



OFS GB Handbook

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Franciscan Family

The Franciscans form by far the greatest spiritual family in the Church. This comprises the three independent bodies of Friars Minor (O.F.M., O.F.M. Conventual and O.F.M. Capuchin), the Poor Clare Nuns, the Third Order Regular of men, the vast number of religious congregations of Franciscan Sisters, and the worldwide body of Secular Franciscans, men and women who follow the Franciscan way of life as a true but non-religious order in the world. These Secular Franciscans far outnumber the remaining Franciscan bodies, both individually and collectively. They are numbered in millions, the others only in thousands. All however draw their particular spiritual inspiration and guidance from Francis Bernardone, the son of a cloth merchant of Assisi in Umbria, who lived for only forty-four years, from 1182 to 1226, and after a youth of worldly ambition and pleasure seeking, entirely abandoned earthly possessions and fulfilments in order totally to imitate the Gospel life of Christ.

The young Francis was by no means the first of mediaeval men to revolt against the materialism of the age and the increasing domination

of money, as feudalism began imperceptibly to yield to capitalism. Cathars, Waldensians, Humiliati: these are just three of the forty sects mentioned by Ronald Knox in that part of his work “Enthusiasm” which deals with the mediaeval heresies.

There was a vast disillusionment and discontent among ordinary people with the institutional Church in particular and with the state of Christendom in general. But what distinguished Francis of Assisi from other reformers was his total loyalty to the institutional Church. He recognised that the rule and life of gospel observance, which he chose for himself and for those who would follow him, necessitated obedience “to our Lord, Pope Honorius and to his successors canonically elected and to the Roman Church” (Rule of 1223, Cap. 1). Not only did Francis avoid heresy - neither Waldensians nor Humiliati were essentially heretical - he avoided too the pitfalls of anti-clericalism and insubordination to ecclesiastical authority, into which others had fallen. Peter Waldo, no less than Francis after him, had taken to heart the teaching of Christ, “You cannot serve both God and Mammon”. Francis however realised, as Waldo had failed to do, that refusal to serve Mammon does not of itself constitute service of God; this consists in loyal and total obedience

to the authority of Christ in his Church. This is at the heart of all Franciscan spirituality.

The history of the Franciscan family is the history of a constant struggle against human frailty and the inevitable pressure of the outside world, in order to maintain a truly gospel way of life in that world. From the very outset practical adjustments to changing situations were necessary. A handful of itinerant friars could sleep in barns or easily constructed wattle huts, and beg for whatever bread they failed to receive for the work they readily rendered; but as numbers increased first to hundreds and then to thousands, some more stable form of life became a practical necessity. As the friars took their apostolate into the cities and great university towns of Europe, they were quickly joined by priests, students and university doctors, and facilities for full theological formation became essential. The great figure who led the friars through this critical period of early growth was St Bonaventure. A theologian on a par with Thomas Aquinas, he led the friars as their general minister through the stages of their development into a predominantly clerical order, wisely adapting the expression of the spirit of holy poverty to the exigencies of the changing situation. Inevitably, in the course of time modifications of life style and easements of external poverty increased.

Equally inevitable, however regrettable, was a gradual relaxation of the spirit of poverty itself. But always there was unrest within the order at such relaxation, and again and again down the centuries a resurgence of the primitive ardour for the simple gospel life manifested itself. This led to constant “reforms” within the order, the greatest of which, the Observant reform, was more notable for charity than some which had preceded it. In consequence, by the end of the 15th Century it had won over the majority of the friars. Leo XIII finally separated the Observants from the Conventuals (as the friars of the parent stock were called), leaving both equal right to the name of Friars Minor, but according the seal of the order and the title “Successor of St Francis” to the general minister of the Observants. By this time however the difficulties of reconciling the ideal with the practical were already manifest among the Observants themselves. This led to the second major reform of the order, which developed during the Reformation era and acquired the name of “Capuchin” from the simple, one piece habit with a long pointed hood, which the friars of this reform adopted. Many other reforms developed during the 16th Century, but there is no space here to speak of them. Nor is there any need to do so, for the greatest Tertiary Pope of modern times, Leo XIII, brought all these reforms back into the

Observant family, leaving separate and independent the Conventuals and the Capuchins, and according to each of the three general ministers the right to hold themselves as direct successors to St Francis.

The same account of relaxation and reform could be given about the Poor Clares. In 1250 Isabella of France, sister of St Louis, founded a convent of Poor Clares at Longchamps for noble women. It was a convent of great piety, but for the sake of its delicately nurtured and noble inhabitants great concessions with regard to property and revenues were granted to it. The example spread, and in 1264 Urban IV approved a mitigated rule for common observance, though not all the convents adopted it. St Bernardine of Sienna re-introduced the first rule of St Clare into many convents in Italy, but the chief reformer of the Poor Clares was St Colette of Corbie (1381-1447). It is not without interest that, at the time when she received the inspiration and sought papal approval for her reform, Colette herself was not yet a Poor Clare but a Tertiary Eremite, living in a walled up cell.

The third Franciscan Rule was originally intended for lay men and women. As Fr. Gemelli put it: “He (Francis) taught the wealthier

burghers and the common people that everyone may lead the life of a religious even in the midst of the world. For who cannot make of his heart a cell, and of the exact fulfilment of his daily duties a way of life, considering every living creature he meets as his brother or sister?”

The spiritual unrest which had given rise to the Waldensians and others formed a ready seed- ground among the laity for the gospel teaching of Francis, and the absolute orthodoxy of that teaching safeguarded them from errors into which the followers of earlier reformers had all too easily fallen. It is now fully accepted that St Francis founded “The Order of Penance” (as the Secular Franciscan Order was originally called) long before 1221, when Honorius III approved its rule, that it came into existence in fact before the Poor Clares were founded in 1212. The writings of Thomas of Celano and of St Bonaventure both bear this out. The original rule given them by Francis, like that originally given to the friars, is no longer extant.

The rule drawn up by Cardinal Hugolino and approved by Honorius, though not extant in its original form, can be fairly satisfactorily determined from subsequent rules based on it but containing certain local additions. From it can clearly be seen the exact nature of the

foundation. Though non-religious it was unquestionably an order, with definite rules for investiture of new members and profession after a year's probation (just as in the rule for the friars). A monthly meeting was prescribed, with Mass. There must be fraternity officers, and external and internal procedures for achieving sanctity were laid down. The external means were poverty, simplicity of dress, the avoidance of unbecoming amusements and the mortification of the palate. Prayer, the frequenting of the sacraments and a daily examination of conscience were the internal means. A distinctive habit was prescribed to distinguish the secular Franciscan from worldly people. They must pay their debts and lawful taxes. They were exempted from military service and from public offices. Except in certain cases of necessity they could not be constrained to take an oath. This was a far more significant prescription in the 13th century than it would be today, for the oath of fealty was the basic prop of the feudal social structure, and it compelled those who took it to total service of their overlord, even to unquestioning support in battle should need arise.

Originally the First Order did not exercise any jurisdiction over these secular Franciscans. It was only in 1428 that Pope Martin IV obliged the

latter to obtain visitors from the First Order. The present rule of Pope Paul VI clearly indicates a return to the original relationship between the friars and the Secular Franciscans, that of fraternal co-operation in the Franciscan apostolate.

In the course of time various forms of life developed from the Order of Penance. We have mentioned that St Colette herself was at one time a tertiary eremite. This was a not infrequent way of living out the Franciscan life and carrying out its missionary work to those who would come to the cell window embrasure to receive counsel. There were others who formed themselves into stable communities of men or women, as the Waldensians indeed had done. By taking vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, these groups gave birth to the Third Order Regular. At times, during the 14th Century and later, the Third Order Regular claimed jurisdiction over their secular counterparts. There were arguments too between the great First Order families as to their competence to direct the Secular Franciscans. At one time there was a move to place all Secular Franciscans under the direction of the Observant Friars, but this came to nothing. In short, just as with the friars and the Poor Clares, the Secular Franciscan Order revealed its human aspect and its

human limitations. Owing to the immense appeal of St Francis and the Franciscan charism, many sought the privilege of the Franciscan lay habit; not all were so willing to commit themselves to the full rigours of Franciscan renunciation, as prescribed by the rule. It would have required a continuous divine miracle for it to have been otherwise. What is far more significant however is that despite the inequalities of Franciscan life to be found in all three orders down the centuries, they have never failed to provide a seed-ground to sanctity in the Church. In no century have any of them failed to produce saints and blessed to testify to the spiritual validity and value of the Franciscan way of life. The saints of the First and Second Orders are well known. In recent years two Franciscan Tertiaries, St Pius X and St Francis Xavier Cabrini have been canonised. In all there are about 130 tertiary saints and blessed, including Pope John XXIII, whilst Ven. Matt Talbot is one of more than 30 whose cause is still being considered. Needless to say, these impressive figures must give Franciscans no cause for false pride. They should however convince us that the Franciscan way of life is a safe road to sanctity for those who are willing to follow it faithfully, and the Franciscan apostolate a divinely appointed instrument for the salvation of our modern world.

