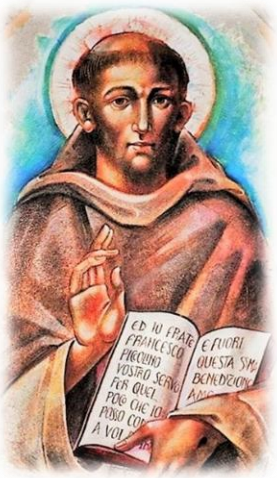
COME AND SEE...



The SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

A VOCATION for CATHOLIC MEN & WOMEN, MARRIED or SINGLE & DIOCESAN CLERGY

Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, Lord, that I may carry out Your holy and true command. (Prayer of St. Francis before the crucifix in San Damiano Church)

ENRICH YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Are you being called to a life of peace and simplicity?
Do you want to draw closer to God?
Do you strive daily to live a Gospel life in a secular world?
Are you called to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis?
Perhaps you have a vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order….

TRUE ORDER AND GOSPEL LIVING

The Secular Franciscan Order is a well-established Religious Order within the Catholic Church, for men and women who seek to fully live their baptismal call, in following a "Rule" that was originally written by St. Francis of Assisi for religious life and then adapted for secular life.

As a Lay Order, we are called to live in the world and to transform it! Our vocation is to follow Jesus as St. Francis did, in living the Gospel as a way of life.

IT STARTED WITH FRANCIS

St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), the son of a wealthy cloth merchant, lived a life of comfort and self-indulgence. He had dreams of glory and knighthood. Then the Lord spoke to Francis and Francis truly heard. He responded generously to the Lord's call and willingly turned from his worldly life to a life of conversion and service.

In 1209, Francis established the First Order of the Franciscan family, *Order of Friars Minor*, for men who follow the *Rule of 1223*. Inspired by the change in Francis, Clare of Assisi left wealth and family to find the truth of the Gospel way. With Lady Clare of Assisi, Francis founded the Second Order, *Poor Clares*, in 1212. They follow St Clare's *Rule of Life of 1253*.

Finally in 1221, Francis instituted the Third Order, which has two major divisions: Firstly, *Secular Franciscans*, men and women, who remained dedicated to their homes, families or work but wanted to live the same values as Francis and his Order. The ***Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order of 1978*** was approved by Pope Paul VI (replaced following the earlier *Rule of 1221* and its revisions, the *Third Order Rules of 1289* and *1889*). Secondly, *Third Order Regular*, are men and women who live a religious life as priests, brothers and sisters and follow the *Rule of 1223*.

We, too, struggle daily to abandon ourselves to God's plan for our lives. Francis was a living reflection of the Good News of Christ in the Gospel and a living light and legacy to us all!

FRATERNAL COMMUNITY

We are brothers and sisters in Christ. Our Fraternity is the privileged place where we develop our sense of Church, our Franciscan spirituality and our ministry. We seek to encounter the living person of Jesus in each other, in Scripture, Liturgical Prayer and the Sacraments.

SIMPLICITY AND PEACE

We seek to live simply, valuing people above material possessions and sharing what we have with others. We honour and respect all of creation as property of God.

We strive to reach out to the needy and marginalized of society, and both individually as well as

collectively strive to promote social justice.

We have a special concern for works of peace and reconciliation. We value family as a sign of peace, fidelity and respect for life. We esteem work as a gift through which we share in creation, redemption and service to the human 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 gospel.

YOU WILL BE IN GOOD COMPANY

Throughout history, millions of men and women have followed in the footsteps of St. Francis as members of the Secular Franciscan Order. More than 125 have been beatified or canonized including our patrons, *Saints Louis of France* and *Elizabeth of Hungary*.

Other well-known members are *St. Angela of Foligno, Dante, St. Thomas More, Louis Pasteur, Sts. Louis and Zelie Martin* (parents of *St. Theresa of Lisieux*), *Mother Cabrini, St. Pope John XXIII, Catherine Doherty*, and *Thomas Merton.*

VOCATION WITHOUT VOWS

Secular Franciscans do not take vows. Instead, we make a lifelong promise to observe the *Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.* This imposes no obligation binding us under pain of sin except those situations that are binding on all Catholics.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

Admission to the Order is open to diocesan clergy, men and women, married or single who are not members of any other religious or secular order and are 18 years or older. Candidates must be practicing Catholics faithful to the teachings of the Church and loyal to the Apostolic See.

WE INVITE YOU...

We invite you to meet us and discern whether you are called by the Spirit of God to become an expression of the Gospel in the manner of *St. Francis and St. Clare.*

May the Lord give you peace!

For more information, please contact olotaofs@gmail.com