

The materials used in Orientation should allow for comprehensive, yet nonintrusive, personal disclosure so as to discover the person's reasons for wanting to become a Secular Franciscan. We need to discern the extent to which their motivation is compatible with what we know the Order to be. In this way, potential "mismatching" can be handled early, avoiding much anguish for all concerned.

The formation resources used should encourage ample dialogue and sharing since this type of interaction is invaluable in assessing whether aspirants' life circumstances will allow them to commit to the Secular Franciscan lifestyle. Orientation is a favorable time to observe the whole person, physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and interpersonally.

While we're "getting to know them," we expect them to "get to know us," our roots and our charism. Therefore, some form of introduction to the lives of Saints Francis and Clare are appropriate as early as possible and throughout the entire formation process.

Especially useful during Orientation are resources that allow the Fraternity and the formators to gather knowledge about the individual's understanding of the Catholic faith. Remedial work takes time. If their knowledge is inadequate, perhaps involvement in the local church's adult religious education program or RCIA process would be appropriate BEFORE continuing with Secular Franciscan Initial Formation. Please make sure that these persons are fully initiated members of the Catholic faith.

- The Orientation phase of formation is critical. This is a time to watch for specific clues that the person before you is or is not suited for SFO life.
- It is a time for discerning whether or not the prospective member has the basic dispositions that are essential for entering into mature committed relationships such as those which membership in the SFO requires.
- The *Interview Guide for Prospective Members of the Secular Franciscan Order* is especially useful during this phase.

- **Time frame: at least** three to four months
- **Content for the Orientation phase (an OVERVIEW of):**

- an understanding of discernment and vocation (see *To Cling with All Her Heart to Him* by Fonck, page 5)
- brief review of Catholic doctrine and Christian morals
- an explanation of Franciscan prayer life and apostolic activity
- phases of Secular Franciscan formation and expectations
- introduction to the life of Saint Francis (perhaps in novel form, such as *Francis: The Saint of Assisi* by Mueller; or *Francis: The Journey and the Dream* by Bodo)
- introduction to the life of Saint Clare (perhaps in novel form, such as *Clare: A Light in the Garden* by Bodo)
- branches of the Franciscan family
- 1978 Rule and brief history of the Secular Franciscan Order
- an understanding of some of our Franciscan symbols
- a Franciscan prayer experience

Rite: Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming (see *SFO Ritual*, pages 9-10)

Bibliography:

- Bodo OFM, Murray. (1992, revised & expanded). *Clare: A Light in the Garden*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
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- Fonck OFM, Benet A. (1996). *To Cling with All Her Heart to Him*. Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press.
- Mueller, Joan. (2000). *Francis: The Saint of Assisi*. Allen, TX: Thomas More.

THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION PROCESS

Part II: The Inquiry Phase

When we look at the Secular Franciscan formation process, it is important to see it as a continuum, that is, each stage flowing into the next. Aspects that are essential in the first phase, Orientation, will still be essential in the second, Inquiry, the third, Candidacy, and into the Ongoing Formation of professed members.

The Inquiry phase of initial formation is a time for the most serious and prayerful discernment of the Inquirer's vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order. During this phase of initial formation, the Fraternity and the Inquirer continue to get to know each other more fully. Opportunities for dialogue and sharing continue to be important to ensure that the aspirant and the Fraternity are compatible.

During Inquiry and **before the Rite of Admission**, certain aspects of the relationship between the Inquirer and the Fraternity must be examined. Prior to the Rite of Admission, the Fraternity needs to be confident that the Inquirer has an adequate grasp of the Catholic faith to sustain their deeper journey into the Franciscan way of life. The Inquirer's life should reflect a determination not only to know the faith intellectually, but also to live the faith in practice. The Inquirer must be a fully initiated member of the Catholic faith. The Inquirer should understand and be able to articulate the concept of vocation and, more specifically, a vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order.

Note the emphasis on "before the Rite of Admission." Once this Rite is celebrated, the Inquirers officially become Candidates and are admitted into a local Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order to prepare for permanent commitment. If the discernment of vocation is incomplete or mistaken during the Orientation and Inquiry phases, it must be rectified before the Rite of Admission takes place.

- The Inquiry phase, as the first formal period of initiation, is a time of discernment and choice of the Franciscan life. During this time, the Inquirer participates in the life of the Fraternity and comes to understand our way of life. At the same time, the Fraternity comes to know the Inquirer better, so that it can discern how best to respond to the Inquirer's request to become part of the Fraternity.
- The Inquiry phase begins with the Ceremony of Welcoming. This is a simple paraliturgical service that promises the support of the Fraternity on the journey that the Inquirer is about to undertake. It does not take place as a separate ritual, but as part of the regular meeting or gathering of the Fraternity.
- During this phase, the Inquirer, with the help of the Formation Director/Team, must seek to determine honest responses to these basic questions:
 - What is a vocation, and how am I called?
 - What is Gospel life, and how am I called to live it?
 - What is a vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order, and am I called to live this way of life?
- **Time frame: at least** six months