The Secular Franciscan Order

The Secular Franciscan Order, hitherto widely known as the Third Order of St Francis, is the world-wide spiritual family of those who strive to live the Gospel life of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, following the pattern set by St Francis of Assisi under the guidance of the Holy Spirit ('No one showed me what to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel.' Testament of St Francis). The deliberate change of name is to make clear that this order is in no way subsidiary to the First or Second Order, nor is it third in importance. Nor indeed was it instituted by Francis third in time, but in all probability was contemporary with the First Order.

The original Rule given by Francis is no longer clearly identifiable. Its essence however is contained in his "Letter to the Faithful" The Rule of 1221 was a legal compilation of Cardinal Hugolino, suiting the spirit of Francis to the requirements of the time. Nearly seventy years later Pope Nicholas IV re-issued the Rule in a pattern which persisted for some six hundred years, until Leo XIII adapted it to more modern requirements in 1883. Our modern world is however a

very rapidly changing one, and in 1978 the most recent revision of the Rule of St Francis was promulgated under the authority of Pope Paul VI.

In many respects this rule is a return to the original simplicity of Francis' primitive rule, avoiding as it does a multiplicity of regulations and presenting instead ideals of Gospel living to be pursued. Unquestionably, it is a great spiritual challenge to the Christians of our time, just as Francis was to the Christians of the thirteenth century, and as the Holy Spirit and the Church desire him to be for Christians of every generation. It offers the pure milk of the Gospel in a manner such that it may be assimilated by everyone into their own personal life, provided they really will to be conformed to Christ.

The Rule of Paul VI is published separately with documentary sources and full references. Here is appended simply the basic text of this Rule. But for purposes of study and meditation every secular Franciscan should have an annotated copy.

The Rule

Prologue

In the name of the Lord!

(i)

Concerning those who do Penance

All those who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with their whole strength (Mk.12:30) and love their neighbours as themselves (Mt.22:39) who hate their bodies with their vices and sins, who receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who produce worthy fruits of penance; O how happy and blessed are these men and women while they do such things and persevere in doing them, because the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them, (Isaiah.11:2) and make his home and dwelling place among them, (Jn.14:23) and they are the children of the heavenly Father Whose works they do,(Mt.5:45) and they are spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Mt.12:50)

We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to

our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brothers to Him when we do the will of the Father who is in heaven. (Mt. 12:50) We are mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body (1 Cor.6:20) through a divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and give birth to Him through a holy activity which must shine as an example before others. (Mt.5:16)

O how glorious it is to have a holy and great Father in heaven! O how holy, consoling to have such a beautiful and wonderful spouse! O how holy and how loving, gratifying, humbling, peace-giving, sweet, worthy of love, and, above all things desirable: to have such a Brother and such a Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who laid down His life for His sheep (Jn.10:15) and prayed to His Father, saying:

Holy Father, in your name, (Jn.17:11) save those whom you have given me in the world; they were yours and you gave them to me. The words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them, and have believed in the truth that I have come from you and they have known that you have sent me.

I pray for them and not for the world. (Jn.17:9) Bless and sanctify them; I sanctify myself for them. I pray not only for them, but for those

who will believe in me through their word (Jn.17:20) that they may be sanctified in being one as we are. (Jn.17:11) I wish, Father, that where I am, they also may be with me, that they may see my glory in your kingdom. Amen.

(ii)

Those Who Do Not Do Penance

All those men and women who are not living in penance, who do not receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who practice vice and sin and walk after the evil concupiscence and the evil desires of their flesh, who do not observe what they have promised to the Lord, and who in their body serve the world through the desires of their flesh, the concerns of the world and the cares of this life: (Jn.8:41) They are held captive by the devil, whose children they are, and whose works they do. They are blind because they do not see the true light, our Lord Jesus Christ. They do not possess spiritual wisdom because they do not have the Son of God, the true wisdom of the Father. It is said of them: “Their wisdom has been swallowed up, (Ps. 107:27) and, Cursed are those who turn away from your commands.” (Ps.119:21) They see and acknowledge, know and do evil, and knowingly lose their souls.

See, the blind ones, deceived by your enemies: the flesh, the world, and the devil, because it is sweet for the body to sin and it is bitter to serve God, for every vice and sin flow and proceed from the human heart (Mt.7:21) as the Lord says in the Gospel. And you have nothing in this world or in that to come. And you think that you will possess this world's vanities for a long time, but you are deceived because a day and an hour will come of which you give no thought, which you do not know, and of which you are unaware when the body becomes weak, death approaches, and it dies a bitter death. And no matter where, when, or how a person dies in the guilt of sin without penance and satisfaction, if he can perform an act of satisfaction and does not do so, the devil snatches his soul from its body with such anguish and distress that no one can know what it is like except the one receiving it.

And every talent, ability, knowledge, and wisdom (2 Chron.1:17) they think they have will be taken away from them. (Lk.8:18; Mk.4:25) And they leave their wealth to their relatives and friends who take and divide it and afterwards say: "May his soul be cursed because he could have given us more and acquired more than what he distributed to us."

Worms eat his body and so body and soul perish in this brief world and they will go to hell where they will be tortured for ever.

In the love which is God (1Jn.4:17) we beg all those whom these words reach to receive those fragrant words of our Lord Jesus Christ written above with divine love and kindness. And let whoever does not know how to read have them read to them frequently. Because they are spirit and life, they should preserve them together with a holy activity to the end. (Jn.6:64)

And whoever has not done these things will be held accountable (Mt. 12:36) before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ on the day of judgement. (Rom.14:10)

Chapter One

1. The Franciscan family, as one among many spiritual families raised up by the Holy Spirit in the Church, unites all members of the People of God - laity, religious and priests - who recognise that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi. In various ways and forms but in life-giving union with each

other, they intend to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church.

2. The Secular Franciscan Order holds a special place in this family circle. It is an organic union of all Catholic fraternities scattered throughout the world and open to every group of the faithful. In these fraternities the brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state. By their profession they pledge themselves to live the Gospel in the manner of Saint Francis by means of this rule approved by the Church.
3. The present rule, succeeding “Memoriale Propositi” (1221) and the rules approved by the supreme Pontiffs Nicholas IV and Leo XIII, adapts the Secular Franciscan Order to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times. Its interpretation belongs to the Holy See and its application will be made by the General Constitutions and particular statutes.

Chapter Two - the Way of Life

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 Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the centre of his life with God and people. Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly. Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to the careful reading of the Gospel, going from Gospel to Life, and Life to the Gospel.
5. Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in Liturgical activity. The Faith of Saint 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," should be the inspiration and pattern of their Eucharistic life.
6. They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in Baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all

people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words. Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the Pope, bishops and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.

7. United by their vocation as “brothers and sisters of penance”, and motivated by the dynamic power of the Gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the Gospel itself calls “conversion”. Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily. On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father’s mercy and the source of grace.
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 the life of Christ.
9. The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to his every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable

love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.

10. Uniting themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed his will in the Father's hands, let them faithfully fulfil the duties proper to their various circumstances of life. Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witnessing to him even in difficulties and persecutions.
11. Trusting in the Father, Christ chose for himself and his mother a poor and humble life, even though he valued created things attentively and lovingly. Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that according to the Gospel they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God's children. Thus, in the spirit of "The Beatitudes", and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of their Father, they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.

12. Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.
13. As the Father sees in every person the features of his son, the first born of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.
14. Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the Kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone who “follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more a man himself,” let them exercise their responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service.
15. Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their

courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.

16. Let them esteem work as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption and service of the Christian community.
17. In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ. By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for his Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their human and spiritual journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.
18. Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which “bear the imprint of the Most High” and should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.
19. Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal

harmony through dialogue, trusting the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others. Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend towards the ultimate encounter with the Father.

