



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

- Initial Formation for Candidates -

Module 4: "PROFESSION"

sheet 1

1 A Gift of the Spirit

[[] Grace, Action, Fraternity & Ministries

'profession' =
declaration of belief; vow
made on entering, fact of
being in, a religious Order



'...[Francis] founded a true Order, that of the Tertiaries, not restricted by religious vows, as the two preceding [Orders], but similarly conformed to simplicity of customs and to a spirit of penitence. So, he was the first to conceive and happily carry out, with the help of God, what no founder of regulars [religious Orders] had previously contrived, to have the religious life practiced by all.'
Benedict XV, *Sacra Propediem* (1921)

GRACE

Dedication to the service of the kingdom comes about because the Lord gives a person grace to consecrate himself to the cause of the kingdom.

Holy Spirit = source & working of vocation to OFS

'Lord, watch over these your servants. May the Spirit of your love penetrate their hearts, so that your grace will strengthen them to keep their commitment to the gospel life.' [Ritual II, 30]



ACTION

Profession comes about through God's intervention; it is action of Christ and the Church, & is a solemn ecclesial act (action) as well as an event (or, saving 'kairos' - Gk for 'time'; not man's time, which is 'Chronos', but 'kairos' - God's time)

FRATERNITY

The local fraternity makes the presence and action of the Church visible primarily in profession. Profession must (as a public ecclesial act) be celebrated in the presence of the fraternity, because it is a visible sign of the Church.

Fraternity = accepts candidate's request; fraternity is united to prayer of those making profession so Holy Spirit may bring to fulfilment his work. Profession produces incorporation into OFS, & so Franciscan Family, determining reciprocal attitudes, sentiments, relationships, duties & rights.

Profession = not 'registration' (one is not enrolled into OFS) but 'incorporation' - which entails transformation ('conversion'), absorption, assimilation.

'By your presence and communion you enrich our fraternity in numbers and virtue.' [Ritual I, 16]

MINISTRIES

Action of celebrating "Church-Fraternity", finds expression in many ministries done by those called to carry out particular functions in the liturgical assembly.

Candidates: action expressed in 'person of candidate'

- baptised (conformed to Christ as prophet, priest & king)
- confirmed (recipient of Holy Spirit)
- professed ('made members of the People of God by baptism, and strengthened in confirmation by the new gift of the Spirit, in order to proclaim Christ by your life and your words. Do you wish to bind yourself more closely to the Church?' [Ritual II, 29e])

Ministry of the Fraternity: action expressed in 'presence of Minister'

- Church acts through priest & Minister (reps Fraternity)
- Minister has function of 'sign': makes visible & shows forth presence & action of the Church

Presbyter: action is sacramental in nature

- presence of priest vouches for validity of event
- as in baptism & confirmation he now scrutinises those about to make this commitment on behalf of the Church as 'mother'

'I affirm your commitment in the name of the Church.' [Ritual II, 33]

- priest is 'witness', 'guarantor', 'ratifier' for the Church in this ecclesial act of Profession