• **Suggested content for the Inquiry phase:**

- a deeper understanding of discernment and vocation specifically to the SFO
- awareness of the agents of formation (see *Guidelines for Initial Formation*)
- a more in-depth study of the life of Saint Francis (a more scholarly version, such as *St. Francis of Assisi: A Biography* by Englebert)
- a more in-depth study of the life of Saint Clare (a more scholarly version, such as *Clare of Assisi* by Bartoli; or *Clare: Her Light and Her Song* by Karper)
- first-hand exposure to the writings of Saints Francis and Clare (as contained in, for example, *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings for a Gospel Life* by Armstrong; *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* by Armstrong & Brady; and *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* by Armstrong)
- history of the Secular Franciscan Order, including the evolution of its Rules
- overview of the organizational structure of the Secular Franciscan Order
- introduction to the *SFO Rule, General Constitutions of the SFO* and the *SFO Ritual*
- introduction to Sacred Scripture and how it impacts the life of a Secular Franciscan (the practice of *Lectio Divina* as contained in, for example, *Too Deep For Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina* by Hall)
- the Catholic Church in light of the Second Vatican Council (especially the documents *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*)
- the *SFO Rule* in light of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- an understanding of spirituality which is both secular and (for most aspirants) lay
 - the family (*SFO Rule*, article 17; *Constitutions*, article 24)
 - work (*SFO Rule*, article 16; *Constitutions*, article 21.1-2)
 - social and political involvement (*SFO Rule*, article 14; *Constitutions*, article 22)
- introduction to praying the *Liturgy of the Hours*
- other Franciscan prayer experiences

Rite: Rite of Admission (see *SFO Ritual*, pages 11-17)

Bibliography:

- Armstrong OFM Cap., Regis J. (1993, revised & expanded). *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*. Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications.
- Armstrong OFM Cap., Regis J. (1994). *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings for a Gospel Life*. NY: Crossroad.
- Armstrong OFM Cap., Regis J. & Brady OFM, Ignatius C. (1982). *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Bartoli, Marco. (1993). *Clare of Assisi*. Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press.
- Englebert, Omer. (1965). *St. Francis of Assisi: A Biography*. Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books.
- Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Order in the United States*. (1985). Lindsborg, KS: Barbo-Carlson Enterprises.
- Hall RC, Thelma. (1988). *Too Deep For Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Karper PCPA, Karen. (1990). *Clare: Her Light and Her Song*. Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press (now available from Franciscan Press, Quincy, IL).

THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION PROCESS

Part III: The Candidacy Phase

When we look at the Secular Franciscan formation process, it is important to see it as a continuum, that is, each stage flowing into the next. Aspects that are essential in the first phase, Orientation, will still be essential in the second, Inquiry, the third, Candidacy, and into the Ongoing Formation of professed members.

The time between the Rite of Admission and the Rite of Profession or Permanent Commitment to the Gospel is the Candidacy phase of formation. This is a time for assisting and promoting the growth of the Candidate as a human person, as a Christian person, and as a Franciscan person. All three dimensions are interrelated and, if the vocation is true, will blend into one harmonious human being.

As in all phases of formation, it is essential that resources allow for dialogue and sharing between the Candidates and the Fraternity as well as among the Candidates themselves. This is a time for the Formation Director/Team to encourage the Candidates' growth in Franciscan spirituality and the practice of Gospel values. It is the time for the Candidates to take on a gradually more active role in the Fraternity and in society, especially by means of participation in Franciscan apostolates.

During Candidacy the Secular Franciscan Rule supplies the path, the approach, and the guide. Therefore, considerable emphasis is placed on reading, understanding, digesting and incarnating the Rule. The living out of the Rule is crucial in preparing for Profession since it provides the structure for growing in the spirit of penance and ongoing conversion within the context of the local Fraternity.

- Candidacy is the most important stage in the Initial Formation process since its purpose is to prepare the Candidate for a life-long commitment to live the *SFO Rule*, a mature and enduring decision to participate as fully as possible in the Church's life and mission according to the manner of Saint Francis.
- This period of formation begins with the Rite of Admission into the Secular Franciscan Order, the public acceptance by the Order of the Candidate's request and intention to live the Gospel life in the manner of Saint Francis as contained in the *SFO Rule* which has been approved by the Church.
- During Candidacy, the entire Fraternity participates in and nurtures the growth and development of the Candidate's evangelical living out of the *SFO Rule*.
- It is important that the Candidate be given opportunities to experience, interiorize, integrate and live out the Gospel values presented in the *SFO Rule*.
- **Time frame:** an extended period, ***lasting a minimum of eighteen months and up to a maximum of three years***. In particular circumstances, it may be prudent to extend the actual time of Candidacy beyond these norms to broaden and deepen the Candidate's formation experience.

• **Suggested content for the Candidacy phase:**

- the *Prologue to the SFO Rule* (the *Volterra Letter*)
 - a thorough study of the 1978 *SFO Rule*
 - Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels, and the opportunity to experience, interiorize and integrate Gospel values
 - Franciscan spirituality
 - Secular Franciscan apostolic life
 - a detailed study of the *SFO General Constitutions*
 - lives of Secular Franciscan saints and other Franciscans
 - Franciscan traditions and stories (such as the Franciscan crown rosary, Stations of the Cross, Greccio, Gubbio, etc.)
 - writings of Francis and Clare
 - introduction to Franciscan sources, including an understanding of the purpose of a medieval legend
 - continued experience in praying and leading the *Liturgy of the Hours*
 - other Franciscan prayer experiences (for example, the Transitus)
 - a detailed study of the *SFO Ritual*, especially the Rites of Profession
- A retreat may serve as a fitting formation experience prior to making Profession

Rite: Rite of Profession or Permanent Commitment (see *SFO Ritual*, pages 18-26) or Rite of Temporary Commitment (see *SFO Ritual*, pages 27-29)

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS
(All information is to be held in strict confidence)

Date _____
Name
Address
City, State
Phone (H) (W)
E-mail Address Fax Number
Date of Birth Place
Occupation

Name of your Parish
Address

FAMILY INFORMATION:

Spouse's Name
Number and ages of children

RELIGIOUS FORMATION:

What is the extent of your formal Religious Education?

Have you continued educating yourself in the faith since you left school?

In what ways? (e.g. Bible Classes, Days of Recollection, Adult Religious Ed. Programs)

How many, how often, how recently?

