



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS  
- Initial Formation for Candidates -

Module 5: "The Nature of the OFS"  
sheet 1

1. What is meant by 'Nature'?

**'NATURE'** - [Latin: nascor, nasce, natus—to be begotten, born]

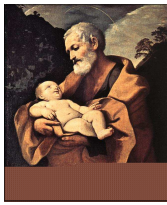
- refers to essential character or constitution; distinguishing qualities; essence

So, man is a living creature [animal], but he differs from other animals in that his nature is 'human'

**'IDENTITY'** - [Latin: idem—same]

- refers to specific attributes of a person

So, man is a living creature [animal], but he differs from other animals in that his nature is human, and he differs from other humans in that he has a unique [there is only one like it] 'identity'



Jesus: nature ['of one being with the Father' = divine; 'became incarnate from the Virgin Mary' = human; so, two natures]  
: identity ['was made man', "Jesus of Nazareth" = one person]



St Thomas More: nature [= human; one nature]  
: identity ['Thomas' baptismal name; 'More' family name, "Thomas More" = one person]  
- and, Secular Franciscan!

Everything has 'nature' and 'identity'. We have specific nature [human] and specific identity [personality], so the OFS has specific nature and individual persons who share that nature with each other

How can we apply all this to the OFS? That is: **What is the specific nature of the OFS?**

Well, the Latin designation helps us here: **OFS [Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis]**

- it is an **ORDER** — Ordo
- it is a **FRANCISCAN ORDER** — Ordo Franciscanus
- it is a **FRANCISCAN ORDER IN THE WORLD** — Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis

Let us not forget that the OFS stands in an uninterrupted line of continuity with the *Penitents of Assisi* [of whom Francis himself is the first and the founding father] which has existed for NEARLY 800 years! And the OFS is defined very precisely by THREE PIVOTAL FACTORS.



1. Its **genesis** and the **intention** of the Founder, St Francis , based on the **inspiration** he received from God who wanted its foundation

## 2. Its historical evolution



Dante



Columbus



Michelangelo



Elizabeth of Hungary



Liszt

## 3. The will expressed by the Church through

- the **legislation** which has provided for it and the
- **Magisterium** of the Church herself, expressed by the Supreme Pontiffs through the course of history.



Leo XIII



John XXIII



Paul VI