Chapter Three - Life in Fraternity

20. The Secular Franciscan Order is divided into fraternities of various levels - local, regional, national, and international. Each one has its own moral personality in the Church. These various fraternities are co-ordinated and united according to the norm of this rule and of the constitutions.
21. On various levels, each fraternity is animated and guided by a council and minister who are elected by the professed according to the constitutions. Their service, which lasts for a definite period, is marked by a ready and willing spirit and is a duty of responsibility to each member and to the community. Within themselves the

fraternities are structured in different ways according to the norm of the constitutions, according to the various needs of their members and their regions, and under the guidance of their respective councils.

22. The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.

23. Requests for admission to the Secular Order must be presented to the local Fraternity, whose council decides upon the acceptance of new brothers and sisters. Admission into the Order is gradually attained through a time of initiation, a period of formation of at least one year and profession of the rule. The entire community is engaged in this process of growth by its own manner of living. The age for profession and the distinctive Franciscan sign are regulated by the statutes. Profession by its nature is a permanent commitment. Members who find themselves in particular difficulties should discuss their problems with the council

in fraternal dialogue. Withdrawal or permanent dismissal from the Order, if necessary, is an act of the fraternity council according to the norm of the constitutions.

24. To foster communion among members the council should organise regular and frequent meetings of the community as well as meeting with other Franciscan groups, especially with youth groups. It should adopt appropriate means for growth in Franciscan and ecclesial life and encourage everyone to a life of fraternity. This communion continues with the deceased brothers and sisters through prayer for them.
25. Regarding expenses necessary for the life of the fraternity and the needs of worship, of the apostolate and of charity, all the brothers and sisters should offer a contribution according to their means. Local fraternities should contribute towards the expenses of the higher fraternity councils.
26. As a concrete sign of communion and co responsibility the councils on various levels, in keeping with the constitutions, shall ask for suitable and well prepared religious for spiritual assistance. They should make this request to the superiors of the four religious

Franciscan families, to whom the Secular Fraternity has been united for centuries.

To promote fidelity to the charism as well as observance of the rule and to receive greater support in the life of the fraternity, the minister with the consent of the council, should take care to ask for a regular pastoral visit by the competent religious superiors as well as for a fraternal visit from those of the higher fraternities, according to the norms of the constitutions.

AND WHOEVER OBSERVES THESE THINGS, LET HIM BE BLESSED IN HEAVEN WITH THE BLESSING OF THE MOST HIGH FATHER, AND ON EARTH WITH THE BLESSING OF HIS BELOVED SON WITH THE MOST HIGH SPIRIT, THE PARACLETE, AND WITH ALL THE POWERS OF HEAVEN AND WITH ALL THE SAINTS.

The Monthly Meeting

The monthly fraternity meeting is the foundation stone of community life in the Secular Franciscan Order. As such its importance cannot be over emphasized. Where circumstances make monthly meeting quite impossible, meetings should be arranged at least quarterly. These regular meetings must have the nature of spiritual family encounters, during which spiritual guidance and instruction are given by those elected or appointed to lead, while mutual encouragement and renewed inspiration are ministered by all. If possible, the devotional part of the meeting should take place in church, with Mass or the shared recitation of some hour of office before the Blessed Sacrament. Afterwards (or before should convenience require it) the Fraternity should assemble in a Hall to take part in a time of Formation, which will include sharing their thoughts on some aspect of the Rule and the Gospels and a reflection on the Life of St Francis. A short time may be given to the discussion of Fraternity business and activities, and some time needs to be given to socialising. In this way their Franciscan apostolate in the world will be enabled to grow and flourish. **If a priest (or other spiritual animator) is present, he (or she) should be invited to lead at prayer. The minister however is to preside at the meeting itself.**

Prayers Before and After Monthly Meeting

OPENING PRAYERS

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the
son and of the Holy Spirit.

℞. Amen.

Minister: Most high, all powerful, good God,
praise, glory and honour and all blessing are yours.

℞. Praise and bless my Lord, and give him
thanks, And serve him with great humility.

Minister: Let us pray.

All-powerful, most holy, most high and supreme God: all
good, supreme good, totally good, You Who alone are
good, may we give You all praise, all glory, all thanks, all
honour, all blessing, and all good. So be it! So be it!

℞. Amen

Or... Let us pray, Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness
of our heart and give us true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity
sense and knowledge, Lord, that we may carry out Your holy and true
command.

℟. Amen.

A short reading may follow, from Sacred Scripture e.g. Ephesians 1:3-14
or from the writings of St Francis

CLOSING PRAYERS

Minister: Let us pray.

Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God, give us miserable ones the grace to do for You alone what we know You want us to do and always to desire what pleases You. Inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, may we be able to follow in the footprints of Your beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and, by Your grace alone, may we make our way to You, Most High, Who live and rule in perfect Trinity and simple Unity, and are glorified God almighty, forever and ever.

℟. Amen.

Or. . .

Let us pray Most generous God, you are the giver of peace and the lover of charity. Grant to us your people true harmony with your will, and help us to overcome all temptations that could disturb our peace. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

If a priest is present, he may give St Francis' Blessing to Brother Leo.

Time of Visitation

At the time of the Pastoral or fraternal visit of the fraternity (SFO Rule, art 26), these prayers would ordinarily supplant the prayers for a regular fraternity meeting.

After the customary greeting and an Invocation of The Holy Spirit, the visitor offers an opening prayer, either in a form particularly prepared for the occasion or one modelled on the following:

We praise and thank you, O Lord our God, for through your love and wisdom you have called us to holiness through the Franciscan way of life.

Through your grace and inspiration you have provided for us the means to promote fidelity to the Franciscan charism, to observe the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, and to receive greater support in the life of the fraternity.

By the power of your Holy Spirit we have come together today for this pastoral (and/or fraternal) visit, in order to evaluate our efforts and to

renew our dedication to live the holy gospel of your Son in the footsteps of St Francis.

We ask for your blessing and guidance so that this occasion may help us to appreciate our vocation more deeply, to embrace it more enthusiastically, and to share it more fully with one another and with all people

Give us the fullness of your Spirit. Take full possession of our hearts; root out of them attitudes of selfishness and false fear.

Give us the will to persevere, as followers of St Francis in the contemporary world, in rebuilding the Church and in proclaiming the Good News of salvation.

Where we have faltered or even failed, give us the strength to begin anew, the light to discover our true meaning and purpose, and the courage to move forward with conviction and humility.

'May the power of your love, O Lord, fiery and sweet as honey, wean

our hearts from all that is under heaven so that we may die for love of Jesus' love, who was so good as to die for love of our love." This we ask through the same Christ our Lord.'

℟. Amen.

A reading from Sacred Scripture or the writings of St Francis with a reflection or meditation, follows. The visit is carried out in the customary fashion. At the end of the visit, after shared prayer or general intercessions, the visitor concludes with a prayer composed for the visit or with these or similar words.

'Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel! You have visited your people and redeemed them. Stir up your Spirit in us. As we observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the centre of his life with you and your people, keep us faithful to the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. We ask this in Jesus' name and for his sake.'

℟. Amen.

The visitor may conclude with a scriptural exhortation. For example:

‘We beg you: Be at peace among yourselves.

This is what we ask you to do: warn the idlers, give courage to those who are apprehensive, care for the weak, and be patient with everyone. Make sure that people do not try to take revenge; you must all think of what is best for each other and for the community.

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Thes 5:13-18, 23)

The priest present may give the blessing, especially in the form of St Francis' blessing to Brother Leo:

℟. The Lord bless you and keep you.

℞. Amen.

℟. May his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

℞. Amen.

℟. May he look upon you with kindness and give you his peace.

℞. Amen.

℟. May the Lord bless you, + the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

℞. Amen.

Election of Officers

Elections at various levels are preceded by the convocation of those having the right to vote. The convocation should be done sufficiently in advance (not less than one month) with notice of the day, hour and place.

‘The Elective Assembly (Chapter) will be presided over by the Minister of the Council of the immediately higher level or his delegate. He confirms the election. The Spiritual Assistant of the immediately higher level or his delegate is to be present as a witness of communion with the First Order and the TOR. The Minister or his delegate cannot be a member of the Fraternity over whose Elections he is called to preside. The person presiding at the Chapter and the Spiritual Assistant of the higher level do not have the right to vote.

In the local fraternity all of the professed persons of the fraternity can elect and be elected. The spiritual assistant of the fraternity has only the right to elect. On the other levels, besides the outgoing members of the council, representatives of the immediately lower level, representatives of Franciscan Youth, if they are professed, and the spiritual assistants have the right to elect, according to the directives of the particular statutes which ought to try to ensure the largest elective base. All professed

Secular Franciscans within the territorial limits of the fraternity are eligible for election.