SACRAMENTAL INFORMATION:

Please supply certificates for reception of these sacraments:

BAPTISM

RCIA

CONFIRMATION

EUCCHARIST

HOLY ORDERS

MATRIMONY

If you are divorced and remarried, please supply document of annulment.

MISC.:

Do you or have you ever belonged to a Religious Order?

To what other groups or organizations do you belong?

How are you active in your parish community?

How are you active in your local community?

How do you occupy your leisure time (hobbies, talents)?

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER:

How did you first hear of the Secular Franciscan Order?

What draws your interest to Francis?

What drew you to this fraternity?

How willing and able are you to participate in the monthly formation process and the fraternal gatherings?

How supportive is your family of your decision to join the Secular Franciscan Order?

What do you expect from the Secular Franciscan Order?

What are you willing to bring to the Secular Franciscan Order?

REFERENCES:

Please supply the names and addresses of your pastor or spiritual director and another person to serve as character references.

Signs that a person MAY have a call to the S.F.O.

1. A person who is good practicing Catholic.
2. A person who has a desire to follow Jesus.
Jesus and his Gospel are at the heart of the Franciscan way of life.
3. A person who has a personal faith relationship with Jesus, not simply intellectual knowledge about him. Franciscans follow Francis' example in loving God, our sister earth and all its people.
4. A person who is hope-filled and is willing to deal with life's issues.
Pessimists, nay-sayers, and persons who want to hide from the world are typically not good candidates for the SFO.
5. A person who realizes that we are all sinful people in need of conversion.
"Perfect" people do not need the SFO, and the SFO certainly does not need them!
6. A person who has at least some knowledge of the persons and spirits of Francis and Clare of Assisi.
7. A person who is willing and able to make a commitment to the *Rule of the SFO* and to live in fraternity. Basic communication skills are needed to listen to and interact with our brothers and sisters in fraternity.
8. A person who trusts in God and realizes that God is needed in his/her life.
Anyone who is prejudiced, arrogant and closed-minded will not make a good candidate for the SFO.
9. A person who has a reverence for all of creation. Courtesy and respect are part of the spirit of reverence for all of creation.
10. A person who is willing to live the countercultural reality of a life in fraternity.
Secular Franciscans live in fraternity and are willing to share creative ideas and life with others.

**IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT,
THE FRATERNITY RECEIVES THE BENEFIT OF THE
DOUBT!!!**

Signs that a person may NOT have a call to the S.F.O.

1. A person who already belongs to a religious Order or another “Third Order” may **not** belong to the SFO.
2. A person who is a non-Catholic may **not** be received as an Inquirer into the SFO, although may be able to participate to some extent in the life of a fraternity. Good dialogue can determine a healthy form of participation.
3. A person who has interpersonal problems, problems with relationships, or wants to escape home or family problems is **not** likely to be a good candidate for the SFO. The SFO is not a therapy group/society, although we do offer our members supportive encouragement.
4. A person who is a “professional joiner” is **not** a good candidate for the SFO.
5. A person who forces personal devotions and ideas on others is **not** a good candidate for the SFO.
6. A person who is too individualistic and self-centered is **not** likely to be a good candidate for the SFO. The SFO fraternity must be united by a common goal, a sense of mission and a common desire to integrate life and Gospel, “going from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel” (*SFO Rule*, art. #4).
7. A person whose lifestyle is obviously counter to the Gospel is **not** a good candidate for the SFO.
8. A person who continuously gossips, or criticizes everything and everybody, or is irresponsible in family and/or work situations, or has addictions and does nothing to change (such as seeking professional help) is **not** a good candidate for the SFO.
9. A person with rigid and unbending opinions and attitudes is **not** a good candidate for the SFO. The SFO does not need dictators! We are involved in servant leadership and need to work collaboratively.
10. A person who uses violence, power or prestige to control life is **not** suitable for a Gospel way of life.

**IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT,
THE FRATERNITY RECEIVES THE BENEFIT OF THE
DOUBT!!!**

Sponsor as an Agent of Formation

From the earliest days of the Order, Francis sent the brothers out two by two to preach the good news of repentance to any and all they met. As with other things in his life, Francis' choice of two by two was Gospel based. In his wisdom, he would probably have paired up a newer member of the brotherhood with an older member. In time, the pairs would return and share the bounty or the sorrows of their missionary adventures.

Take time now and be present to one of these pairs. Imagine their journey. There would definitely be times of prayer; there'd be times of sharing the workings of the Holy Spirit in their lives. How they came to be drawn to this band of men following Francis of Assisi would definitely enter into the conversation. I'm sure they would have asked each other questions they had concerning truths Francis had shared with them. As they were preaching, they probably would have shared what different Scripture passages meant. As they walked from town to town, the beauties of creation and how creation perfectly conforms to the will of God would have come to mind. After time together, they would even come to share the parts of this mendicant life they found hard to live. They would seek each other's advice as to how to better live out poverty, chastity, obedience, charity, humility, penitence. They might even admonish the other as to how to better live this way of life. They would praise the goodness of God that had brought them to this point of their spiritual journey.

Would you think this sharing helped the brothers grow in their vocation? Would it have helped to form greater bonds of unity within the community? Would it have caused stronger bonds of support between the brothers? I believe this might have been one of Jesus' original intents when sending the disciples out two by two. It was probably one of Francis' ideas also.

Do we have this companionship built into the Secular Franciscan Order today? In the role of Sponsor in the formation process, this role is alive and active. What is a Sponsor? Very basically, it is a journey companion: an active, professed member of the fraternity who chooses to walk the initial journey with a new Candidate. What occurs between these two persons? Much the same as occurred on the imaginary journey we just walked with the original Friars Minor. These two persons would share prayer, Scripture, how they came to this vocation, the teachings of this way of life, a sharing in

mission, and the movement of the Holy Spirit in their own lives. When asked, the professed member might offer points on how to better live the Rule. They would have times of leisure to share together, times of worship, times of being present to the creation that surrounds them, times of opening up to God within and God they discovered outside of themselves, times of service to others. All in all, they would share how this call to live the Gospel life in the example of St. Francis is exploding in their very being.

