

How do you enter the Secular Franciscan Order?

When a man or a woman feels that God may be calling them to the Franciscan way, they should contact the fraternity of the Order nearest to where they live.

A "fraternity" is a local group of Secular Franciscans. Being a Secular Franciscan is not something one does alone. St. Francis gathered a community around him and together they made a difference in their own lives and in the world.

Your local fraternity will give you information about monthly meeting times and welcome you as an *Inquirer*. After a short time, if it seems right to you and the fraternity, you will be accepted as a *Candidate* to the Order and receive very thorough instruction in the Franciscan way over a period of up to two years.

At the conclusion of this time you will be invited to make your *Profession* a life commitment to the Franciscan way of following Jesus.

As a Secular Franciscan you are a member of the Franciscan family comprising friars (priests and brothers), nuns and sisters, and secular men and women. At present there are about a million members of the worldwide Franciscan family.

FROM OUR RULE Article 4

*The rule and life of the
Secular Franciscan is this:
To observe the gospel of our
Lord Jesus Christ by
following the example of
St. Francis of Assisi,
who made Christ the
inspiration and the centre
of his life with God and people.*

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

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

Have you considered?

CONTACT:

**Have you retired
from full-time work?**

**The Secular Franciscan
Order...**

***Please
consider!***

Is your life all it could be?

Jesus came that we may have life and have it abundantly...John 10:10.

Do you sometimes stop to reflect on your life and feel a tinge of dissatisfaction? Perhaps your life is not all that it should be.

You are a practising Catholic and attend your parish church regularly; but you still feel that something is missing. Your life is not fully satisfying, not full of joy. You have anxieties and there is not that abundance of life which the evangelist claimed Jesus had brought.

What are your anxieties and concerns about life?

Maybe you have a feeling of alienation from the world at large and some sorrow for its present condition. The world seems to have different values from your own; it seems to be governed by an ethos of greed and materialism. You are anxious for the future.

You may be anxious for your children who are struggling to raise families in difficult times. You may be anxious for your grandchildren who have to survive in a society that seems to be godless and that turns to alcohol and drugs as a substitute for the real joy of healthy companionship.

You are probably concerned about your own health, which is not as good as it used to be. Perhaps you are also anxious about the future when you may not be able to care fully for yourself or for your spouse.

What have the Secular Franciscans to offer?

In John's Gospel, Jesus is pictured as the gate through which we can enter into a full and abundant life. Jesus is the way, in fact the only way to a rewarding and satisfying life.

The Secular Franciscan Order offers its members a way of life that is the one Jesus told us to follow: a way of life based on the gospel. What is more, you are assisted on your gospel-led journey by the companionship and support of fellow Christians, including a Franciscan friar or other qualified Spiritual Assistant.

In the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi, Secular Franciscans devote themselves to living the gospel in the world. They have a Rule of Life to guide them on their journey; a rule that follows the path taken by St. Francis, the little poor man of Assisi. This path has proved to be of extraordinary benefit to millions of men and women over nearly eight hundred years. The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order was updated in 1978 by Pope Paul VI.

What does living the gospel mean?

Essentially, living the gospel means developing a deeper spirituality than merely attending Mass on Sunday and being a good parishioner. These things are praiseworthy and necessary but they only open the gate for entering Jesus' way of life.

Secular Franciscans read, reflect on and discuss the gospels as well as the writings of St. Francis, St. Clare and other Franciscan saints. In this way the key elements of St. Francis' spirituality are discovered and they become touchstones for our guidance in dealing with life's dilemmas.

Franciscan spirituality is more than simple piety. It takes us beyond religious rituals into the deeper reality of what it truly means to be human. Ritual, prayer and reflection are food for our journey, but it is the life of Jesus as revealed in Holy Scripture that shows us how our life journey should progress.

The Franciscan emphases in interpreting the gospel of Jesus are truly rewarding for the follower of St. Francis. By following in the footsteps of St. Francis, the Secular Franciscan can attain a peace of spirit that transcends all evil in the world and opens the way to perfect joy. By this means, Jesus' promise of abundant life can be ours, whatever life's circumstances.