

# 'Belonging' to the Order

Acceptance, Affinity, Association,  
Attachment, Inclusion, Kinship,  
Loyalty, Rapport, Relationship

Think about a synonym of BELONGING listed here,  
or is there a different one that has meaning to you?  
One that BELONGS to you?



Come Holy Spirit.

Fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your spirit and we shall be created and you shall renew the face of the earth!

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ

‘BELONGING’

Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis





*Hail, O Lady, Holy Queen, Mary, holy Mother of God, Who are the Virgin made Church, chosen by the most Holy Father in heaven whom he consecrated with His most holy beloved Son and with the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, in whom there was and is all fullness of grace and every good. Hail His Palace! Hail His Tabernacle! Hail His Dwelling! Hail His Robe! Hail His Servant! Hail His Mother! And hail all You holy virtues which are poured into the hearts of the faithful through the grace and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, that from being*

# 1st Reading

Francis, A  
Letter to the  
Entire Order  
(LtOrd5-10)

- “Listen, pay attention to my words. Incline the ear of your heart and obey that voice of the Son of God. Observe His commands with your whole heart and fulfill his counsels with a perfect mind. Give praise to Him because He is good; exalt Him by your deeds; for this reason, He has sent you into the whole world: that you may bear witness to His voice in word and deed and bring everyone to know that there is no one who is all-powerful except Him.  
Persevere in discipline and holy



# Litany

*In Christ  
Jesus...*

(repeated  
before each  
response)

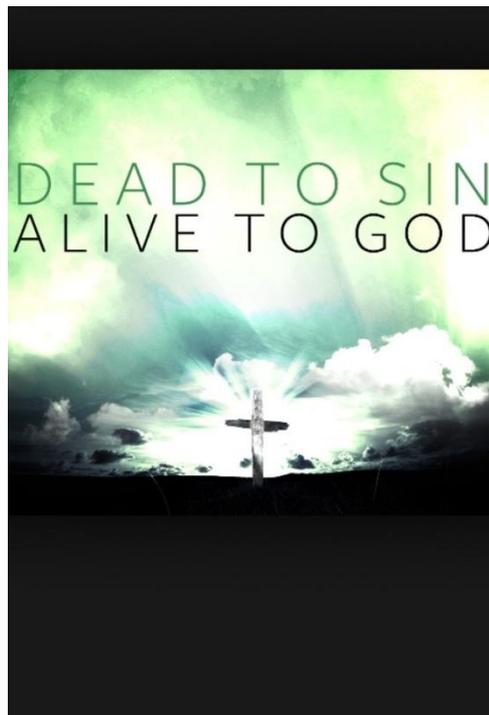


- *In Christ Jesus...* I am God's child; I am a member of Christ's Body.
- *In Christ Jesus...* I am blessed, chosen, and dearly loved; I am blessed with every spiritual blessing.
- ...I am forgiven; I can forgive others.
- ...I have purpose; I have hope.
- ...I have peace; I am sealed with the Holy Spirit.

# Litany, continued

*In Christ  
Jesus...*

(repeated  
before each  
response)



- *In Christ Jesus...* I am salt and light of the earth; I am His disciple.
- *In Christ Jesus...* I am alive with Christ; I have access to the Father.
- ...I am a dwelling for the Holy Spirit; I can approach God with freedom and confidence.
- ...I know there is a purpose for my sufferings; I know I have been called.
- ...I can give thanks for everything; I know I can be

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

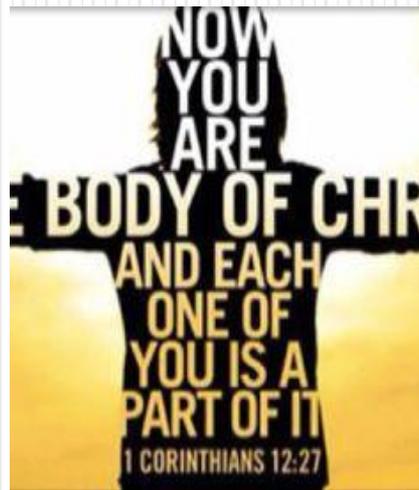
From the  
Gospel of  
Saint  
Matthew  
(Matt



