

INTRODUCING ST FRANCIS

(based on a text
by Jovian Weigel OFM)

Once St Francis was staying at the hermitage of the Portiuncula with Brother Masseo. Testing the humility of Francis, Masseo asked, "Why you?"

"What do you mean by that?", Francis asked. Masseo answered, "I want to know why you should be the man all the world is running after, and why everybody seems to want to see you, and listen to you, and obey you. You are not good looking, you're not a great scholar, you're not noble. So why should all the world run after you?"

WHY SAINT FRANCIS?

Nearly eight hundred years later, we may ask the same question. Why is St Francis so universally popular? He was called the "Little Poor Man". He thought of himself as the worst of sinners. Why is he followed by the largest body of religious and secular people in the whole Church? Why is he loved by so many outside the Church? Why does he have so much appeal?

THE SECRET OF HIS POPULARITY

Chesterton said that it was not humanity that Francis loved, but people; and it was not Christianity that Francis loved, but Christ. These two facts contain the secret of St

Francis's appeal to men and women of his own time, as well as of our own.

The two facts were: (1) his strong personal love for each one and the resulting recognition of individual worth, dignity and responsibility; (2) his warm love for the person of Christ, to whom he dedicated his whole life, for whom he fought as a knight, and for whom he died.

HE LOVED PEOPLE

There is no better way to have people respond than to let them know they are valuable, and that you love them for themselves, that you think they belong. When Francis met anyone, that person knew that Francis was interested in anything he thought, said or did, in his joys and troubles, in his family and work and friends. He was willing to accept any responsibility that Francis placed on him. He appreciated Francis's courtesy and sympathy.

HE LOVED JESUS CHRIST

Francis could not love such a vague thing as Christianity. He had to love someone personal. He did not say, "I am going to fight for Christianity" He said, "I am the Herald of the Great King." Christianity is something vague. Christ is someone warm, living and real.

Wherever Francis found Christ, he loved him. In the Gospel, he saw his brother and model. In the Eucharist, he saw Christ

dwelling among us. In every man, woman and child, he saw Christ present.

No other saint succeeded in bringing Christ so close to us, in making him so appealing, heart-warming and human, in showing how Christ can lead us to the heights of seraphic holiness. He simplified and humanized the Good News. He made it more understandable and appealing to ordinary people.

YOU'LL BE DELIGHTED TO MEET HIM

This is the man whom we introduce you to. He is one of the most refreshing, fascinating, understanding persons who ever lived. As you study him more, you'll find that he grows closer to you, your love grows warmer and your life grows richer.

IN THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

To know him better and to follow him, we invite you to join his secular Order, that he inspired in his own life time, for lay people to follow his way of life.

ST FRANCIS UNDERSTANDS YOU

We can all tell our own story of ups and downs in life, good times and bad, successes and failures, loves and disappointments, losses and gains. "

Here is a man who understands your difficulties and will give you his kindest help. He will lead you surely on your way to heaven.

HE CHALLENGES YOU

This man was an apostle. He filled himself with the life of Christ and was impelled to bring Christ to others. He flings down the challenge: "This is your duty: to make Christ live within you and in others. You can do it by following the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order!"

HE FILLS YOU WITH JOY

Francis suffered severely from cataracts, osteoarthritis and the Stigmata, yet he radiated joy. "Sadness belongs to the devil". Francis provides that inner refreshment that makes us want to live life to the full. He had a deep conviction of the seriousness of life but refused to be merely solemn about it.

HE OFFERS A WAY OF LIFE

Religion for Francis was a love affair. All human life was one long love story, of love accepted and rejected. Human history reached the climax of love in the death of Jesus on Calvary. The love story continued daily in the world around him. His whole being was thrilled.

St Francis offers you his way of life in his secular Order. Your life is also a love affair with God. You will recognize God's love and goodness. All is centred on God: work, recreation, prayer; family, friends, your country, the world.

HE MAKES US BROTHERS AND SISTERS

In the Secular Franciscan Order, all are brothers and sisters, all united in one Franciscan family. Jesus is the elder brother; we are his little brothers and sisters, all united in the love of God the Father. How can anyone be lonely?

HE OFFERS AN IDEAL

Francis served as a humble knight of Christ, he consecrated his whole being to him. Christ was his ideal. His whole life centred on Christ his King. He shows you, in his secular Order, whom to serve, how to serve, and the means to carry your ideal into real life.

HE OFFERS PEACE

Before all his sermons, Francis wished "Peace" to his listeners. He wants you to have peace. Peace results from living his way of life.

St Francis will lead you in a patient, friendly way, in the company of all his Franciscan brothers and sisters, to love, joy and peace.

For further information, please contact:

Introducing

ST FRANCIS

Do you know St Francis of Assisi?

Do you know what he tried to do?

Do you know what his Secular Order is?

Do you know what it could do for you?