What are the qualifications necessary to be a Sponsor?

- A love of your Secular Franciscan vocation and a desire to share it
- A willingness to be open to the Holy Spirit and to another
- A desire to share God's goodness in your life with another
- An openness to share your understanding and love of Sts. Francis and Clare
- A listening heart
- A prayerful spirit
- A sense of nurture for another's vocation
- A lived experience of Scripture
- A call to service
- An appreciation of creation

How does this process begin? This will vary from fraternity to fraternity. In some fraternities, the person who introduced the Candidate to the Secular Franciscan way of life might be the Sponsor. In another instance, the Candidates may choose a professed member to walk with them. In still another case, the Council would match up professed members with the Candidates to be. Your fraternity may have another manner in which to pair people. The mode of connecting one person with another can be as varied as there are fraternities.

Interaction is key to this process. Initial contact most times becomes the responsibility of the professed member. One scenario would be for the professed member to invite the Candidate for a cup of coffee or, better still, breakfast one morning. And just begin the conversation:

“I first heard about St. Francis . . . ” or

“I was invited to consider a vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order when . . .” or

“I saw a brochure or announcement in the bulletin that there was an Open House at the fraternity meeting and I went.” or

“I became interested when I read a life of St. Francis.” or

“My spiritual director thought this might be a path for me to explore.” or

“I was searching for a way to live a Gospel life and . . .”

Whatever your introduction to St. Francis and the Order, share it, and then ask your partner to share in turn.

What other avenues are there in this sponsor relationship? Together you might try reading a biography of Francis or a book on Franciscan values and share your gleanings. You might watch a movie or see a play about Francis together and share insights. You might go to a Franciscan prayer service at your parish or a nearby Monastery of St. Clare. During Lent, you might attend Stations together. You might set aside a time once a month to share Scripture and how a certain passage has affected your life. Be ready to answer any questions that might arise from the formation session. Attend the sessions when you are able. Join in a service project together. Most of all, be open to each other and the movement of the Holy Spirit. Allow the Spirit to guide your relationship, remembering that the Holy Spirit and the Candidate are the primary agents of Formation. The rest of us are present to facilitate this awesome interaction.

Companions on the Journey – a tradition that goes back to the beginnings of the Order of Friars Minor, a tradition that is rooted in the ministry of Jesus’ earliest disciples, a tradition that enriches all who partake in it. Partaking in the role of Sponsor is being actively engaged in the formation process as a professed Secular Franciscan. It is accepting the invitation to journey with another, following our Lord Jesus Christ in the example set forth by St. Francis himself.

Be adventurous. Take the first step. Encounter another on the Journey. Enjoy the benefits. Reap the rewards. Accept the role of Sponsor.

Teresa V. Baker

2005

Guidelines for Newly Professed

General Constitutions Article 44

- 2 The Fraternity has the duty to give special attention to the formation of the newly professed and of the temporarily professed, to help them become fully mature in their vocation and develop a true sense of belonging.

Formation of the newly professed this is taking place in many fraternities through various means. However, we feel that the obligation placed on the local formation directors to oversee initial and ongoing formation processes might become overwhelming. The newly professed seems to be the group that is most vulnerable to lack of time and consideration, or numerous participants. Therefore, we set out

Guidelines for Regional Formation Gatherings of the Newly Professed

Time Frame: four meetings within a year

How and Where:

- Meeting in groups at Regional Fraternity gatherings
- Meetings in clusters, areas, districts (however your regional fraternity is divided into smaller groups)
- Meetings with other local fraternities or other groups of newly professed

Why:

- deepening of their initial permanent profession experience
- provide a support system
- a more gradual transition from a small intimate group setting to a larger group

Content:

- how is your vocation growing
- what are its good points, its bad points; its ups, its downs
- what new surprises have you discovered
- what new insights
- what does it mean to be professed
- how are you giving ecclesial witness
- what apostolate are you involved in
- how has your prayer life changed
- what do you find easy to follow in the Rule; what do you find difficult
- were your expectations of profession met
- what improvements would you offer to formation process
- do you feel as if you fit in

Structure: 4 meetings a year of the Newly Professed

1. Regional Day of Unity

- As your Region gathers for its annual Day of Unity, invite the Newly Professed.
- have them gather together in their own session to share
 - how is your vocation going?
 - what do you find difficult about not being in the smaller formation group?
 - what new insights have you gained?
 - what has surprised you?
 - what has happened that you did not expect?

2. Day of Recollection

- Regional Executive Council invites the newly professed to a Day of Recollection set up just for them
- Invite them to a uniquely Franciscan prayer experience
- Have someone present them with a talk that is timely to their professional situation
- afterward, invite them to share:
 - how has their prayer life changed
 - what does it mean to be professed
 - What were their expectations?
 - have their expectations of being a professed Franciscan been met?
 - have them share their initial formational experiences

3. Clusters of Newly Professed

- clusters, districts, areas, local fraternities gather the newly professed together in smaller groupings
- afterward, invite them to share:
 - what are their fraternal issues?
 - Are they feeling more included?
 - what surprises continue to unfold for them
 - what new insights are they gaining as they enter more deeply into fraternal life
 - how has this time of gathering together enhanced their lives?

