

# What Makes Secular Franciscans Different

---

*from Regular Catholics?*

Elective Chapter Formation 2022

# Formation Friday Formation National Formation Commission

*All information and material contained in this presentation come from the weekly Formation Fridays distributed by the National Formation Commission.*

*All members of the Juan de Padilla Region (who have an email address) receive these emails each week.*

# HOW ARE SECULAR FRANCISCANS DIFFERENT?

## Regular Catholic

- Occasional Confession
- Pray- Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Memorare, Angelus, ask for intercession of various saints
- May pray the Liturgy of the Hours
- Read a bit of the Bible or attend Scripture Study
- Sunday Mass

## SECULAR FRANCISCANS

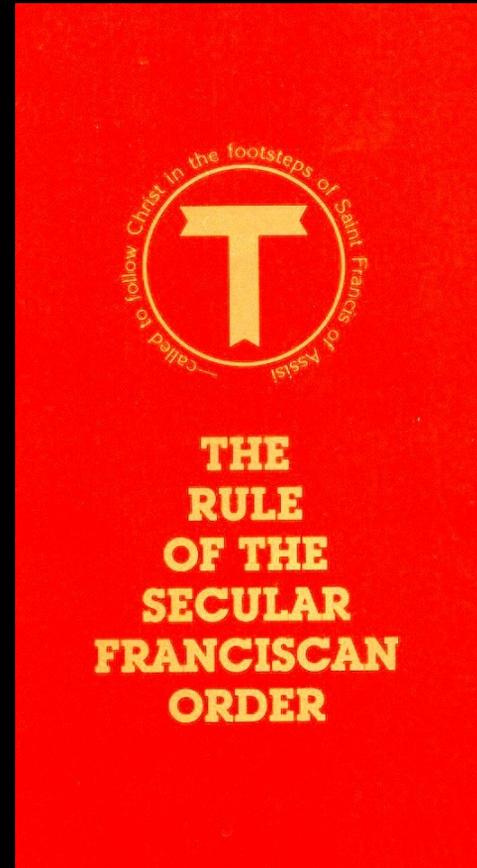
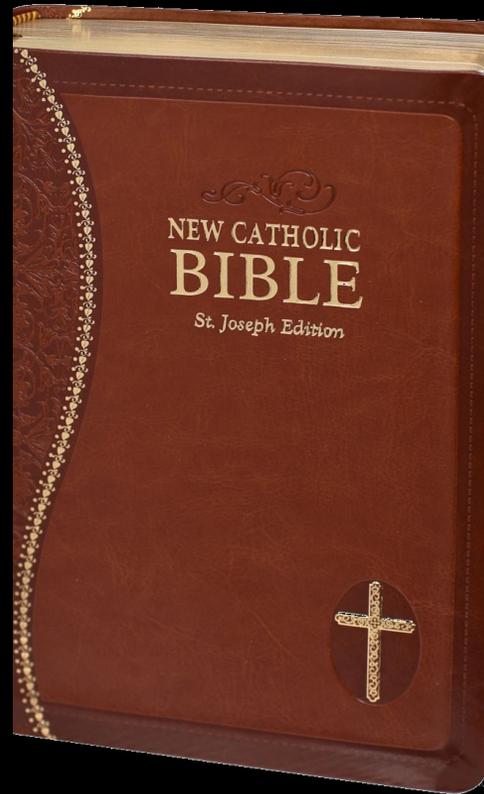
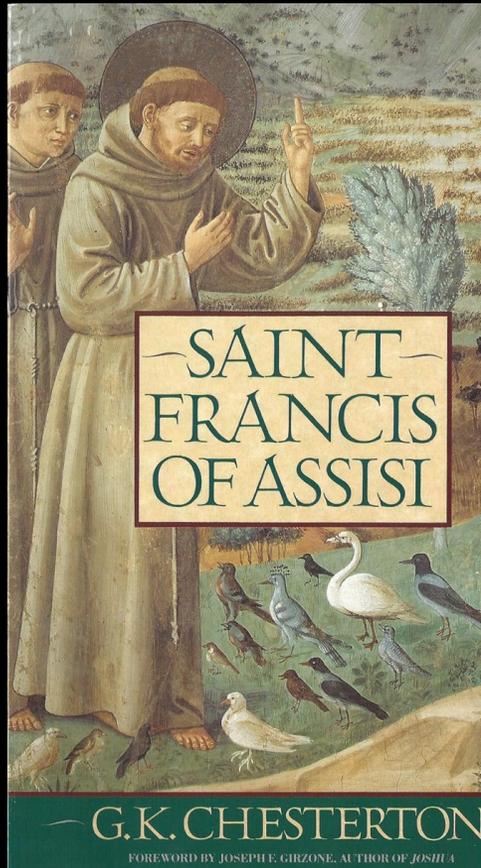
Bind more closely to the Church