- “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good

# belonging

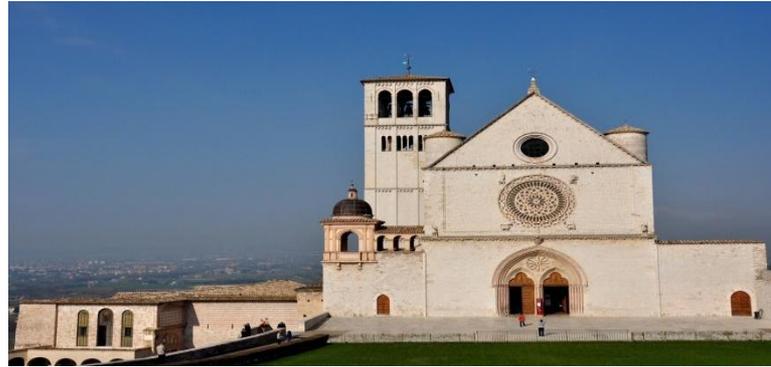
“And the Lord Gave Me Brothers”  
...and Sisters



# The Witness

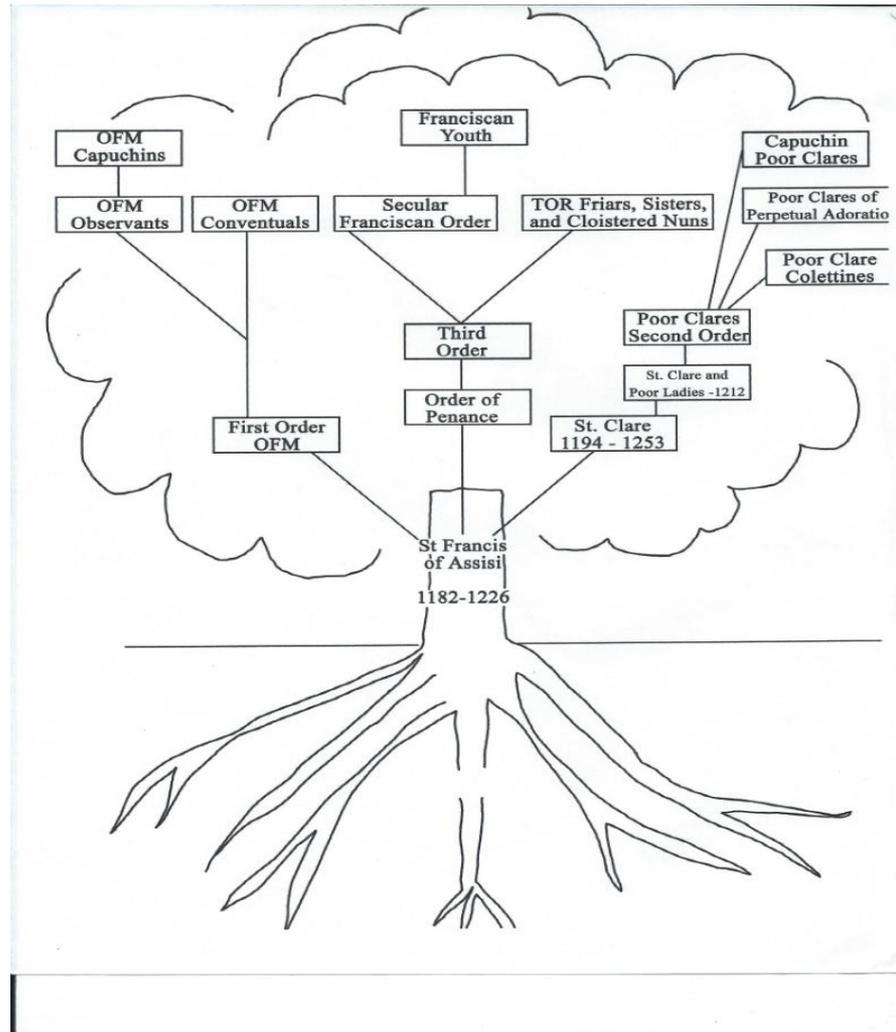


- Consider:
- What prompted me to respond to God's grace?
- When have I found joy in the Lord and in His Church
- When have I experienced "peace" through Jesus and His Church?
- How have I found my heart softened by Jesus (through His Church)
- How has my mind been changed by Jesus and the Church?
- How have I grown in virtue through Jesus and the Church?
- What blessings have I received from the Lord and his Church?
- What difference has the Holy Spirit made in