An absolute majority of the valid votes present, cast in secret, are required for the election of a minister. After two inconclusive ballots, the voting continues between the two candidates who have obtained the largest number of votes or, in case there are more than two, between the two candidates who are older by profession. If there is still a tie after the third ballot, the older by profession will be considered elected. The election of the vice minister proceeds in the identical manner. For the election of a councillor, after a first ballot without an absolute majority, a relative majority of the valid votes present, cast in secret, is sufficient, unless the particular statutes require a greater majority. The secretary announces the names of the elected. The minister confirms the election.

Opening Prayers for the Election

After the invocation of the Holy Spirit and a short reading from the Sacred Scriptures or from the writings of St Francis, the one presiding at the elections offers this prayer:

Almighty, most high and supreme God, Father, holy and just, Lord, King of heaven and earth: we give you thanks for yourself.

Of your own will you created all things spiritual and physical, and made us in your own image and likeness, and gave us a place in paradise, through your only Son, in the Holy Spirit.

We trust in you and we ask for your light so that we may choose those who will properly service our fraternity through their leadership.

Help us to select those who are able to animate and guide us by their example, their virtues and prudent decisions so that the gospel of Jesus in the spirit of St Francis may come alive in our community.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

The elections follow in accordance with the General Constitutions and

the particular statutes.

After each election, that is, of the Minister, Vice Minister, and council members, the secretary of the elections says:

In the name of Christ. Amen.

I announce that the newly elected Minister (or Vice Minister or Council Members) of _____ is (are) N.N.

The newly elected comes forward and the one presiding at the elections then asks:

N.N., do you accept this election?

The newly elected responds:

I do.

The one presiding then says in these or similar words:

In the name of the Church and the Franciscan Family, I confirm the election of N.N. as the Minister (or Vice Minister or Council Member of the ————— Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order.

At the end of the election process, the newly elected minister recites the Creed in the name of the whole council. If Holy Mass is to be celebrated afterwards then this part of the proceedings can take place after the Homily.

All of the newly elected council members give witness together to their Franciscan calling and to their readiness to be of service. Each may use his/her own words, or they may say together a common text, using the following as a model:

We, the council members of ————— Fraternity, accept this responsibility and service of leadership. Before almighty God, we promise to live daily the gospel life in the spirit of our seraphic father St Francis and to exercise our new ministry to the best of our ability. We ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the co-operation of this fraternity, so

that together as the Family of Francis we may witness to the gospel, may be instruments of peace, and may build a more fraternal and evangelical world, so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively.

Afterwards the one presiding at the elections says:

May the God of hope bring you such joy and peace in your faith that the power of The Holy Spirit will remove all bounds to hope. (Rom 15:13)

℟. Blessed be God forever

The one Presiding continues in these or similar words:

Let us pray for those who have been elected, so that through their service of animating and guiding the fraternity, we may all live our faith more deeply, witness to Christ more bravely, and work more enthusiastically

to prepare the kingdom of God.

After a moment of silence, all join in a common prayer, either one specially composed for the occasion or modelled on the following:

Most generous Father, Grant to all of us to know you better, and make you known to all, Through the dedicated efforts of our new leaders who have been called to serve our Fraternity, may we live more vigorously the gospel way of life that you inspired through Francis of Assisi. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Entry into the Secular Order

Ceremony of Welcome

For use when Visitors/Guests first arrive at Fraternity Meetings.

After the opening Prayers a simple expression of welcome can be made by the Fraternity Minister or the following simple ceremony can be used:-

The Professed member who has brought the Visitor to the Meeting says.

May I introduce you to..... from..... who would like to attend our meetings for a while, having expressed an interest in our Franciscan Way of Life.

The Professed member may want to tell the Fraternity something about the newcomer. The Minister then says:

On behalf of the Fraternity I welcome you to our Meeting.

The Visitor may be given a short life of St Francis to read.

Introduction to the Period of Enquiry

This is also a simple ceremony which takes place during the Fraternity Meeting.

A professed Member/Sponsor says:

‘..... has attended our meetings for the past six months and now wishes to enter the Stage of Enquiry.’

The Prospective Enquirer then says:

‘I have come to see in your Franciscan life a way that appeals to me. So I would like to learn more about it. In time, by the grace of God, I may be able to become part of the Secular Franciscan Order and thus come to serve the Lord and his people more faithfully.’

The Fraternity Minister then says:

I am delighted that you have expressed your desire to learn more about our Way of Life with a view, if it is God’s wish for you, to entering the Order. Be assured that in your search you will have the support of our prayers, our Formation and our example, and always keep in mind the words of St Francis to Bro. Leo: ‘In whatever way you think will best please our Lord God and follow in his footsteps and in poverty, take that way with the Lord God’s blessing.’

The Formation Officer then presents the Enquirer with a copy of the Formation Programme to be followed during the next six months saying.

‘Take this copy of the Formation Programme which you will follow during your time as an Enquirer in this Fraternity. May it help to set your feet firmly on the path you wish to follow.’

A Reading from the Holy Gospels or the Life of St Francis follows. The Ceremony concludes with the following prayer / or a similar one. It may be said by the Spiritual Assistant if one is present.

Minister:

Let us pray

O Lord our God

you have shown us your wisdom and love and you have called us to follow you. May this person here present enquiring into the Secular Franciscan Way of Life be inspired and strengthened by your grace and the support of this community. We ask this through Christ of Lord.

℟. Amen.

Rite of Admission

It is fitting that the rite of admission take place within an appropriate celebration of the Word of God, but not during the Mass. The rite is to be kept simple and is to be performed before the community.

Before the celebration is about to begin, one of the members of the fraternity may give a short admonition on the meaning of the event, as follows:

'The Lord has called us to live the gospel way of life in fraternity, as he showed it to Francis of Assisi. He brings us together today to receive those who, moved by the Holy Spirit, have asked to be admitted into the Secular Franciscan Order and want to begin their time of formation, which will culminate in their profession or permanent commitment to the gospel life. We will now renew our faith in the Holy Spirit and call on him: May he give us the grace to encourage and sustain their proper formation and to walk with them to attain their goal.'

OPENING RITE

The rite of admission begins with a suitable hymn. After the hymn the spiritual assistant or the celebrant makes the Sign of the Cross and

greet the community. He then says:

Let us acknowledge the presence of God and turn to him in prayer.

Lord our God, you have sent your son, Jesus Christ, to be for us the way, the truth and the life.

Grant that these your people who are asking to be admitted into the Secular Franciscan Order, and all of us, may hear the words of the Gospel fully and may observe them attentively.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Before the first reading these words of exhortation of St Francis may be read from the letter to All the Faithful (14, 2.3):

Let us hear the Word of God in the spirit of our blessed father Francis who encourages us:

In that love which is God, I beg and implore you to hear these fragrant words of our Lord Jesus Christ with humility and love, putting them into practice with all gentleness and observing them perfectly.

1st READING. (Rom 6:3-11)

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans:

You have been taught that when we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life.

If in union with Christ we have imitated his death, we shall also imitate him in his resurrection. We must realise that our former selves have been crucified with him to destroy this sinful body and to free us from the slavery of sin. When a man dies, of course, he has finished with sin. But we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him: Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over him any more. When he died, he died once for all to sin, so his life now is life with God; and in that way, you too must consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.

This is the Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 23(24) : 1-2.3-4.5-6)

℟. Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.

The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all its peoples. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm. ℟.

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? The man with clean hands and pure heart, who desires not worthless things, who has not sworn so as to deceive his neighbour. ℟.

He shall receive a blessing from the Lord and reward from the God who saves him. Such are the men who seek him, seek the face of the God of Jacob. ℟.

Verse Before The Gospel (Phil 3:8-9)

I count all things worthless but this: to gain Jesus Christ and to be found in him.

SECOND READING (Mk 1:12-15)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

The spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. “The time has come,” he said, “and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

The celebrant gives a brief homily.

ADMISSION

One of the candidates in the name of all (or all together or even each one separately) expresses the desire to enter the Secular Franciscan Order. The minister receives the request in the name of the fraternity, as follows:

Director of Formation:

‘Would those who are asking to be admitted into the Secular Franciscan Order please come forward, namely, N.N.’

Minister:

‘My friends (or calling them by their name) what is your request?’

Candidate(s):

‘We (I) here present ask to enter this fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order, so that we/I may live more intensely and faithfully the grace and dedication of our/my Baptism by following Jesus Christ according to the teachings and examples of Saint Francis of Assisi. In this way we/I intend to be of service to all through our/my secular state of life for the glory of God and to fulfil his plan of love on behalf of all people.’