Work to Rebuild Ecclesiastic Community

Profession

Commitment to live the Gospel daily by following the footsteps of St. Francis

# All Remind Us How to Internalize How Francis Lived

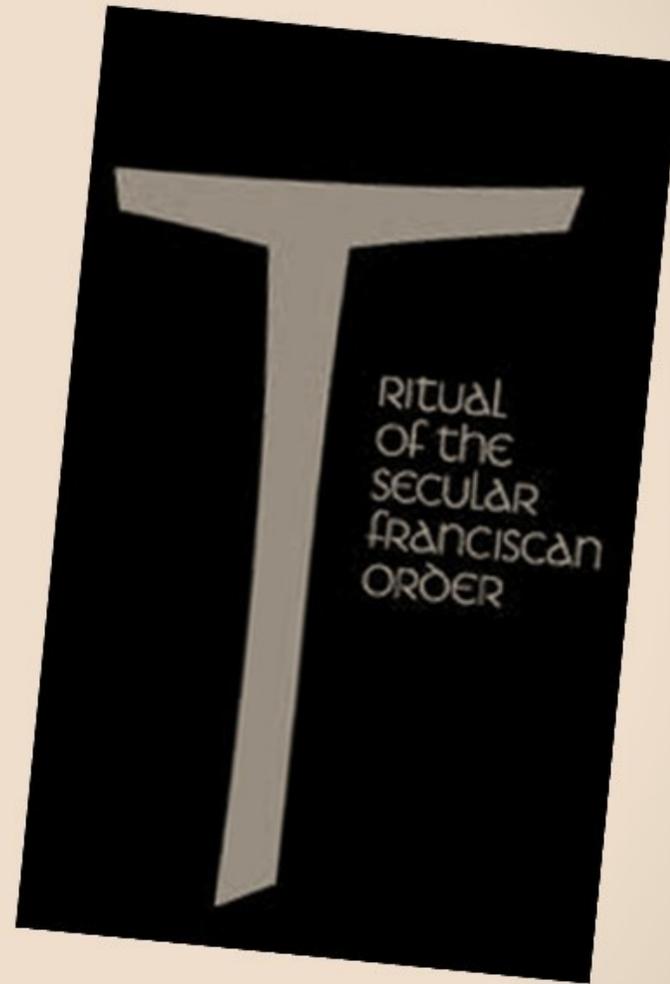


- The Bible
- The RULE
- Book on the Life of St. Francis

**OFS:  
What Makes Us  
Different?**

**Part 1**

**Profession**



**OFS  
Profession  
- Promise  
to - “Yes,  
this is  
what I  
want”**



- Build a more fraternal & evangelical world based upon the Gospels
- Bind ourselves more closely to the Church
- Participate more fully in her (Church's) mission
- Pledge to make the fraternity a visible sign of the Church- a community of faith & love

# DISCUSSION #1

- After reading the profession promises described, discuss the ways in which you are living them in your daily life.
- Which of the promises are the most challenging for you?



# OFS: What Makes Us Different? Part 2

## Fraternity



- *The vocation to the OFS is a vocation to live the Gospel in **FRATERNAL COMMUNION** (GC 3.3)*



## Fraternity – “The Lord Gave Me Brothers”

Though Francis love to find solitary places to pray – he always had friars nearby

# Fraternity is ...

“... a call to build a community of love in harmony with all of God’s children and all of God’s creation to reflect Love back to the God of Love: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