- How do I live this Franciscan charism in my life?
- How has this charism changed my life?
- How do I struggle with Franciscanism?
- How have I been challenged/convicted by this state of life ?
- What are some common misunderstandings of the Secular Franciscan Order...what misunderstandings did I have?

# Belonging To The Family



# Belonging and Identity

- The Main Connection



# Belonging as co-responsibility

- BELONGING to the Order

- Is based upon our Profession, that is, the act with which we are solemnly committed to “live the Gospel in the way of Saint Francis and through this authentic Rule of the Church”.

- Rule N.2

- Article 42.2 of the General Constitutions

The “plan of Gospel life” outlined in our Rule is a plan to fulfill and to live “in fraternal community”.

Article 3.3 of the General Constitutions: “The vocation to the OFS is a vocation to live the Gospel in fraternal community.

We, as Brothers & Sisters, are responsible to this fraternal communion of faith and love, that needs to be nurtured by mutual prayer, by reciprocal

# Belonging as co-responsibility

- And Belonging to the local Fraternity
  - We know the definition of the local Fraternity contained in Art. 22 of the Rule: “The basic unit of the whole Order...a visible sign of the Church, ... community of love...”.
  - The General Constitutions in art. 30.2 state how belonging to the Fraternity should be lived:
  - “The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires personal presence, witness, prayer, and active collaboration, in accordance with each one’s situations and possible obligations for the animation of the fraternity.”
    - 1. personal presence at the “frequent gatherings” organized by the Council to stimulate everyone to the life of fraternity and for growth of Franciscan and ecclesial life (Rule. n. 24)

# Belonging as co-responsibility

- 2. witness, of Gospel life and of fraternal life also as a means of promoting vocations and as assistance in the formation of new members
- 3. prayer, it is the soul of this “community of love (Rule N. 8)
- 4. active collaboration, of each and everyone, for the good of the Fraternity, for dynamic meetings and with good participation, for contemplating its charitable and apostolic initiatives ( C.C. G.G. art. 53.3)
- 5. possible commitments to bring life to the Fraternity, particularly, when it comes to candidates taking on office/service (C.C.G.G. art. 31.4)
- 6. Economic contribution, based on the ability of the individual members (cc. GG. Art. 30.3), to provide for the financial means required for the life of the Fraternity and its religious, apostolic and

# New Forms of Intervention

- It has been the 40 years since the Second Vatican Council, but the reference to the Magisterium (Teaching) is always current and promising!
- We are called to project it, to apply it, and to connect it with the values that appear non negotiable (i.e. they are not related to the process of secularization and relativism that goes through our history.
  - Social doctrine of the Church (for those who intend to get involved in social commitments and in the political sphere. A sense of justice and of the common good should mark the work of the Christian. (Vatican II fundamental document: *Gaudium et Spes*, Encyclical of Benedict XVI, *Deus*

# New Forms of Intervention

- Secular Franciscan's voluntary service
  - Voluntary service is not only a “to do”; it is above all a “way to be”, that comes from the heart, from an attitude of gratitude toward life, and asks us “to give back” and to share with the other the gifts received.
    - Attention to the young
    - Ecology
    - Our own personal commitment for a simple lifestyle
    - Ecumenism and interfaith dialogue
    - Mission to the people

# Conclusion

- So...
  - How, in practice, do we nurture the sense of belonging to a Secular Fraternity and to the whole Order?
  - Let us never forget that our Constitutions, in art. 30.1 already cited, strongly affirm that the Secular Fraternity, but in mission.

