

## How do you enter the Secular Franciscan Order?

When a young man or 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 himself 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:

**Are you a young Catholic adult?**

**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 reflect on your life and feel a sense of uncertainty or dissatisfaction? Perhaps your life is not all it should be.

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

### **What are your anxieties and concerns about life?**

Maybe you feel a degree of alienation from the world and some sorrow for its present condition. The world seems to be uncaring. It seems to be governed by an ethos of greed and materialism. You need like-minded friends who want to make a difference and help those in need.

You don't like to see people suffer for lack of a job. You don't like to see young people turn to alcohol and drugs in order to alleviate their anxieties and to mask the lack of direction in their lives. Perhaps this has been part of your experience too!

You don't like to see the environment abused and want to protect it for future generations.

You are disturbed that young couples have to struggle just to raise a family decently. Perhaps such problems have been part of your experience and you need to put some perspective on them.

Perhaps you experience a world that envelops you with its unsatisfying daily grind. You need to develop authentic friendships and a personal spirituality to help you cope.

Changes need to be made. Your life is not the one of abundance promised by Jesus.

### **What have the Secular Franciscans to offer?**

In John's Gospel, Jesus is pictured as the gate through which we may 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. It is a way of life based on his gospel.

In the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi, Secular Franciscans devote themselves to living the gospel in their world; and thereby making a difference by the life they lead.

Secular Franciscans have a Rule of Life to live by that is gospel-based. The current Rule was updated by Pope Paul VI in 1978.

### **What does living the gospel mean?**

Essentially, it means a deeper spirituality than merely attending Mass on Sunday and being a good parishioner. These things are good and necessary but they only open the gate to 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. The Secular Franciscan can attain a peace of spirit that transcends all evil in the world. Such peace opens the way to joy and abundant life in all life's circumstances.