4. Gathering with other Newly Professed

- of the Franciscan family, friars, Clares, Brothers and sisters of the Third Order
- other Third Order groups in your area
- afterward, invite them to share:
 - how do we give an ecclesial witness
 - what apostolate are we involved in?
 - do we reach out to other ecumenical gatherings
 - How might we continue to network?

A METHOD FOR THE FORMATION OF THE NEWLY PROFESSED

The RCIA process in the Catholic Church has a post initiation phase known as Mystagogia. The purpose of this phase is to encourage the newly initiated to become more familiar with the mysteries of our Faith and to motivate them to participate more fully in the Sacraments while they continue to grow in spiritual maturity.

The *General Constitutions of the SFO* (article #44.2) and the *Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States* (Chapter III, F.2.a, page 28) advocate a Mystagogia-type phase for the newly professed so that they may have the opportunity to delve more deeply into the mysteries of Franciscan spirituality and to make the conversion process an integral part of their daily lives. The format which follows is offered with the hope that it will stimulate the newly professed to become spiritually mature Secular Franciscans.

The method is as follows:

1. A theme such as poverty or humility is selected.
2. An article from the *SFO Rule* which reinforces the theme is identified.
3. A short passage from Sacred Scripture relevant to the theme is chosen.
4. Participants reflect in silence on what the Rule and the Scripture passage are saying to them. This time of meditation is important to the process of surrender. Participants need this quiet time in order to listen to God's Word and to learn what Jesus is personally asking of each of them.
5. A member of the Formation Team then offers a short presentation which integrates and clarifies the theme in light of the Rule and the biblical reference.
6. Another period of reflective silence follows allowing the participants to interiorize what they have learned from the presentation.
7. The presenter or one of the participants reads a short, theme-related selection about St. Francis which illustrates how Francis lived out this theme in light of his relationship with Christ.
8. Journaling comes next in which the participants are asked to reflect upon and write about what this experience of St. Francis means to them.
9. The participants are then invited to imagine a situation that any of them might encounter on their spiritual journey in which St. Francis directly accompanies them.

10. Participants then write a letter to Jesus telling Him about their experience with St. Francis at their side (e.g., How did they feel knowing that Francis was a part of their experience? What did he say to them? How did he encourage them?).
11. A period of sharing follows. Sharing is important in the growth of Fraternity members. We learn from one other as well as learning to hear what Christ has to say through another person.
12. The process ends with the communal praying of one of the prayers of St. Francis.

Here is a sample session on the theme of Humility:

THE SFO RULE: Chapter 2, Article # 11.

BIBLICAL REFERENCE: Philippians 2:3-11.

REFLECTIVE SILENCE: Quiet reflection on the passages as presented.

PRESENTATION: A short presentation on Franciscan humility is offered.

REFLECTIVE SILENCE: Quiet reflection on the presentation.

FRANCIS' EXPERIENCE: 1 Celano 17

JOURNALING: "Write about what St. Francis' experience of humility means to you."

GUIDED IMAGERY: "Imagine yourself volunteering at a soup kitchen for the homeless or at an AIDS hospice with Francis at your side."

LETTER WRITING: "Write a letter to Jesus about your experience at the soup kitchen or hospice with St. Francis at your side."

SHARING:

PRAYER: Communal praying of one of the prayers of St. Francis.

*Please note that you can choose any Franciscan theme to explore using this method. The short Franciscan story for the Experience portion of the process may be selected from any reliable Franciscan source.

(Adapted from Nancy Lippert, S.F.O., a member of the St. Francis Regional Formation Commission. She graciously gave the National Formation Commission her permission and her blessing for the use of this format, 2005)

Major Legend for Ongoing Formation for the Newly Professed



The Major Life of Francis by Saint Bonaventure is a thematic telling of Francis' life based on Franciscan spirituality.

Have the Newly Professed:

- 1) read a chapter a month, each dealing with a different topic (there are 15 chapters and a Prologue);
- 2) read a writing of Francis that correlates to this topic (Formator chooses it ahead of time);
- 3) have *Newly Professed* discern which articles of the *Rule* best speak to the topic;
- 4) have *Newly Professed* discern and discuss how this aspect of Franciscan spirituality is present in their lives or how to try and make it present;
- 5) have *the Formator* select from one of the Council Documents, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* or *The Church in the Modern World* or *Dei Verbum* to make this topic pertinent to Church teaching today;
- 6) have *Newly Professed* select articles of the SFO *General Constitutions* that correspond with this aspect of Franciscan spirituality.

The main goals (not listed here in order of importance) of this approach to formation for the Newly Professed include:

- 1) Having the Newly Professed read an original source on Francis;
- 2) Having the Newly Professed read the Writings of Francis;
- 3) Having the Newly Professed delve into the *Rule* and *General Constitutions* of the Secular Franciscan Order and make them their own;
- 4) Having the Newly Professed reflect on the teachings of the Church;
- 5) Having the Newly Professed uncover the tenets of Franciscan spirituality;
- 6) Having the Newly Professed identify these tenets in their own lives;
- 7) *Allowing the Holy Spirit to be the primary agent of formation in their lives!*

THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION PROCESS

Part IV: The Ongoing Formation Phase

When we look at the Secular Franciscan formation process, it is important to see it as a continuum, that is, each stage flowing into the next. Aspects that are essential in the first phase, Orientation, will still be essential in the second, Inquiry, the third, Candidacy, and into the Ongoing Formation of professed members.

The purpose of the Ongoing Formation Phase is to support the professed members' commitment, and to strengthen their Franciscan vocation so that the ongoing conversion process will continue as a lifestyle.

“Begun by the preceding stages, the formation of the brothers and sisters takes place in a permanent and continuous way. It should be understood as an aid in the conversion of each and everyone and in the fulfillment of their proper mission in the Church and in society” (*General Constitutions*, article 44.1).

