

ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS
- Initial Formation for Candidates -

Module 1: "VOCATION, CHARISM & MISSION"
sheet 6

3. Mission — 'Repair My Church!'



Mission [Latin: 'missio' - send] = person's vocation
or divinely appointed work in life

CHRIST RISEN gives the Church its mission

'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...'
[Matt 28.19]

CHRIST ASCENDED calls and equips for mission

'And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers...for building up the body of the Church.'
[Eph 4.11f]

CHRIST GLORIFIED gives Francis his specific mission

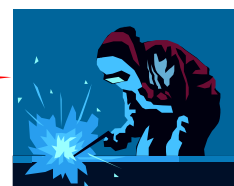
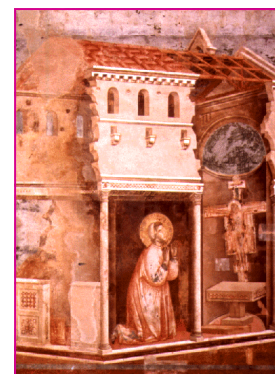
He 'heard with his bodily ears a voice coming from that cross, telling him three times: Francis go and repair my house, which, as you see, is all being destroyed.'

[St Bonaventure, Major Life: II, 1]

In that moment there was in Francis, we are told, the entire Franciscan Family—**Paul VI reminds us**, 'The vision of Innocent III of Francis who is supporting the Lateran Basilica, in other words the Church, the mystical body of Christ in his historical and central, unified, hierarchical and Roman expression, has divined **the vocation and mission of the great Franciscan family**'. And he repeated to the Secular Franciscans, 'We hope and trust that the visible and human Church will be supported by you especially, dear tertiaries'.

At first, Francis thought with 'stone', but gradually came to understand... 'like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house...' [I Pet 2,5]

But, how is a house repaired?



The request of those in the 1st Century, in the 13th Century, in the 21st Century remains the same:

‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ [John 12. 21]

Now, as we look at Francis, we see Christ! Francis has become sacrament of Christ, and Christ leads us to the Father. For God has constituted Francis *alter Christus* [another Christ] in a conformation which we can define as *total* so that he would be qualified to fulfil, and with the *right materials*, the mission that God had entrusted him—to repair his Church. As brothers and sisters of St Francis we are also called to that mission, for his call, his charism, his mission are ours too. Like Francis, and St Paul before him, we are to ‘count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus’; for Jesus’ sake to suffer ‘the loss of all things, and count them as refuse’ in order to ‘gain Christ and be found in him’ that we ‘may know him and the power of his resurrection’, sharing in his sufferings and ‘becoming like him in his death’ [Phil 3.8ff].

At the very centre of our charism there is the **heavenly Father** [the centrality of the Father]. This is the journey that Francis, guided by the Spirit, has done and that we have to do. For as Francis takes us with him to his most beloved Christ, so Christ brings us to the Father that we might ‘be perfect’ as our ‘Father in heaven is perfect’ [Matt 5.48]. This invitation carries with it a special meaning and responsibility for us, the children of Francis, whom the Spirit has endowed with the **special charism of sonship**. And we understand now that there are no limits in the scope of the mission of Secular Franciscans. We will have to make ourselves available, like Francis, every time the Church calls; every time there is something, anything, to ‘repair’.



The Psalmist reminds us, ‘Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.’ [Ps 127.1]

‘As builders of the ‘new Jerusalem’ [Rev 21.2] Let us, then, as God’s fellow workers ‘build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer disgrace...



LET US RISE UP AND BUILD.’ [Neh. 2.17f]