Minister:

This Fraternity is pleased to accept your request. I, therefore receive you into the Secular Franciscan Order so that you may begin your time of formation and experience our Franciscan life in preparation for your permanent commitment.’

Celebrant:

‘The Church and the Franciscan Family accept and confirm your sincere

intention. May the Lord allow you to persevere in this desire and to be leaven of gospel life within the world.’

℟. ’Thanks be to God!

Blessed are those who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with all their strength, and love their neighbours as themselves. Blessed are those who despise the ways of the flesh with their vices and sins, and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed are those who produce worthy fruits of penance.

Oh, how happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things and persevere in doing them, because “the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them” and he will make “his home and dwelling among them.” And they are children of the heavenly Father, whose work they do, And they are spouses, brothers, and mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ.’

(Letter to the Faithful, 1-7)

It is appropriate for the whole community to express its sentiments in the customary fashion.

PRESENTATION OF THE RULE OF LIFE

While the director of formation presents a copy of the **RULE OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER** to each of the newly admitted candidates, the minister says:

'The rule and life of the Secular Franciscan is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the centre of his life with God and with people. May this too be your way of life.'

While the director of formation presents to each of the candidates the distinctive sign of the Secular Franciscan Order, the minister says:

'As you turn towards Christ in the spirit of Saint Francis, receive this sign of the Secular Franciscan Order and become one with us.'

The General Intercessions, the Lord's prayer and a concluding prayer (perhaps taken from the writings of St Francis) follow.

Then the minister of the fraternity addresses the new members as follows:

‘N.N. the Secular Franciscan Fraternity of very gladly promises to help you in your journey with friendship, prayer and the witness of its life. You on the other hand, strengthen our fraternity in numbers, by virtue of your presence and participation, and through the sharing of your special gifts. You are most welcome!’

All the members exchange a sign of peace, especially with the newly admitted candidates. Meanwhile, a suitable hymn is sung.

BLESSING

The rite concludes with the blessing of St Francis:

℣. The Lord bless you and keep you.

℟. Amen

℣. May his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

℟. Amen

℣. May he look upon you with kindness and give you his peace.

℟. Amen

℣. May the Lord bless you, + the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

℟. Amen

Rite of Profession to the Gospel Life

The rite is celebrated during the Mass because the nature of permanent commitment as a public and ecclesial act is closely tied to the celebration of the Eucharist.

All that is necessary for celebrating the Eucharist and for the rite of profession is to be adequately prepared beforehand.

The minister of the fraternity receives the profession at a suitable place in the sanctuary, while either sitting or standing. Places for those to be professed are to be arranged in the sanctuary so that the whole liturgical action can be clearly seen by the whole congregation.

Before the presiding celebrant is about to begin, a member of the fraternity gives a short admonition on the meaning of the event, as follows:

‘We are assembled as a community to take part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In this celebration of the Eucharist N.N. is/are going to make

his/her/their profession of the gospel life in the Secular Franciscan Order. In doing so, they make present again and renew the promises of their Baptism and the of his/her/their Confirmation.

While giving thanks to the Father through Christ for all the gifts we have received from Him, we have a special reason for gratitude today: the gift of His grace which He has given to those about to be professed to live in the world according to the spirit of the Beatitudes, and also the gift of His grace which He has given to the whole community by adding new members to the fraternity.

The permanent commitment to the gospel life publicly proclaimed today during this celebration reminds us of something which is also made present every day in the Eucharist: After the example of Christ and in union with His own act of thanksgiving, we are to present ourselves before the Father as living sacrifices of praise given for the life of the world.'

ENTRANCE RITE

The entrance hymn of the Mass is sung while the presiding celebrant proceeds to the altar. Those to be professed, along with the minister of the fraternity and the director of formation arrange themselves in the

sanctuary in the places designated for them. Then Mass begins.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Everything is done as usual in the Liturgy of the Word, with the exception that:

The Creed, even if part of the rubrics for the day, is to be omitted because a profession is itself a special credal statement.

RITE OF PROFESSION TO THE GOSPEL LIFE

After the reading of the Gospel the celebrant and the people sit. Those who are to be professed are called forward, and the minister of the fraternity invites them to express their intension publicly. This may be done singly, by means of one speaking in the name of all or by all speaking together.

Director of Formation:

‘Would the candidates for profession in the Secular Franciscan Order, please come forward, namely N.N.’

Each Candidate responds:

“I am ready and willing”

Minister:

’N.N. God has consecrated you with water and the Holy Spirit. What do you now ask of God, the Church and the Franciscan Family?’

The candidates present their intention.

‘I/We ask to be admitted to the profession of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order and to make a permanent commitment to the gospel life. The experience during my/our time of formation has strengthened us in the conviction that the Lord is calling me/us to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by following in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi.’

Minister:

’The Fraternity accepts your petition and is united with you in your prayer. May the Holy Spirit confirm in you the work He has begun.’

The community acknowledges its assent in the customary fashion.

HOMILY OR TALK

Those to be professed are seated, and a homily is given. The biblical readings as well as the commitment to the gospel life and its theological implications are fittingly explained.

QUESTIONING

After the homily, those to be professed stand. The celebrant questions them about their intent in these words:

Celebrant:

‘Before this fraternity and the other members of the People of God gathered here, I ask you to express your will. Do you wish to embrace the gospel way of life by following the example and words of Saint Francis of Assisi, which are at the heart of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order?’

Candidates:

‘Yes, this is what I want.’ Celebrant:

‘You have been called to give witness to the Kingdom of God and to build a more fraternal world based on the Gospel, together with all people of good will. Do you wish to be faithful to this vocation and to practice the

spirit of service proper to Secular Franciscans?’

Candidates:

‘Yes, this is what I want.’

Celebrant:

‘You have been made members of the People of God by your 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 and to work intently to rebuild the ecclesial community and fulfil its mission among all people?’

Candidates:

‘Yes, this is what I want.’

Minister:

‘The local fraternity is a visible sign of the Church, a community of faith and love. Together with all the members, you now pledge yourselves to spend your efforts to make the fraternity a genuine ecclesial assembly and a living Franciscan community.’

PRAYER FOR DIVINE GRACE

Celebrant:

‘Let us pray.’

All kneel and a special time of prayer is observed using the following:

‘O Lord our God, your grace has led these your servants to live their faith more fully in the context of this world by coming to profess the gospel according to the life and rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.

By the power of your Holy Spirit may they give witness to the life and teachings of your Son to all the world.

Grant that they may be continually united to Christ through the gifts of their lives, in order that the Church maybe rebuilt and her mission be fulfilled through Christ our Lord.’

Then the celebrant concludes by saying in these words:

‘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.’

We ask this through Christ our Lord

℟. Amen.

PROFESSION TO THE GOSPEL LIFE

While the celebrant remains at the presidential chair, the minister of the fraternity takes a suitable central place in the sanctuary, either standing or sitting.

Two professed members of the fraternity stand beside the minister of the fraternity, acting as special witnesses.

Those to be professed approach the minister one at a time and read the formula of profession, placing their hands, if so desired, into the hands of the minister:

'I, N N. by the grace of God, renew my baptismal promises and consecrate myself to the service of His Kingdom. Therefore in my Secular state I promise to live all the days of my life the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Secular Franciscan Order by observing its rule of life.

May the grace of the Holy Spirit, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our holy father saint Francis, and the fraternal bonds of community always be my help, so that I may reach the goal of perfect Christian love.'

To each one the minister responds:

‘Thanks be to God.

As minister of this fraternity, I accept your profession and receive you into this fraternity of — of the Secular Franciscan Order. Your membership in the fraternity is a cause of great joy and hope for all the members of the community and for the whole Church.’

When all the candidates have made their profession and the minister has accepted it, the celebrant speaks to them in these words:

Celebrant:

‘I confirm your commitment in the name of the Church. Our seraphic father himself encourages you in the words of his Testament: “May whoever observes all this be filled in heaven with the blessing of the most high Father, and on earth with that of His beloved Son, together with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and all the powers of heaven and all the saints.’

PRESENTATION OF SYMBOLS OF PROFESSION

While the formation director gives to each newly professed a copy of the Holy Gospels, the minister says in these words.

‘Christ, the gift of the Father’s love, is the way to Him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which He has come to give abundantly. By your lifelong profession to go from gospel to life and life to the gospel, may you continually encounter the living and active person of Christ.’

A crucifix is presented as a remembrance of profession; the one presenting the crucifix says in these words:

‘May you conform your thoughts and deeds to those of Christ and build a more fraternal and evangelical world by fulfilling your vocation as brother/sister of penance.’

