The Franciscan Journey
Chapter 4

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Inquiry in the SFO
Inquiry – 1st Phase of Initial Formation

- Inquiry (at least 6 months)
- Candidacy (18-36 months)
- Profession Or Not

Continuing discernment of vocation
Look at Lay/secular spirituality
Exploration of the spirit of Francis & Clare
Brief history of the SFO & Rule
Intro to Scripture Study
Reflections – Church & Spirit of Vatican II
Journey of Inquiry

Ceremony of Introduction & Welcoming

Inquirer formation time

• Not less than 6 months

Must attend initial formation sessions
Participate in fraternity gatherings -
Indispensable for initiation into community

(Constitution art. 40.3 Nation Stat art. 19.2 a, 19.2 c)
• SFO IS A **VOCATION** which must be **Prayerfully Discerned** during Orientation & in Inquiry

Are you being called to follow Christ in the footsteps of Francis of Assisi?

Do intend to make present the **charism** of our Seraphic Father, Francis, in the life and mission of the Church?
Striving for Perfect Charity – Following Christ (Rule 2)

- Let Every Creature in the heaven, on earth, in the sea and in the depths give praise, glory, honor and blessing
- To Him Who suffered so much,
- Who has given and will give in the future every good for He is out power and strength,
- Who alone is good, Who alone is almighty,
- Who alone is omnipotent, wonderful glorious,
- and Who alone is holy, worth of praise and blessing through endless ages.
- Amen

Later Admonitions & Exhortation
Francis of Assisi – The Saint – Vol 1, pages
Rule 10 – “Christ, poor and crucified, “ Greatest manifestation of the love of God for humanity.”

- Our growth in Franciscan spirituality enriches our relationship with Jesus
- Maintaining relationships is not easy
- Learn how to deal with tough issues
- Conflicts, opposing ideas and opinions
- Need guidance of the Holy Spirit
- A heart that sees where Love is needed
- FRANCISCANS AVOID THAT WHICH DIMINISHES OR DESTROYS RELATIONSHIPS – WE ARE CALLED TO BRING UNITY.

- This may require listening, forgiving, making a reconciliation, apologizing, discontinuing to dominate.
Human Frailty ~ It is Necessary to Convert Daily

Fruits of Conversion are *Works of Charity* in the interactions with the brothers and sisters.

We need one another if we want to bring the Franciscan spirit to the Church & the world.

Must create a supportive community, a model of reverence & respect, learning to forgive and accept – **NOT EASY**

We must **CHANGE** – Rule requires us to actually “deal” with the people in our lives.
Conversion requires constant comparison with our life and the life of Christ in the Gospels. We will discover many things that need to change.

- How do we perceive the marginalized?
- How do I maintain relationships with those engaged in criminal activity – or who insult or denigrate us?
- How do we assess the qualities of those running for public office?
- How do we deal with failures of authorities in the Church, civil society, families or groups.

Do we create an atmosphere of acceptance for friends, children, spouse, immigrants?

- How do we support servant leadership in the SFO?
Franciscan Spirit Touches the Whole of Life

Constitutions – article 12.1)
Those who practice charity in the Church’s name will never seek to impose the Church’s faith upon others.

Pure & generous love is the best witness to the God -

A Christian knows when it is time to speak of God and when it is better to say nothing and to let love alone speak. (God is Love – Benedict XVI paragraph 31c)

Franciscan bring their whole life into conformity with the Gospel and the spirit of St. Francis.

The SFO Rule and Constitution assist us in the vocation given by the Holy Spirit.