- *FUN Manual “Fraternity and Francis” by Tom Bello, former National Minister*



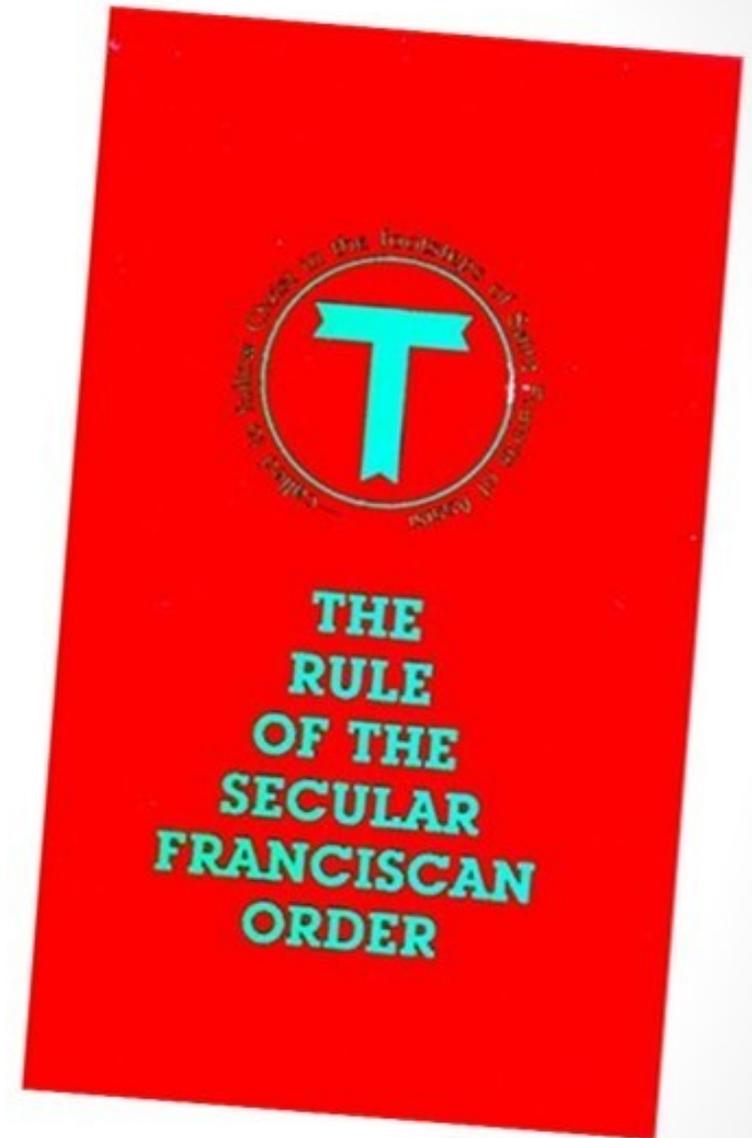
# DISCUSSION #2

- What is your favorite part of your local fraternity gathering?
- Thinking of your positive experiences in fraternity (not just your local fraternity), mention 2 or 3 ways these have impacted your life as a Franciscan.



**OFS:  
What Makes Us  
Different?  
Part 3**

**OFS Rule and  
Constitutions**



# Our RULE

## •Chapter 1 – Only 3 articles:

- Firmly plants us in Franciscan Family
- Rule is approved by Holy See
- Linked through the centuries to all in the three orders founded by Francis

# Our RULE

- **Chapter 2 - Articles 4-19 (daily journey to the Father)**

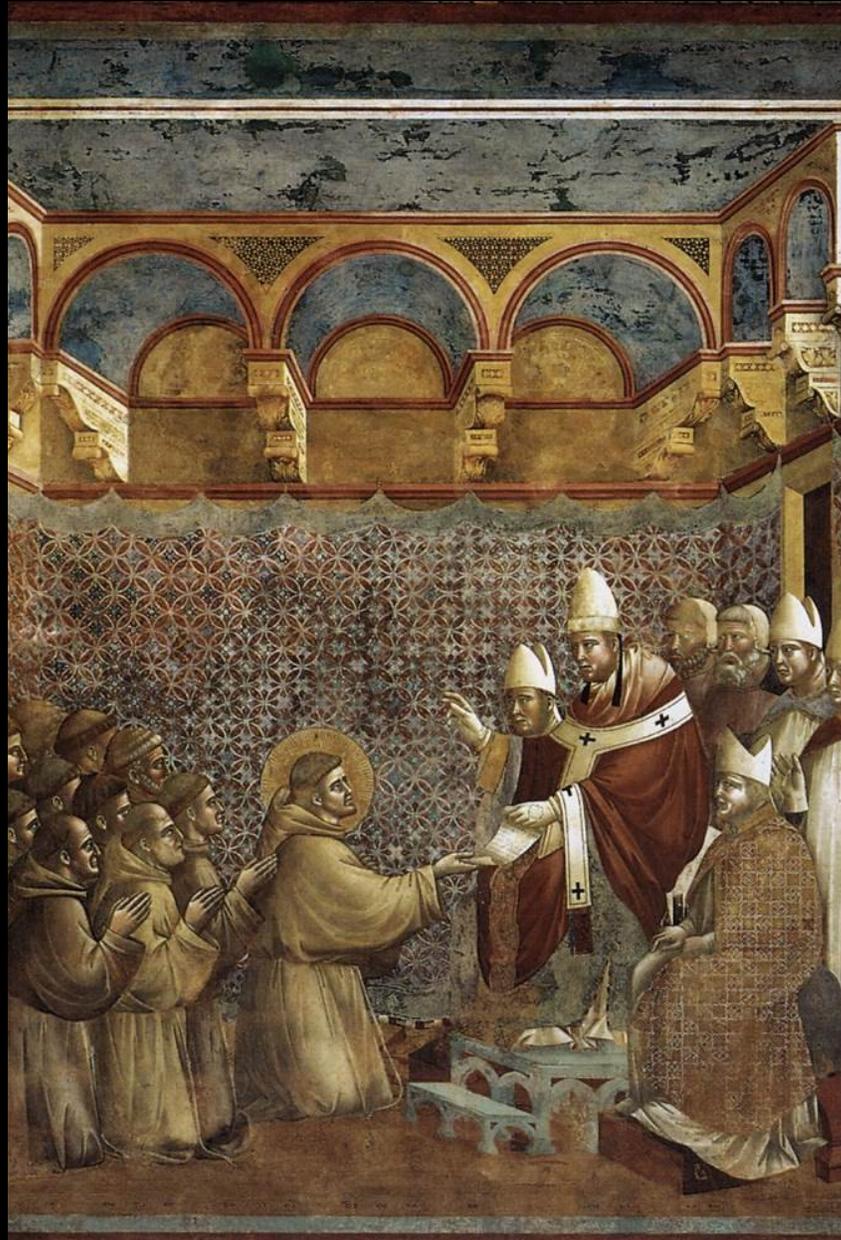
- Plan for life as OFS
- How to Pray
- Strive for daily conversion
- Live – in simplicity, humility in footsteps of St. Francis
- Reach out to all Brothers and Sisters and all of Creation

# Our RULE

## •Chapter 3 -

- Guides us in Fraternity life
- Tells us about structure of world-wide Order
- Purpose of Fraternity life.