A lighted candle is presented to the newly professed, the one presenting the candle says:

‘By your profession you are the light of Christ in the world. Your light must shine before all so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to our heavenly Father.’

After the presentations, the members present may come forward to congratulate each newly professed member with an appropriate sign of peace and goodwill. Meanwhile, the hymn will be sung.

CONCLUSION OF THE RITE OF PROFESSION

The rite concludes with the General intercessions. These may be prepared and presented by representatives of the whole fraternity.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

While a hymn is sung at the Presentation of the Gifts, some of the newly professed will present the bread, wine and water. Other symbols signifying the commitment to the Gospel life within the Secular Franciscan Order may also be presented.

At the end of the Mass, the Solemn Blessing may be the blessing of Saint Francis:

℟. The Lord bless you and keep you.

℞. Amen.

℟. May his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

℞. Amen.

℟. May he look upon you with kindness and give you his peace.

℞. Amen.

℟. May the Lord bless you,– the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

℟. Amen.

Ceremony on the Anniversary of Profession

It is a praiseworthy custom to celebrate the 25th and the 50th anniversary of profession in the Secular Franciscan Order, both to congratulate the jubilarians for their fidelity and dedication and also to strengthen the bonds of fraternal life within the community.

If this jubilee is celebrated within the context of the Eucharist, the Mass corresponding to the liturgy of the day may be said, with the prayers “In Thanksgiving,” according to the rubrics. Also, the votive mass of St Francis, of the patron saints of the Secular Franciscan Order, or the Mass for the Laity may be used. The jubilee may also take place during the Liturgy of the Hours or during a special celebration of the Word of God.

ADMONITION AFTER THE HOMILY

After the homily, the minister of the fraternity or one of the other members present introduces the jubilee ceremony. It would be appropriate to compose a special text for the occasion using the

following as a model:

‘Today with great joy we are celebrating the 25th (and/or 50th) anniversary of N.N. in the Secular Franciscan Order. During these years, they have made a sincere effort “to make present the charism of their common seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church” and to build “a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the Kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively.” Let us, therefore, join in their thanksgiving and in their commitment to an ongoing change of heart.’

RENEWAL OF COMMITMENT

The jubilarians come forward to renew their commitment, either singly or as a group. It would be appropriate if a particular statement of renewal were composed, using the following as a model:

“Let us bless our Lord and God, living and true; to him we must attribute all praise, glory, honour, blessing, and every good forever.

We thank you, Lord, for calling us to the Secular Franciscan Order. We ask your pardon for all our shortcomings, weaknesses, and transgressions against our commitment to the gospel life and against the Rule, We

pray that you will allow us to experience once again the fervour and readiness of that first day when we entered the fraternity. We renew once again our commitment to the gospel life, according to the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, until the end of our days. Grant also that we may live in harmony with our brothers and sisters, and may give witness to younger people of the great gift we received from you: our Franciscan calling to “go forth as witnesses and instruments of the Church’s mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by our life and words.”

All praise be yours, O Lord, through all that you have made.” Amen

After the renewal of commitment, the celebrant offers a prayer. He may use a text specially composed for the occasion, or he may say in these or similar words:

‘Lord our God, Father of all, we thank you for the love and goodwill that you have shown toward your people. And so we ask you to help our brothers and sisters who today celebrate their anniversaries in the Secular Franciscan Order to fulfill their commitment to the gospel life which they once took upon themselves.

Most high, all powerful, all good, Lord! All praise is yours, all glory, all honour, and all blessing forever and ever.’

℟. Amen.

CONCLUSION

Where time and circumstances permit, the members of the fraternity or at least some representatives of the fraternity come forward to offer the jubilarians their congratulations and best wishes. Meanwhile, it is appropriate that a song of thanksgiving and praise be sung, especially St Francis’ “Canticle of the Creatures.”

The liturgical celebration continues in the usual manner. If the anniversaries are celebrated within the context of the Eucharist, it is fitting that the jubilarians are involved in the General Intercessions, in the Preparation of the Gifts, etc

Establishment of a New Fraternity

The rite described in this chapter is performed in a suitable place.

The one who has the faculty to establish a fraternity canonically presides at the ceremony.

INTRODUCTION

After a word of welcome and a brief introduction from the minister of the fraternity, article 22 of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order is read:

The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.

The one presiding at the establishment of the new fraternity offers the following prayer:

‘Let us pray.

O Lord our God, as we gather here in your name, may our lives together in fraternity help us to experience the presence of your Son our Lord

Jesus Christ, so that our joy in St Francis may come to fulfillment.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.’

℟. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Then there is a reading from the Bible; Rom 12:4-13 is suggested.

READING AND SIGNING OF THE DOCUMENT OF ESTABLISHMENT

After the scripture reading, the document of the establishment of the new fraternity is now formally read and signed. Also the names of the members of the fraternity are recorded, as well as the leaders who constitute the council of the new fraternity.

When this is finished, it is appropriate to read a short text from St Francis’ “Letter to All the Faithful”.

On this occasion some appropriate words can be offered either by the one presiding at the establishment or by a regional or national leader present.

PRAYER IN COMMON AND CONCLUSION

A prayer can be offered in common after the style of general intercessions,

which is concluded with the following prayer:

‘Our Father, almighty God, source of love and unity: grant that this new fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order, united and animated by the Holy Spirit, may be ready to hear your Word and keep it.

May all its members pray together with one mind and heart. May they find in the community the strength and inspiration to bring about a more fraternal world and to carry the message of joy and peace to everyone.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.’

℟. Amen

It is appropriate to conclude with a hymn to Our Lady.

The Divine Office

In “Sacrosanctum concilium”, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy issued by the Second Vatican Council in 1963, it is stated that “The laity too are encouraged to recite the divine office, either with the priests, or among themselves, or even individually” (para. 100). The secular Franciscan, in accordance with the Franciscan spirit of total obedience to the Holy See, cannot but aim to respond to the Church’s

lead in its own pattern of prayer. Now that the practical barriers of the past have been broken down, there is no longer any difficulty in doing so. The relevant precept of our Rule is “Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms approved by the Church, re-living the mysteries of the life of Christ”. In addition to the full three volume breviary, the cost of which could be prohibitive for many, the main hours of divine office are offered in a single volume, “Morning and Evening Prayer”. All Secular Franciscans are urged to obtain one and to make it their regular prayer book. Here however we make available for you a form of office for each day of the week compiled by Fr. Godfrey Mannion, O.F.M. Cap. and Fr. Robert O’Neill, O.F.M. of the respective Irish provinces. The Tertiary commitment will be fulfilled by the recital of these. We include, too, a meditative version of the office of the Our Father for those unable to follow a printed version of the office.

Tertiary Offices

Abbreviations:

Ant Antiphon (indicates and subsequently sums up the theme or “feel” of the psalm).

℞. - Response.

℣. -Verse.

* - The asterisk invites you to pause fractionally.

† - Indicates an even shorter pause and the coupling with the next line.

Sunday - Worship of God in Christ

℣. - O God, come to our aid.

℞. - O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. * As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. (Alleluia! omitted during Lent)

HYMN

O God, thou art the Father Of all that have believed, From whom all hosts of angels Have life and power received I God, thou art the maker Of all created things, The righteous judge of judges The almighty King of Kings.

Thou to the meek and lowly thy secrets dost unfold; O God thou doest all things, All things both new and old. I walk secure and blessed In

every clime and coast In the name of the Father, The Son and Holy Ghost.

St Columba

Ant.1 Christ the Lord * is a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedek, (ET Alleluia)

God the protector of his people Ps 120 (121)

They will never hunger or thirst again; neither the sun or scorching wind will ever plague them (Rev 7:16)

I lift up my eyes to the mountains: * from where shall come my help?

My help shall come from the Lord * who made heaven and earth.

May he never allow you to stumble! * Let him sleep not, your guard.

No, he sleeps not nor slumbers, * Israel's guard.

The Lord is your guard and your shade; * at your right side he stands.

By day the sun shall not smite you * nor the moon in the night.

The Lord will guard you from evil, * he will guard your soul.

The Lord will guard your going and coming * both now and forever.

Glory be to the Father. . . .

Ant.1 Christ the Lord is a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedek, (ET Alleluia)

Ant. 2 Our God is in heaven; * he has power to do whatever he will. (ET Alleluia)

Israel is freed from Egypt

Ps 113B (115): 1-4, 11-18

You, who have renounced this world, have also been led forth from Egypt (St Augustine)

Not to us, Lord, not to us, * but to your name give the glory for the sake of your love and your truth, * lest the heathen say: “Where is their God?”

