

Entering the Cave Franciscan Spiritual Checklist

One important lesson we have learned from studying the book, Francis of Assisi, by Augustine Thompson is St. Francis' dependence on prayer so that he would know God and fulfill God's will. After leaving the military "to follow the Lord in charge" (pg 11), Francis went to the San Damiano Church and prayed for God's direction.

Prayer in the life of a Secular Franciscan

Top 4 in Importance:

1. Daily Eucharist
2. Liturgy of the Hours, Morning and Evening
3. Sacrament of Reconciliation
4. Contemplative Prayer

More on prayer:

- Pray like St. Francis before the crucifix:
"Most high, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart, give me Lord a correct faith, a certain hope and perfect charity, sense and knowledge that I may carry out your holy and true command."
- Assist at daily Mass and receive the Eucharist as often as possible
- Pray Morning and Evening prayer (preferably the Liturgy of the Hours)
- Utilize the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least monthly, as much as is possible.
- Pray for vocations to the 3 orders of the Franciscan Family (use Franciscan Family Chaplet and Prayer of Marian Cosby).
- Pray for Franciscan souls in purgatory.
- Practice 10 to 15 minutes of silence each day (Franciscan Contemplation)
- Spend time in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as often as possible.
- Pray the Franciscan Crown Rosary as often as possible.
- Pray the Traditional Rosary daily if possible.
- Participate in community prayer especially during Lent and Advent.

Spiritual Reading

When St. Francis needed an immediate answer, he turned to the Gospels (pg 22-23) and with the aid of a priest he opened the Bible three times (*Sortes Biblicae*) that God would show His will to Francis.

- 1) Mark 10: 17-21, 2) Luke 9: 1-6
- 3) Matthew 16: 24-28

Most Important:

Read and Meditate on the Gospels and on the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare.

"Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Jesus Christ."

(St. Jerome.)

1. Read the daily mass readings.
 2. Meditate on the Gospels 15 minutes/day. (Rule, Art.4)
 3. Prayerfully read scripture using "Franciscan Lectio" (St. Clare's method of Gazing).
 - A. Gaze (or Read)
 - B. Hear from the heart (Immerse, Consider, Imagine.)
 - C. Contemplate (Be transformed.)
 - D. Imitate (Move to action.)
 4. Participate in a Bible Study Group
- Read a life of St. Francis or St. Clare every year.
 - Meditate on a successive article of the Rule each day of the month.
 - Study the constitution and other documents. "Ignorance of the documents is ignorance of the Order."
 - Meditatively read original writings of St. Francis and St. Clare and other Franciscan saints.
 - Read literature about Franciscan Saints.
 - Read books and articles by Franciscan authors.

Francis Leaves the World of the “Majores” and Enters the World of the “Minores”

When St. Francis leaves the world, he leaves his earthly father, becomes the “Herald of the Great King” and cares for the lepers (pg. 16-17).

1. Commit to a serious conversion journey.

- Are you committed to conform to Jesus Christ like St. Francis?
- Wear your habit, the TAU cross, daily.
- Renew your profession statement daily.
- Observe moderation of dress, recreation, food and manner of life.

2. Live the Gospel in Fraternal Communion.

- Attend the monthly fraternity gatherings and bring a guest.
- Contribute time, talent and treasure to your fraternity and to your church to help rebuild the Church in our time.
- Be a servant leader in your fraternity.
- Assist in formation of prospective members.
- Attend Regional and National Franciscan events.
- Practice Corporal Works of Mercy. (Everyone cannot DO every one of these, but you can always pray.)
 1. Feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty.
 2. Shelter the homeless. (Can donate money)
 3. Visit the sick.
 4. Visit prisoners. (includes homebound, nursing homes, etc.)
 5. Bury the dead.
 6. Give alms to the poor.
- Practice Spiritual Works of Mercy.
 1. Counsel the doubtful.
 2. Instruct the Ignorant.
 3. Admonish the sinner.
 4. Forgive injuries.
 5. Bear wrongs patiently.
 6. Pray for the living and the dead.
- See suggestions for practicing the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website (USCCB.org).

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