# General Constitutions



Constitution - much longer

- Interprets the RULE
- How to carry out what is asked in the RULE
- Approved by the Holy See
- In promising to follow the RULE, we also promise to follow what is laid out in the Constitutions

# Discussion #3

---

1. Which of the elements of our Rule have helped you in your daily life as a Franciscan?

2. Which of the elements are challenging for you?

To follow the poor and crucified Christ

To share in the life and mission of the Church

To share in the love of the Father

To be instruments of Peace

To have a life of prayer that is personal, communal and liturgical

To live in joy

To have a spirituality of a secular character

To be pilgrims on the way to the Father

To participate in the Apostolate of the Laity

To be at the service of the less fortunate

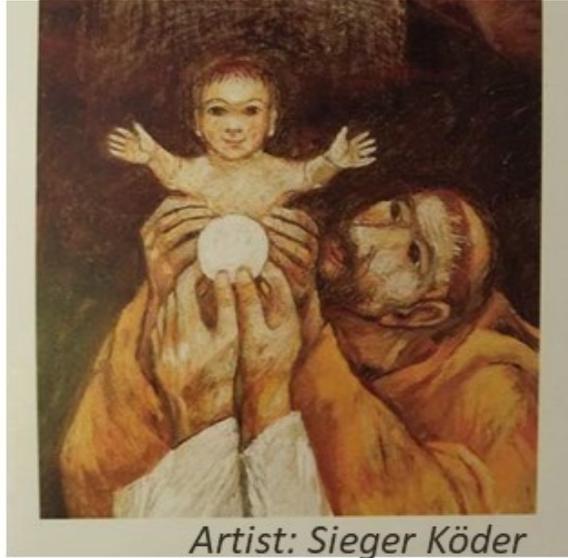
To be loyal to the Church in an attitude of dialogue and collaboration with her minister

To be open to the action of the Spirit

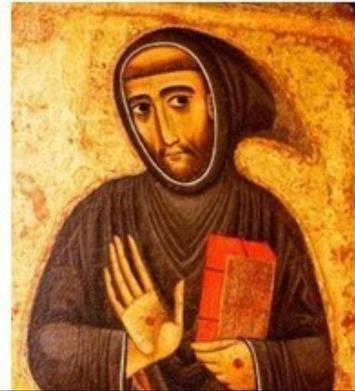
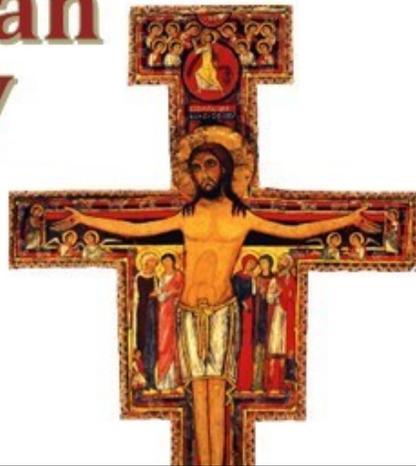
To live in simplicity, humility and minority

**OFS:  
What Makes Us  
Different?  
Part 4**

**Our Franciscan  
Spirituality**



*Artist: Sieger Köder*





# The Cross, the Crib, and the Eucharist

FRANCISCAN  
SPIRITUALITY

# FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY - the Crib

---

- Incarnational – Kenosis (self-emptying) shown by God in becoming one of us
  - Greccio – Francis wanted to imitate Jesus perfectly in all things – mirror of Christ





# FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

## the Cross – Wounds of Christ and Stigmata

---

- Penitential – Mount La Verna Francis asked two things:
  - To experience the suffering Christ
  - To experience the LOVE in which HE did it

Francis knew that penance and daily conversion (Metanoia) were the only way to the Father

## FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

### - the Eucharist



*Jesus physically present  
under the appearance of  
the bread and the wine*

- Francis – in first letter to the Custodians –
- “With all that is in me and more, I beg you that, when it is fitting and you judge it expedient, you humbly beg the clergy to revere about all else the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and His holy names and the written words that sanctify His Body.
- They should hold as precious the chalices, corporals, appointments of the altar and everything that pertains to the sacrifice.
- If the most holy Body of the Lord is very poorly reserved in any place, let it be placed and locked up in a precious place according the command of the Church.
- Let it be carried about with great reverence and administered to others with discernment.”

# Franciscan Spirituality Spiritual Focus

---

- All is wrapped in Sacred Scriptures
- Francis lived by the words of the gospels
- We imitate him:
  - In our readings
  - And praying
  - And living out the gospels





## Rule Article 4 -

- “The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans 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 center of his life with God