But our God is in the heavens; * he does whatever he wills. Their idols are silver and gold, * the work of human hands.

You who fear him, trust in the Lord; * he is their help and their shield. He remembers us, and he will bless us; † he will bless the sons of Israel.

* He will bless the sons of Aaron.

The Lord will bless those who fear him, * the little no less than the great: to you may the Lord grant increase, * to you and all your children.

May you be blessed by the Lord, * the maker of heaven and earth. The heavens belong to the Lord * but the earth he has given to men.

The dead shall not praise the Lord, * nor those who go down into the silence. But we who live bless the Lord * now and for ever. Amen.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant 2 Our God is in heaven; he has power to do whatever he will. (ET Alleluia)

During Lent the following canticle is used

Ant. 3 He was wounded for our faults, * he was bruised for our sins.

Through his wounds we are healed.

Canticle: 1 Pet 2:21-24

Christ suffered for you, † leaving you an example * that you should follow in his steps.

He committed no sin; * no guile was found on his lips, when he was reviled, *he did not revile in return.

When he suffered, * he did not threaten; but he trusted to him * who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins * in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant. 3 He was wounded for our faults, * he was bruised for our sins.
Through his wounds we are healed.

Through the year following canticle is used

Ant. 3 Praise God, * all you his servants, both great and small. (ET
Alleluia)

Canticle: Rev 19:1-2, 5-7

Alleluia.

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, *

His judgments are true and just.

Alleluia.

Alleluia.

Praise our God, all you his servants, * You who fear him, small and
great.

Alleluia.

Alleluia.

The Lord our God, the Almighty reigns, * Let us rejoice and exult and
give him the glory.

Alleluia.

Alleluia.

The Marriage of the Lamb has come, * and his bride has made herself ready.

Alleluia.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant. 3 Praise God, all you his servants, both great and small. (ET Alleluia)

READING

2 COR. 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, a gentle Father and the God of all consolation, who comforts us in all our sorrows, so that we can offer others in their sorrows the consolation that we have received from God ourselves

℟. The Lord is good. He loves good deeds. Repeat ℟.

℣. We shall spend our lives going about doing good. ℟.

℣. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. ℟.

Magnificat Ant.

This is the day * which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.
(ET Alleluia)

Magnificat (See inside back cover)

Repeat Magnificat Antiphon.

INTERCESSIONS:

Christ is the head of His body, the Church;
we, as His living members, pray to the Father. Father, having celebrated
today the mystery of our redemption, we give thanks for your great love
revealed in Christ.

℟. Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Lord, your words are spirit and they are life. Help us to live the Gospel
as St Francis did. ℟.

Help us to bring compassion to the poor, the sick and the unloved.
Make us instruments of your peace in the world. ℟.

Father, grant us your peace; grant that it may reign in our families, our country and our hearts. *℟.*

Father, bless our work and our leisure. Grant that we may do everything for your glory and for the salvation of all men. *℟.*

Father, grant the fullness of life in your presence to our departed relatives and friends. *℟.*

Our Father . . .

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord God, you have prepared for those who love you what no eye has seen, no ear heard.

Fill our hearts with your love, so that loving you above all and in all, we may attain your promises which the heart of man has not conceived.

Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you

in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

℞. Amen.

The Lord bless us and keep us from evil and bring us to everlasting life.

℞. Amen

Monday - Prayer of Praise

℣. O God, come to our aid.

℞. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. * As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen (Alleluia! omitted during Lent)

HYMN

Praise to the Lord the Almighty, the King of creation; O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation: All you who hear, now to his altar draw near, join in profound adoration.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in us adore him! All that has life and breath, come now in praises before him. Let the Amen sound from his people again: now as we worship before him.

Joachim Neander (1650-80)

Ant.1 From the rising of the sun * to its setting, great is the name of the Lord.

Praised be the name of the Lord.

Ps 112 (113)

He put down princes front (heir thrones and exalted the lowly (Lk 1:52)

Praise, O servants of the Lord, * praise the name of the Lord!
May the name of the Lord be blessed * both now and for evermore!
From the rising of the sun to its setting * praised be the name of the Lord!

High above all nations is the Lord, * above the heavens his glory. Who is like the Lord, our God, * who has risen on high to his throne yet

stoops from the heights to look down, * to look down upon heaven and earth?

From the dust he lifts up the lowly, * from the dung heap he raises the poor to set him in the company of princes, * yes, with the princes of his people. To the childless wife he gives a home * and gladdens her heart with children.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant.1 From the rising of the sun to its setting, great is the name of the Lord.

Ant.2 I will bless you day after day, * and tell of your wonderful deeds, O Lord.

Praise of God's majesty

Ps 144(145)

You O Lord, are the One who was and who is, the just One. (Rev. 165)

I will give you glory, O God my King, * I will bless your name for ever.

I will bless you day after day * and praise your name for ever. The Lord is great, highly to be praised, * his greatness cannot be measured.

Age to age shall proclaim your works, * shall declare your mighty deeds, shall speak of your splendour and glory, * tell the tale of your wonderful works.

They will speak of your terrible deeds, * recount your greatness and might. They will recall your abundant goodness; * age to age shall ring out your justice.

The Lord is kind and full of compassion, * slow to anger, abounding in love. How good is the Lord to all, * compassionate to all his creatures.

All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord, * and your friends shall repeat their blessing. They shall speak of the glory of your reign * and

declare your might, O God,

to make known to men your mighty deeds * and the glorious splendour of your reign. Yours is an everlasting kingdom; your rule lasts from age to age.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant.2 I will bless you day after day, and tell of your wonderful deeds, O Lord.

Ant.3 The eyes of all creatures look to you Lord; * you are close to all who call upon you.

The Lord is faithful in all his words * and loving in all his deeds. The Lord supports all who fall * and raises all who are bowed down.

The eyes of all creatures look to you * and you give them their food in

due time. You open wide your hand, *grant the desires of all who live.

The Lord is just in all his ways * and loving in all his deeds. He is close to all who call him, * who call on him from their hearts.

He grants the desires of those who fear him,* he hears their cry and he saves them. The Lord protects all who love him; * but the wicked he will utterly destroy.

Let me speak the praise of the Lord, † let all mankind bless his holy name * for ever, for ages unending.

Glory be to the Father

Ant.3 The eyes of all creatures look to you, Lord; you are close to all who call upon you.

READING.

ROMANS 2:33

How great are God's riches! How deep are his wisdom and knowledge! Who can explain his decisions? Who can understand his ways? As the Scripture says: "Who knows the mind of the Lord? Who is able to give him advice? Who has ever given him anything, so that he had to pay it back?" For all things were created by him, and all things exist through him and for him. To God be Glory forever. Amen

℟. From the rising of the sun to its setting great is the name of the Lord. Repeat

℣. High above the heavens is his glory.℟.

℣. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.℟.

Magnificat Ant.

The Almighty has done great things for me; holy is his name.

Magnificat (See inside back cover)

Repeat Magnificat Antiphon

INTERCESSIONS:

Glory be to the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as we humbly pray.

℟. Lord, be with your people.

Bless your holy Church. Keep us faithful to the teaching of the Gospel.℟.

Give us the strength of your peace, the guidance of your will and the grace to live together in constant love.℟.

Bring to the sick your comfort and healing. Strengthen them with your love.℟.

We praise you Lord, and we thank you for all your blessings.℟.

Receive the departed into your eternal kingdom. May we be united with them at the end of time.℟.

Our Father . . .

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Go before us, O Lord, in all our doings, with your most gracious favour, and further us with your continual help; that in all our works, begun, continued and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name, and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life: Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

℟. Amen.

The Lord bless us and keep us from evil and bring us to everlasting life.

℟. Amen

Tuesday - Office of St Francis

Ÿ. O God, come to our aid.

Ź. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. *

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

(Alleluia! omitted during Lent)

HYMN

During Lent the following hymn should be used

Now let us all with one accord, In fellowship with ages past, Keep vigil
with our heav'nly Lord, In his temptation and his fast.

The covenant so long revealed To faithful men in former time, Christ by
his own example sealed; The Lord of love, in love sublime.

Remember, Lord, though frail we be, By your own kind hand were we made; And help us lest our frailty Cause your great name to be betrayed.

Hear us, O Trinity sublime, And undivided unity; So let this consecrated time Bring forth its fruit abundantly.

