



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS  
- Initial Formation for Candidates -

Module 3: "ELEMENTS OF ECCLESIOLOGY & THE  
THEOLOGY OF THE LAITY"

sheet 6

2. The Identity of the Lay Person  
(IV) Lay Spirituality

Oh! breath of life, come sweeping through us,  
Revive your Church with life and power;  
Oh! breath of life, come, cleanse, renew us  
And fit your Church to meet this hour.

Oh! breath of love, come breathe within us,  
Renewing thought and will and heart:  
Come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,  
Revive your Church in every part.

Oh! heart of Christ, once broken for us,  
'Tis there we find our strength and rest;  
Our broken contrite hearts now solace,  
And let your waiting Church be blest.



What are we to understand by “spirituality”? The answer is that it is the extent to which God the Holy Spirit is at work within us, making us holy [‘sanctification’], and using us in the work to which he has called us [‘vocation’]. As Franciscans, we are called to share in the work to which St Francis was called: to rebuild the Church. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit equips us for this calling, empowering us to do what, without him, we could never do. This is our task; this is his work.

Lay Christians are called to be on the watch for the breath of the Spirit which makes the Word of God living and effective. Their ‘life in the Spirit’ [or spirituality] has specific connotations.

- It is characterised above all by service and apostolic co-responsibility. The today of God is in our concrete lives; our today is the ‘hour’ of God, the today of salvation [II Cor 6.2 ‘behold, now is the day of salvation’]
- It is Christ-like in the sense that it flows from sharing in the priesthood, prophecy and kingship of Christ in the Church [II Cor 6.1 ‘working together with him’]
- It is Charismatic [Rom 12.6 ‘having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us’]
- It is Evangelical [Matt 516 ‘let you light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven’]

**Gaudium et Spes [43] denounces the grave error of separating daily life from the life of faith—**

It is a mistake to think that, because we have here no lasting city, but seek the city which is to come, [Heb 13.14] we are entitled to shirk our earthly responsibilities; this to forget that by our faith we are bound all the more to fulfil these responsibilities according to the vocation of each one. [I Thes 3.6-13; Eph 4.28] But it is no less mistaken to think that we may immerse ourselves in earthly activities as if these latter were utterly foreign to religion, and religion were nothing more than the fulfilment of acts of worship and the observance of a few moral obligations. One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of their daily lives. As far back as the Old Testament the prophets vehemently denounced this scandal, [Isa 58.1-12] and in the New Testament Christ himself with greater force threatened it with severe punishment. [Matt 23.3-33; Mk 7.10-13]...The Christian who shirks his temporal duties shirks his duties towards his neighbour, neglects God himself, and endangers his eternal salvation. Let Christians follow the example of Christ who worked as a craftsman; let them be proud of the opportunity to carry out their earthly activity in such a way as to integrate human, domestic, professional, scientific and technical enterprises with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are ordered to the glory of God.

- *such is the vocation and spirituality of the lay person: to seek the kingdom of God and be concerned for God's concerns*