# Rule Article 5

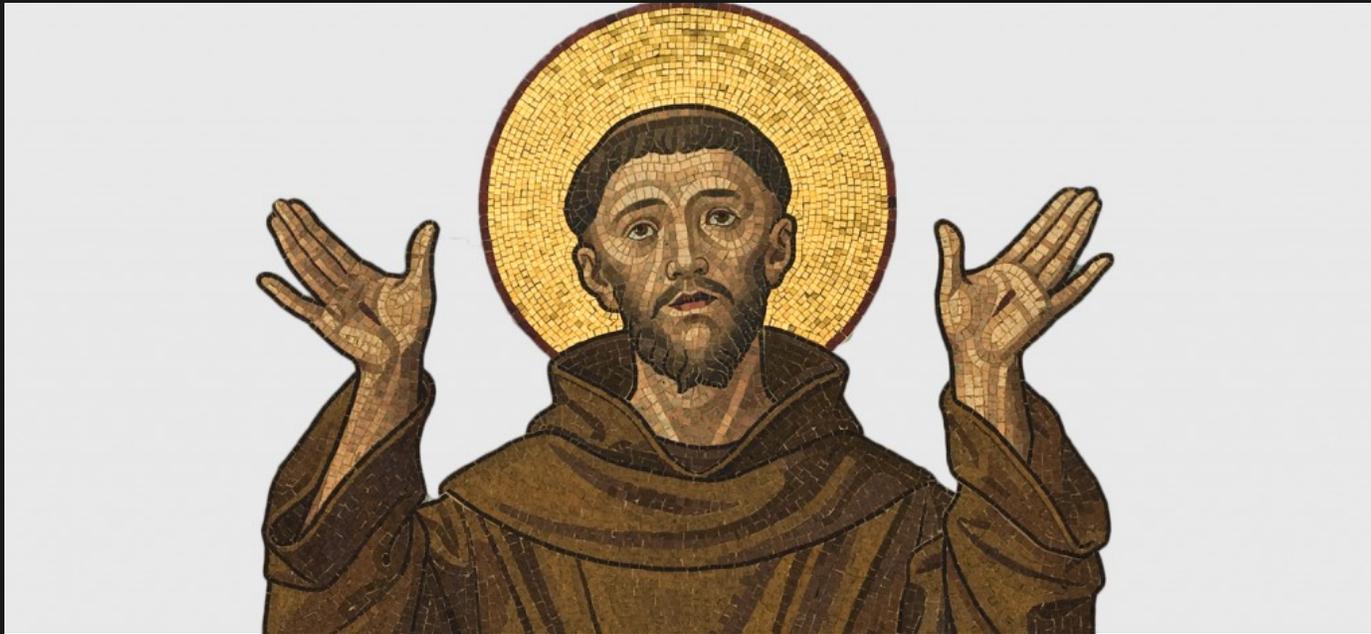


•“Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters. The faith of St. Francis , who often said, “I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except his most holy body and blood” (inspiration of their Eucharistic life)

# Rule Article 8

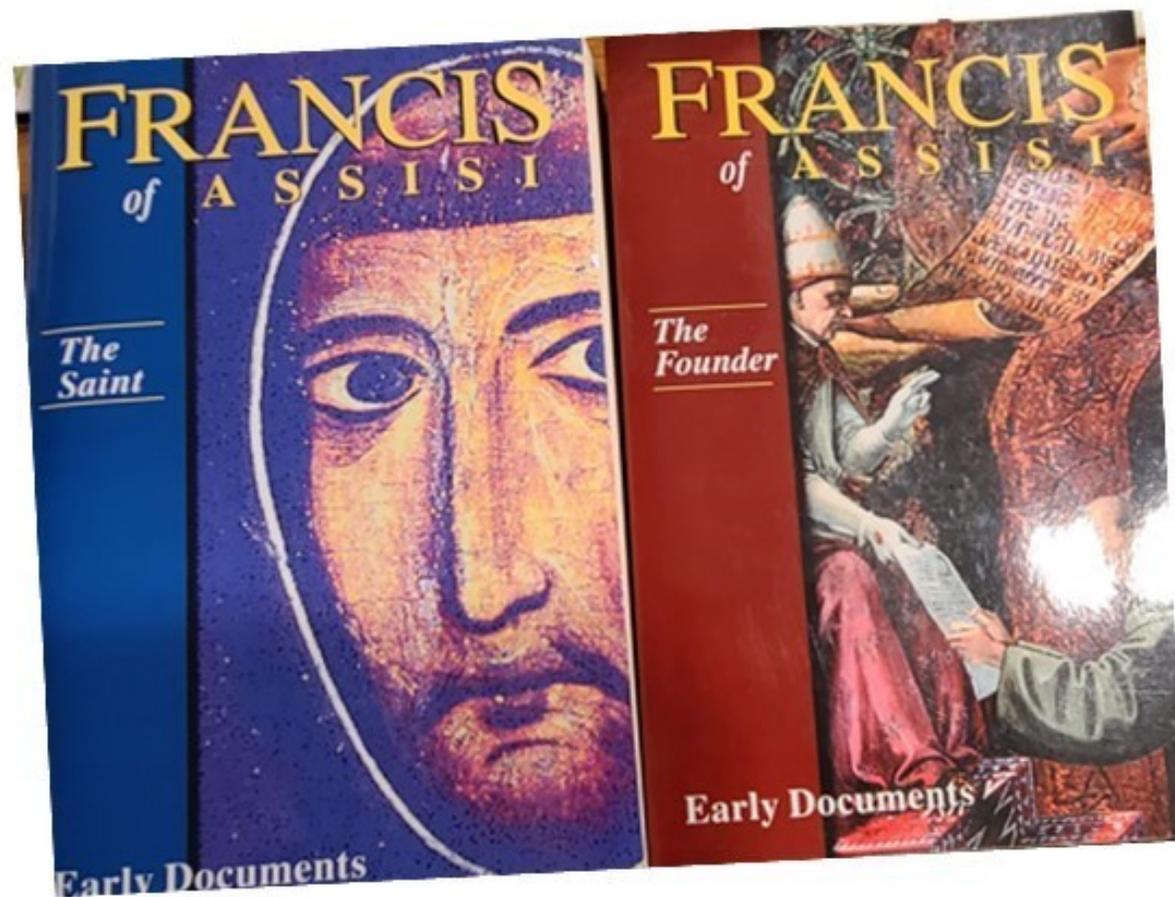
- “As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let **prayer and contemplation** be the soul of all they are and do
- Let them participate in the **sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist.**
- Let them join in **liturgical prayer** in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of Christ.”