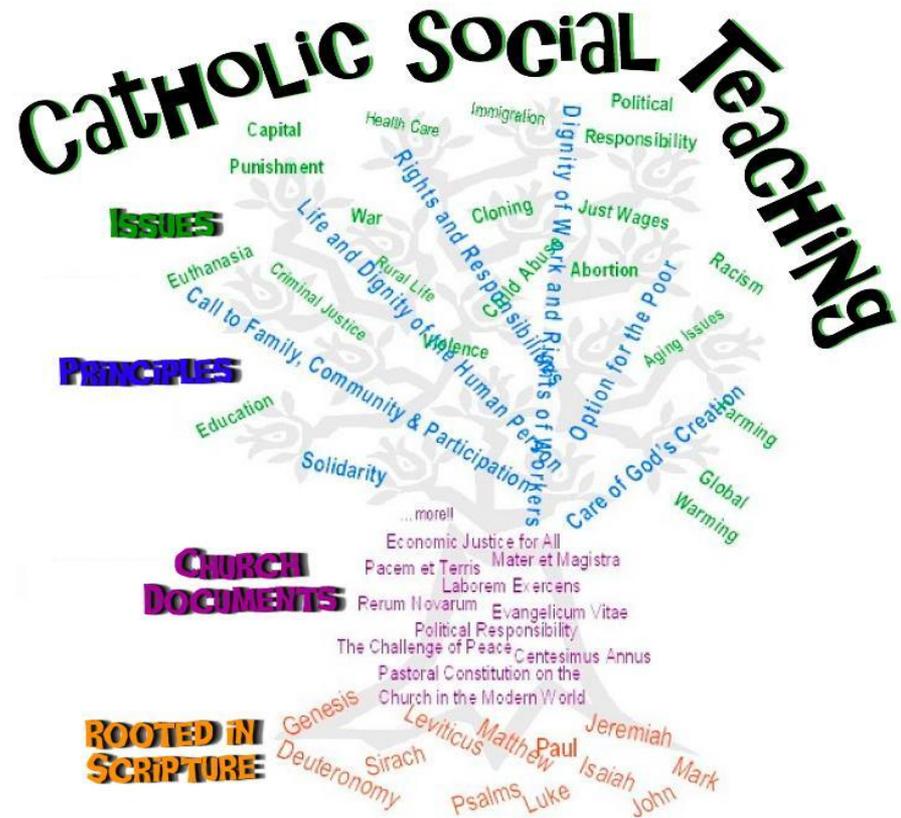


# Small group questions for dialogue

- On the local level (as well as regional and national), we should consider seriously the objective of becoming:
  - A school of sanctity - *How do we do this/be this?* (to fully develop the interior life: an intense liturgical life, sacramental and charitable life, and also taking care in organizing Franciscan retreats in the spirit of rest and renewal of life;
  - A school of formation – the spirit of belonging is nurtured in the measure of which the Rule becomes the “life” of the brothers and of the sisters. It will assure a kind of “assimilation” of the spirit of the Rule in the life of the brothers and sisters.

- A witness of ecclesial communion – It is necessary that Franciscans intensely live their Fraternity *gatherings* as a sacrament of Fraternity. It is essential that everyone make the decision to make himself/herself present in the life of the brothers and sisters. *How does your council look for and plan gatherings that are pleasant, productive and enriching?*
- Participation in the apostolic purpose of the Church – Too often Secular Franciscans tend to stop at traditional ways in fulfilling their apostolic commitment, forgetting that the Rule recommends to us to be creative. Society has changed, the Church is always renewing itself, the

- Presence in society, in the light of the social doctrine of the Church – Every Fraternity should question its priorities in its own missionary commitment. *In what direction do you develop it? For what do you/should available s*



## **Closing Prayer - Renewal of our Promises**

Do you wish to embrace the gospel way of life by following the example and words of Saint Francis of Assisi, which is at the heart of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order?

You have been called to give witness to the Kingdom of God and to build a more fraternal world based on the gospel together with all people of goodwill. Do you wish to be faithful to this vocation and to practice the spirit of service proper to Secular Franciscans?

You have been made members of the People of God by your baptism, and strengthened in confirmation by the new gift of the