- Ongoing Formation is a process of renewal for the entire Fraternity by which we are encouraged and challenged to live our vocation in the actual situations and contingencies of daily living.
- Ongoing Formation is the outgrowth of proper Initial Formation, realizing that we are in a continual process of conversion and growth all the days of our life.
- Ongoing Formation necessarily includes additional information and updating in various areas of spirituality, and deepening of our commitment to the Gospel life. None of us ever completes formation; it is a lifelong process.
- Monthly Fraternity gatherings are the ordinary place for Ongoing Formation.
- Other opportunities for Ongoing Formation include:
 - retreats
 - days of renewal
 - community celebrations
 - interaction between fraternities
 - interaction with the Friars, the Poor Clares, the Third Order Religious
 - attendance at Regional and National gatherings
 - workshops and seminars

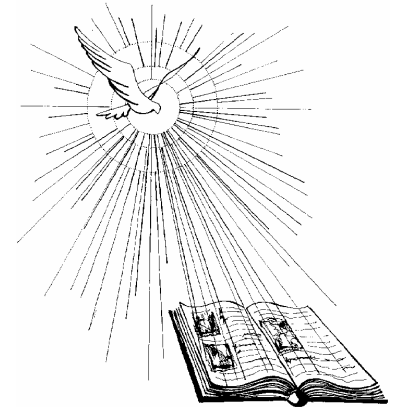
• **Suggested content for the Ongoing Formation phase:**

- the *Prologue to the SFO Rule* (the *Volterra Letter*)
- a detailed study of the 1978 *SFO Rule*
- writings of Francis, Clare, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus and other Franciscan women and men
- Franciscan history
- articles from **TAU-USA**
- papal encyclicals, apostolic letters and statements
- pastoral statements from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- official documents and statements of the Franciscan Family
- detailed study of the *SFO Ritual* and *General Constitutions of the SFO*
- International, National and Regional statutes
- other Franciscan prayer experiences (for example, the Office of the Passion)
- experiencing each other's apostolates

Rite: Ceremony on the Anniversary of Profession (see *SFO Ritual*, pages 30-32)

POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR ONGOING FORMATION

- The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order*
- Scripture (maybe studying the readings for the upcoming Sunday liturgy)
- General Constitutions
- National Statutes
- Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order
- TAU-USA ongoing formation articles
- Franciscan Formation Texts
- Vatican II Documents
- Franciscan Spirituality
- Franciscan Prayer
- Franciscan Life
- Franciscan History
- History of the Penitential Charism
- Saint Francis of Assisi
- Saint Clare of Assisi
- Holy Franciscan Women and Men (for example)



- Saint Anthony
- Saint Bonaventure
- Blessed John Duns Scotus
- Blessed Angela of Foligno
- Saint Margaret of Cortona
- Saint Elizabeth of Hungary
- Saint Louis

- Papal letters
- Christology
- Christian Spirituality
- Servant Leadership
- Materials from the Regional Formation Director
- Ecology
- Family (families, marriage, parenting, sexuality)
- Peace and Justice
- Work (including economic justice)
- Youth and Young Adults
- Multicultural Responsiveness
- Vocations Promotion
- And the list goes on and on!!!



STRUCTURE OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

LOCAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL

Minister Vice Minister Secretary Treasurer Spiritual Assistant Formation Director (elected)

REGIONAL FRATERNITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Minister Vice Minister Secretary Treasurer Spiritual Assistant Formation Director
[elected or appointed]

REGIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL

Regional Executive Council Local Fraternity Ministers Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants

NATIONAL FRATERNITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (NAFRA)

Minister Vice Minister Secretary Treasurer Councilor Councilor Councilor
International Councilor (CIOFS) President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants
[Formation Chair(s) appointed, but not a member of the Council]
[Coordinator of the Apostolic Commissions appointed, but not a member of the Council]
[Youth/Young Adults Chair(s) appointed, but not a member of the Council]

NATIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL

National Executive Council Regional Fraternity Ministers Conference of National Spiritual Assistants

PRESIDENCY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

Minister General Vice Minister Six Linguistic International Councilors
Councilor representing Franciscan Youth Four General Spiritual Assistants
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER (CIOFS)
Presidency Councilors representing the National Fraternities
[Secretary and Treasurer (appointed); but not members of the Council]

NATIONAL FRATERNITY INTERNAL COMMISSIONS

Formation Youth/Young Adult

NATIONAL FRATERNITY APOSTOLIC COMMISSIONS

Ecology Family Peace & Justice Work

Formation calls us to action: It is part of our vocation

Commissions Fraternity/Community Life Parish Community

Articles in The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

- 6 . . . Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting **dialogue of apostolic** effectiveness and creativity.
- 15 Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in **promoting justice** by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives.

- 16 Let them **esteem work** both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community.
- 17 In their **family** they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ.
- 18 Moreover they should **respect all creatures**, animate and inanimate, which “bear the imprint of the Most High,” and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.
- 19 Mindful that they are **bearers of peace** which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.
- 22 The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the **apostolic life** of its members.
- 24 To foster communion among members, the council should organize regular and frequent meetings of the community as well as meeting with other Franciscan groups, especially with **youth** groups.

"Altius moderamen"

It is a Latin term used in Canon 303 to mean that the friars of the First Order and Third Order Regular are to guarantee the fidelity of the SFO to the Franciscan charism, communion with the Church and union with the Franciscan Family, values which represent a vital commitment for the Secular Franciscans. (*General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order*, Article #85.2)

First Order:	Order of Friars Minor	O.F.M.
	Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin	O.F.M. Cap.
	Order of Friars Minor, Conventual	O.F.M. Conv.
Third Order Regular Friars		T.O.R.