# DISCUSSION #4



- After reading the articles of our Rule that talk of our Franciscan spirituality, what might you want to work towards changing or improving how you pray each day?
- How does the Mass, the Gospel, the Liturgy of the Hours affect your relationship with Jesus and others?

# Our Relationship to Our Founder



# Relationship to Founder – Francis

---

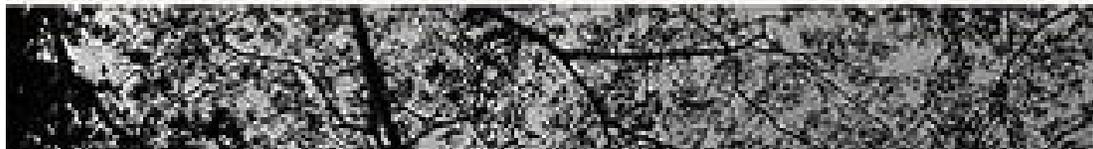
- Trace the founding of Order to one of the greatest saints who sets an example for us
- At profession, we promise to live the gospels in the footsteps of St. Francis (Rite of Profession)
- Writings of Francis to ensure we remain faithful to Franciscan Charism
- Reading his prayers and letters gives us years of material for mediation and imitation – clear path to follow





THE COMPLETE WRITINGS  
OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

*St. Francis of Assisi*

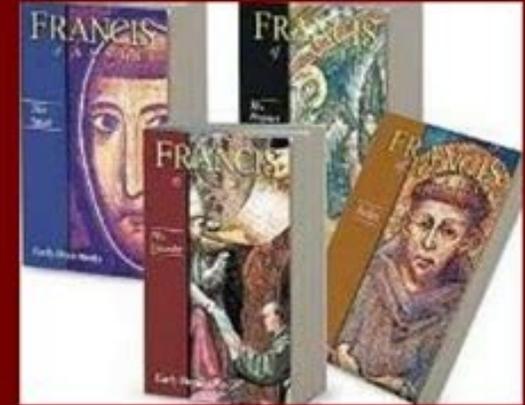


## 30 Writings – Francis speaks for himself

- Real treasure for Franciscans
- By comparison, only four writings by Francis' contemporary, St. Dominic, founder of the Dominicans, survive.
- Francis' writings help us to encounter him personally.



## Francis of Assisi Early Documents



Overview of 4 Volumes

Franciscan  
Intellectual Tradition

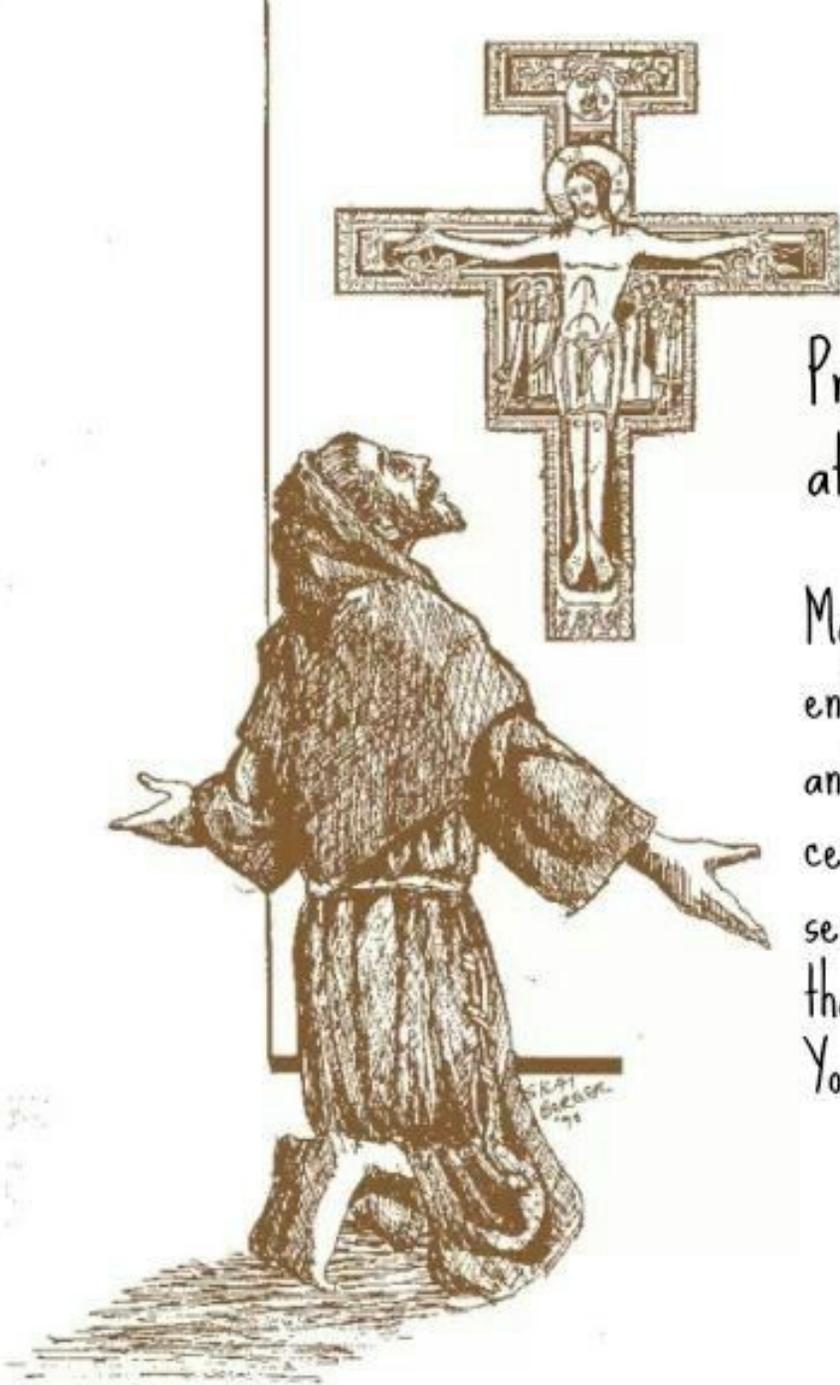
<http://franciscantradition.org/>

# Prayer Before the Crucifix

---

- For Conversion
- Plea for God's Mercy

*Earlier Exhortation: FA: ED,  
vol.1, p.40*



Prayer before the Crucifix  
at San Damiano

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.



“All those who refuse to do penance and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord JESUS CHRIST are blind.... They indulge their vices and sins and follow their evil longings and desires, without a thought for the promises they made.”

—**Saint Francis of Assisi**

## Earlier Exhortation

- (First version of the Letter to the Faithful) serves as the Prologue to the Secular Franciscan Rule of 1978.
- Addresses Brothers and Sisters of Penance, offers a form of life Francis intended for the lay penitents associated with his movement
- *FA:ED. Vol.1, p.41*

# Letter to a Minister – Servant Leadershi p



- Importance of:
- Mercy
- and Minority

• *Earlier Exhortation:  
FA:ED. Vol 1, p.97*

# The Admonitions

– *(collection of writings)*

- How Francis understood the gospel life
- How he viewed life in fraternity
- His LOVE & COMPASSION

*FA:ED, Vol.1, p.122*

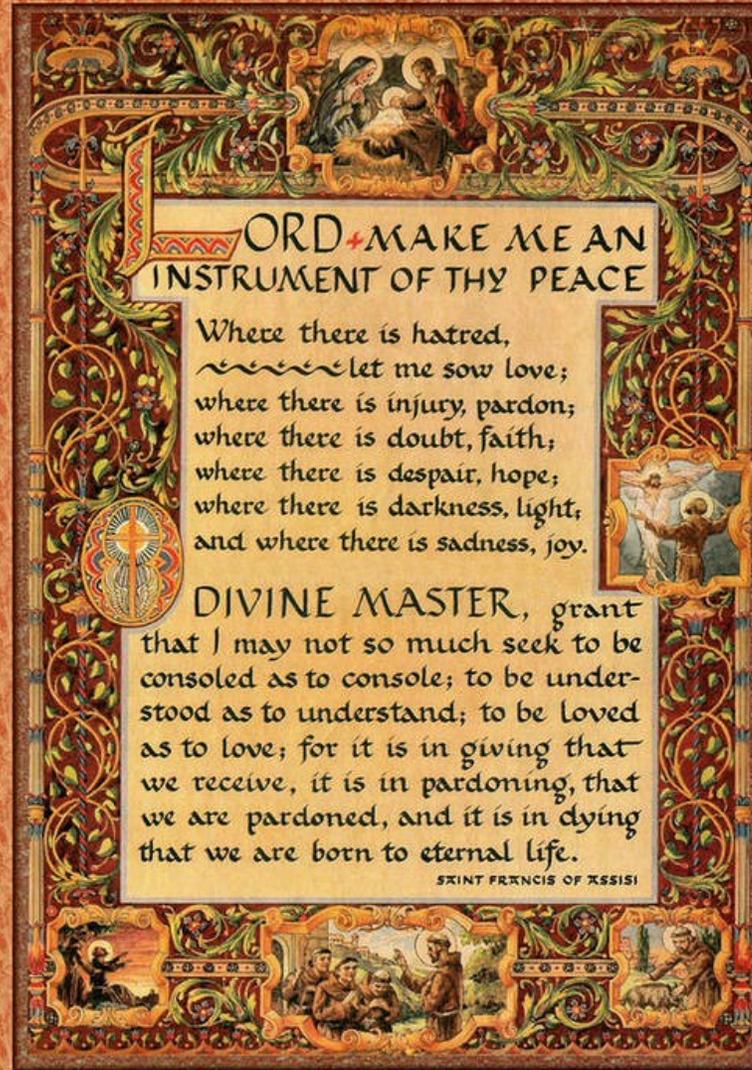




# CANTICLE OF BROTHER SUN

- Poem of Praise to God through his creatures
- Explicit connection between Francis and nature (kinship with creation)
- Establishes Francis as poet and troubadour of God
- *CA:ED, p.391*

# Irony of our time



- Francis never wrote the “Prayer of St. Francis”
  - Likely originated in France around 1912
- “Preach the Gospel; if necessary, use words.” – not found in Francis’ documents

# FORMING OFS HEARTS AND MINDS

- We must be thoroughly familiar with our RULE of Life with the Gospels
- Know and internalize the life and writings of St Francis to firmly implant in our minds and hearts our vocations as Secular Franciscans.