THE CATHOLIC FRANCISCAN FAMILY

First Order:	Order of Friars Minor	O.F.M.
	Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin	O.F.M. Cap.
	Order of Friars Minor, Conventual	O.F.M. Conv.
Second Order:	Poor Clares	O.S.C.; P.C.
Third Order:	Secular Franciscan Order	S.F.O.
	Third Order Regular	T.O.R.

There are several hundred Congregations of Religious Women and Men who also follow the Third Order Regular Rule. Many serve the SFO as Spiritual Animators, but do **not** exercise the "altius moderamen" of the First Order and Third Order Regular friars. These congregations use a variety of initials, such as the following:

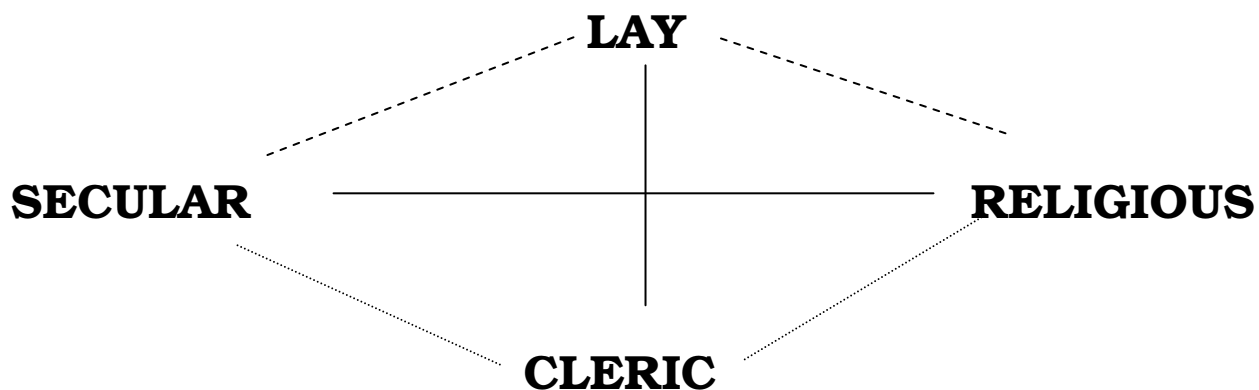
Brothers of the Poor of St. Francis	C.F.P.
Congregation of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis	O.S.E.
Congregation of the Sisters of St. Felix (Felician Sisters)	C.S.S.F.
Franciscan Brothers of Peace	F.B.P.
Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary	F.H.M.
Franciscan Hospitaller Sisters of the Immaculate Conception	F.H.I.C.
Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Divine Child	F.M.D.C.
Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Infant Jesus	F.M.I.J.
Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis	F.M.S.C.

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary	F.M.M.
Franciscan Missionaries of St. Joseph	F.M.S.J.
Franciscan Sisters of Mary	F.S.M.
Franciscan Sisters of Mary Immaculate of the Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi	F.M.I.
Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph	F.S.S.J.
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor	S.F.P.
Franciscan Sisters of Ringwood	F.S.R.
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration	F.S.P.A.
Little Brothers of St. Francis	L.B.S.F.
Little Franciscan Sisters of Mary	P.F.M.
Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception	M.F.I.C.
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God	S.M.I.C.
Order of St. Francis	O.S.F.
Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross	S.C.S.C.
Sisters of St. Francis of Peace	F.S.P.
Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis	S.S.J.-T.O.S.F.
Society of the Atonement (Greymore Friars and Sisters)	S.A.

Our secular Franciscan brothers and sisters from other faith traditions include the following:

The Third Order of the Society of St. Francis (Anglican/Episcopalian)	T.S.S.F.
Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (Christian denominations)	O.E.F.

Clarification of Christian **life-style** (how a person *lives* in the Church) and Christian **ministry** (how a person *acts* or *works* in the Church). (cf. *Code of Canon Law* #207; Benet A. Fonck, *Fully Mature with the Fullness of Christ*, 1995, pages 12-4 to 12-14.)



FRANCISCAN SERVANT LEADERSHIP

(Overview of the text)

Process—Call—Commitment—Vision

CHRIST AS LEADER

"and whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all." (Mt. 20:27)

FRANCIS AS LEADER

"And whoever comes to them, friend or foe, thief or robber, should be received with kindness." (*The Earlier Rule*, Chapter VII)

CLARE AS LEADER

"She should strive as well to preside over the others more by her virtues and holy behavior than by her office." (*Rule of Clare*)

LEADERSHIP STYLES

- Directing
- Coaching
- Supporting
- Delegating

LEADER GUIDES

- Initial formation
- Spiritual attitude
- Ongoing formation
- Fraternity Council
- Candidate ready for profession
- Missing meetings/gatherings
- Fraternity apostolate
- Franciscan life
- Servant leadership roles
- Prayer experience
- Gifts & talents
- Structure of meetings/gatherings
- Franciscans worldwide
- Common fund
- Culturally diverse

FRATERNITY MANAGEMENT

- Index to the *General Constitutions of the S.F.O.* (to be updated)
- Questions referenced

PRACTICAL AIDS

- Brainstorming
- Communication
- Listening
- Responding
- Dialogue
- Decision making
- Fraternity planning
- Presentation
- Problem solving
- Reconciling differences
- Self-esteem
- Becoming a servant leader

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER FORMATION RESOURCE LIST

- Books/audiocassette tapes/videotapes/films strips all grouped according to themes.
- Addresses and phone numbers of publishers are given.
- Suppliers of Franciscan materials are listed (address & phone numbers are included).
- Publications with address, phone numbers and costs are cited.

CHECKLIST FOR SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION RESOURCES

(National Formation Commission member Anne Mulqueen, S.F.O., March 2001, 2005)

When a Formation Director or Formation Team needs to determine the extent to which a particular text is a good resource to use for Secular Franciscan formation, put it to the following test.