If you will be sons of peace, you will win the clergy and the people for the Lord, and the Lord judges this more acceptable than to win the people but scandalize the clergy. Hide their lapses, supply for their many defects; and when you have done this, be even more humble.

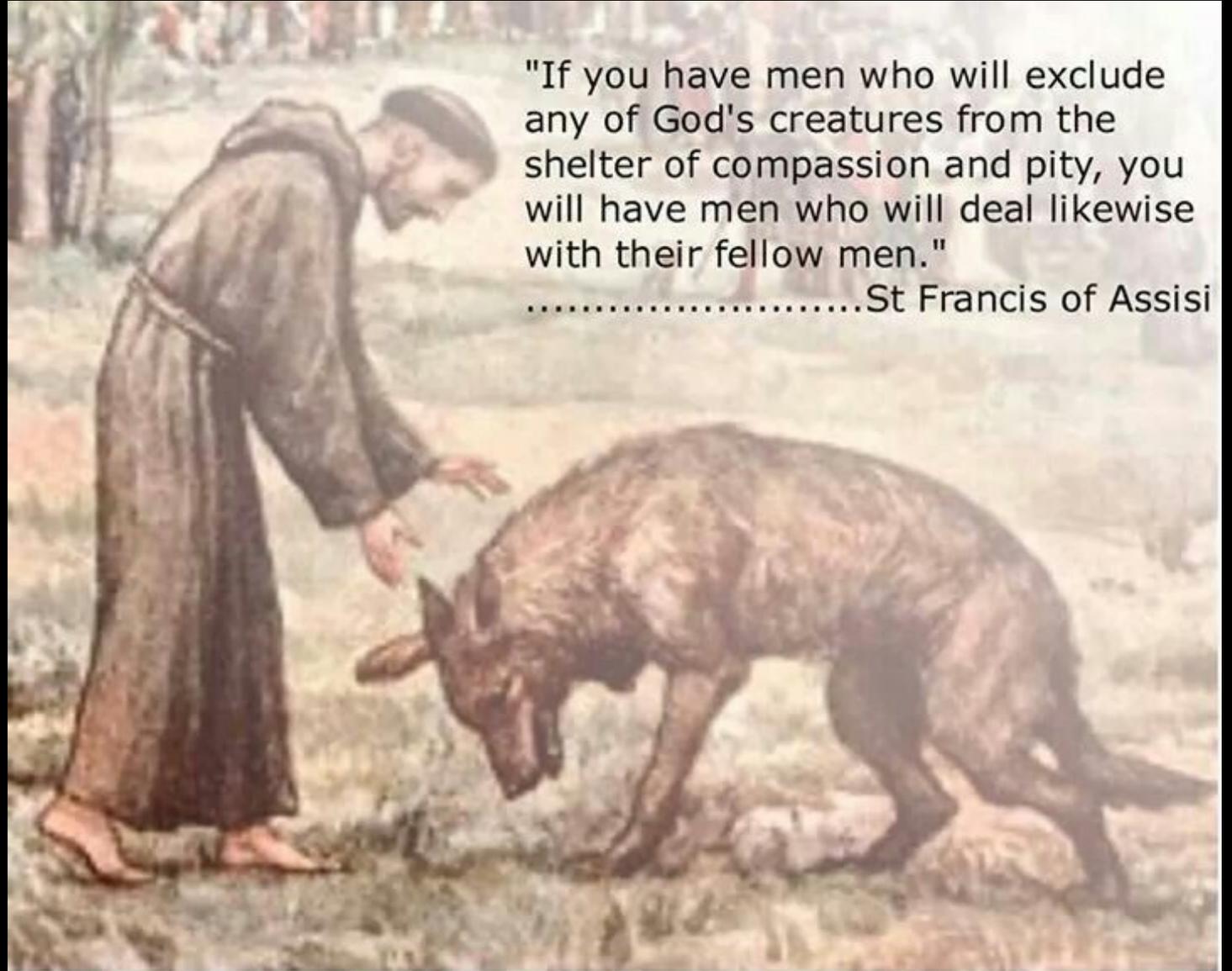
- *St. Francis of Assisi*  
From Celano, *Second Life* (146)

<http://te-deum.blogspot.com>

# DISCUSSION #5

---

- Why do you suppose the writings of the founder of an order would be of great assistance to his/her followers? Please explain.
- Is there a writing/poem that touches you?



"If you have men who will exclude any of God's creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men."  
.....St Francis of Assisi



# Juan de Padilla Elective Chapter

---

Regional Formation Committee  
September 2022