√ Check for YES

- _____ Does the resource evidence explicit and consistent reference to the Second Vatican Council, the 1978 Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, the 1985 Ritual of the SFO, and the General Constitutions of the SFO?
- _____ Does the resource convey a clear statement of the nature of the Secular Franciscan vocation with emphasis on the permanent and secular aspects of this vocation?
- _____ Does the resource emphasize that our formation is never-ending process and that initial formation is simply the beginning of a Secular Franciscan's lifetime journey to God by following the example of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi?
- _____ Does the resource contain references to the following essential elements of each formation session: (1) The Gospel; (2) The SFO Rule; (3) Franciscan writings; (4) Church documents, especially Vatican II and subsequent documents on the role of the laity in the Church?
- _____ Does the resource provide opportunities to apply insights and knowledge acquired through the formation process so that, in truth, the lives of those in formation are transformed?
- _____ Does the resource contain clear examples of Secular Franciscan spirituality and apostolic involvement, especially with regard to the work of the apostolic commissions?
- _____ Does the resource emphasize that our vocation commits us to a life of living the Gospel in fraternity, to a communal way of life rather than a life of private piety lived in isolation from other Secular Franciscans?
- _____ Does the resource accentuate that in our daily lives, we live the essence of the Gospel by following Francis and Clare of Assisi (1) through a process of ongoing conversion; (2) in community; (3) as secular people; and (4) in life-giving union with all Franciscans?
- _____ Does the resource, if used for initial formation, fully explain the Rites and Ceremonies experienced during initial formation and does it emphasize the significance of these Rites and Ceremonies in the continuing journey of formation?

If you have checked "yes" for six or more questions, the resource can be considered good to excellent. If you have checked "yes" for less than six questions, in all likelihood the resource is not appropriate for primary use.

THE ROTATING INITIAL FORMATION PROGRAM

In an article Formation Commission member Fr. Richard Trezza, O.F.M. wrote for *TAU-USA, Issue #17, Fall 1997* entitled, "We're sorry, but you'll have to wait!," he lamented the situation whereby potential Secular Franciscans come to join our way of life, only to be told that the formation program is already underway and that they would have to wait until a new "class" has begun.

He spoke of a formation process which went in rotation or a cycle. In other words, the bulk of information presented during initial formation would have no beginning or end point - it would be ongoing. Whenever Inquirers present themselves and are deemed ready to begin the formation process, they simply "plug in" to where everyone else is.

Separate sessions would have to be held for the newcomers, however. These would deal with issues such as the life of Francis, a quick introduction to the way of life of the SFO, Regional particularities or whatever. The person in formation would stay in the cycle for the entire time of Candidacy. When this period of initial formation is ended, the new member joins the Fraternity in its program of ongoing formation.

The following diagram may be helpful:

ORIENTATION

+

INQUIRY

+

**SFO Rule;
Constitutions;
Franciscan
Spirituality**

Particular Sessions During Candidacy

- Particular Fraternity Statutes
- Commissions
- Traditions and Customs

+

TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT COMMITMENT

+

ONGOING FORMATION WITH THE FRATERNITY

Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading)

The 4 R's



Lectio Divina

(Sacred Reading)

The 4 R's

1) **Read** (Lectio):

Read the Scripture passage through thoroughly.

2) **Reflect** (Meditatio):

Reflect upon what you have read. Ask yourself which word, which phrase, which passage speaks to you, challenges you, tugs at you this day. Which word or passage got your attention this day? Sit with these words and allow them to penetrate your spirit.

3) **Respond** (Oratio):

How do you respond to the stirrings in your heart, your conscience? How does this passage challenge you to look upon the world? How does it effect your interactions with others? How does it change how you see yourself? God spoke to you; what is your response to God?

4) **Receive** (Contemplatio):

Sit in the silence; sit in the Presence of God; receive what it is that God is giving you.

Remember: God's first language is Silence

THE POST FORMATION "BLAHS"

The period of initial formation has ended. The fraternity no longer has Inquirers or Candidates. Now what? Is that all there is? Some fraternities have had a constant flow of newcomers, even if only one a year, that the entire fraternity is taken up with the initial formative process. When these people make their commitments, some fraternities wonder what comes next.

ZERO IN ON FRATERNITY

With less effort placed upon initial formation, this would be a good time to look at fraternity life in general. Take some time to ask the tough questions. The local Council would be able to facilitate by proper planning for the year. How is fraternity life going? Are we still the inspirational group that people wish to join - make a life out of? Is our prayer life really making a change in our personal and communal lives? Do we need to revamp the way we do prayer? Are we still friendly to one another or are we comfortable in the cliques which we have created? Have we left some business undone? Are someone's feelings still hurt? How are we resolving crises?

THE COMMISSIONS

Perhaps it's time to really pay attention to the Apostolic Commissions. Get in touch with the Regional or National Commission Chair(s) and get copies of their workbooks. It may be that your fraternity cannot take on ALL the commissions, but it may be able to get serious about one, at least. Choose the one which fits the temperament of your local fraternity and get to work. As you know, the Commissions put flesh on the skeleton of the *SFO Rule* and *General Constitutions* . . . they turn *words* into **ACTION!**

LEADERSHIP FORMATION

How are we replacing ourselves? Who's coming up through the ranks, so to speak, to take on positions of leadership? Are local elections a drag because NO ONE wants to run for an office? Review how you use the talent in the fraternity. What do you do to enable people to take on positions of responsibility? Buy the **Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership**. Go through it at upcoming fraternity meetings, pray over it, discuss it. Leaders . . . TRAIN PEOPLE TO REPLACE YOURSELVES!