Through the year

All creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing Alleluia, Alleluia! Thou burning sun with golden beam, thou silver moon with softer gleam:

O praise him, O praise him, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Let all things their Creator bless, and worship Him in humbleness, O praise him, alleluia! Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son, and praise the Spirit, Three in One.

O praise him. . .

W.H Draper (1855-1933) (verses 1 & 7) Based on the Cantico di Prate
Sole of St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

Ant.1 Be praised, * my Lord for all your creatures.

The majesty of the Lord, the dignity of man Ps. 8

He has put all things under his feet, and appointed him to be head of
the whole Church. (Eph 1:22)

How great is your name, O Lord our God, * through all the earth!

Your majesty is praised above the heavens; * on the lips of children and
of babes you have found praise to foil your enemy, * to silence the foe
and the rebel.

When I see the heavens, the work of your hands, *

the moon and the stars which you arranged, what is man that you should keep him in mind, *
mortal man that you care for him?
Yet you have made him little less than a god;*
with glory and honour you crowned him, gave him power over the works of your hand,*
put all things under his feet.

All of them, sheep and cattle, * yes, even the savage beasts, birds of the air, and fish * that make their way through the waters.

How great is your name, O Lord our God, * through all the earth!

Glory be to the Father. . . .

Ant.1 Be praised, my Lord for all your creatures.

Ant.2 You are my refuge, * Lord, all 1 have in the land of the living.
You are my refuge. Ps 141 (142)

All these things were fulfilled by the Lord at the time of his passion. (St Hilary)

With all my voice I cry to the Lord, * with all my voice I entreat the Lord. I pour out my trouble before him; * I tell him all my distress while my spirit faints within me. * But you, O Lord, know my path.

On the way where I shall walk * they have hidden a snare to entrap me. Look on my right and see: * there is no one who takes my part. I have no means of escape, * not one who cares for my soul.

I cry to you, O Lord. † I have said: ‘You are my refuge, * all I have in the land of the living.’ Listen then to my cry * for I am in the depths of distress.

Rescue me from those who pursue me * for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of this prison * and then I shall praise your name. Around me the just will assemble because of your goodness to me.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant 2 You are my refuge, Lord, all I have in the land of the living.

Ant.3 Let us praise * and glorify him for ever.

(St Francis' Praises of God)

You alone are holy, Lord God, * worker of wonders. You are strong, you are great; * you are the most high.

You are omnipotent, our Holy Father, * Lord of heaven and earth. You, Lord God, One in Three, * are our every good.

You, Lord God, are good, all good, * our highest good, living and true.

You are charity and love; * you are wisdom; you are humility; You are patience; you are a firm anchor; * you are peace;

You are joy and happiness; † you are justice and temperance; * You are the fullness of riches.

You are beauty, you are gentleness, † You are our protector, * you are our guardian and defender.

You are our strength, you are our refreshment; * you are our great hope.

You are our faith; you are our most profound sweetness. * You are our eternal life, great and admirable Lord, Omnipotent God. Holy and merciful Saviour.

Glory be to the Father...

Ant.3 Let us praise and glorify him for ever.

READING. PHILIPPIANS 3:7-11

Because of Christ I have come to consider all these advantages that I had as disadvantages. Not only that, but I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For Him I have accepted the loss of everything, and look on everything as so much rubbish, if only I can have Christ and be given a place in Him. All I want is to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and to share His sufferings, by reproducing the pattern of His death.

℟. Francis, poor and lowly, enters Heaven rich in virtue.(Repeat)

℣. O Holy Father, take us to your care.℟.

℣. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.℟.

Magnificat Ant.

We are the mothers of Christ, * when through love we conceive Christ in our souls..

Magnificat (See inside back cover)

Repeat Magnificat Antiphon.

INTERCESSIONS

℟. Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Repeat℟.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.℟.

Where there is injury, let me sow pardon.℟.

Where there is doubt, let me sow faith.℟.

Where there is despair, let me sow hope.℟.

Where there is darkness, let me sow light.℟.

Where there is sadness, let me sow joy.℟.

Our Father . . .

CONCLUDING PRAYER

May the power of your love, O Lord,
fiery yet sweet as honey,
win from my heart all that is under heaven,
so that I may die for love of your love,
you who were so good as to die for love of my love, Lord Jesus Christ,
you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God, for
ever and ever.

℞. Amen.

The Lord bless us and keep us from evil and bring us to everlasting life.

℞. Amen.

Wednesday - Office of the Holy Spirit

℟. O God, come to our aid.

℞. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. * As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

(Alleluia! omitted during Lent)

HYMN

Spirit of God, on the waste and the darkness
Hovering in power as creation began,
Drawing forth beauty from clay and from chaos,
Breathing God's life in the nostrils of man.

Come and sow life in the waste of our being,
Pray in us, form us as sons in the Son.
Open our hearts to yourself, mighty Spirit,
Bear us to life in the Three who are one.

Stanbrook Abbey Hymnal

Ant.1 Grant us, Lord, * the spirit of wisdom and insight, the spirit of

counsel and power, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

Who shall be worthy to stand before the Lord? Ps. 14 (15)

You have come to Mount Sion to the city of the living God (Heb 12:22)

Lord who shall be admitted to your tent * and dwell on your holy mountain?

He who walks without fault; * he who acts with justice and speaks the truth from his heart; * he who does not slander with his tongue;

he who does no wrong to his brother, * who casts no slur on his neighbour, who holds the godless in disdain, * but honours those who fear the Lord;

he who keeps his pledge, come what may; † who takes no interest on a loan * and accepts no bribes against the innocent. Such a man will stand for ever.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant.1

Grant us, Lord, the spirit of wisdom and insight, the spirit of counsel and power the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

Ant.2 The harvest * of the Spirit is gentleness and self control.
The joy of brotherly unity Ps. 132 (133)

Let us love one another since love comes from God (1Jn 4:7)

How good and how pleasant it is, *when brothers live in unity!

It is like precious oil upon the head * running down upon the beard,
running down upon Aaron's beard * upon the collar of his robes.

It is like the dew of Hermon which falls * on the heights of Zion. For
there the Lord gives his blessing, * life for ever.

Glory be to the Father ...

Ant.2 The harvest of the Spirit is gentleness and self control.

Ant.3 May the Spirit of the Lord be upon us, * so that we may announce the good news to the poor.

Thanksgiving Ps 4

The Lord raised him from the dead and made him worthy of all admiration (St. Augustine)

When I call, answer me, O God of justice; * from anguish you released me, have mercy and hear me!

O men, how long will your hearts be closed, * will you love what is futile and seek what is false?

It is the Lord who grants favours to those whom he loves; the Lord hears me whenever I call him.

Fear him; do not sin: ponder on your bed and be still. * Make justice your sacrifice and trust in the Lord.

‘What can bring happiness?’ many say. * Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord.

You have put into my heart a greater joy * than they have from abundance of corn and new wine.

I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once * for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Glory be to the Father. . . .

Ant.3 May the Spirit of the Lord be upon us, so that we may announce the good news to the poor.

READING. ACTS 2:17, 21

In the days to come - it is the Lord who speaks - I will pour out my spirit on all flesh All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

℟. The coming of the Holy Spirit changed the lives of the disciples.

Repeat℟.

℣. We need the gift of courage.℟.

℣. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.℟.

Magnificat Ant.

The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.

Magnificat (See inside back cover)

Repeat Magnificat Antiphon.

INTERCESSIONS

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit changed the way of life of the Apostles. This emboldens us to pray: Spirit of God, defend the Church of Christ against all danger.

℟. Lord, hear us.

Give to our holy father Pope N. guidance and protection.℟.

Preserve in peace and injustice all the peoples of the world.℟.

Guide the rulers of all nations.℟.

Comfort the poor and the afflicted.℟.

Our Father. . .

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Send, O eternal and loving Father, your Holy Spirit into our hearts;

grant that in this same Spirit we may be filled with your grace, that our minds may be enlightened, that our hearts may glow with your warmth, and that we may get the necessary strength to overcome our weaknesses.

Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

℞. Amen.

The Lord bless us and keep us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life

℞. Amen.

Thursday - Office for the Dead

℟. O God, come to our aid.

℞. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. * As

it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

(Alleluia! omitted during Lent)

HYMN

Help, Lord, the souls that thou hast made, the souls to thee so dear, in
prison for the debt unpaid of sins committed here.

For daily falls, for pardoned crime they joy to undergo the shadow of
thy cross sublime, the remnant of thy woe.

Good Jesus, help! Sweet Jesus, aid the souls to thee most dear, in prison
for the debt unpaid of sins committed here.

J.H.Newman (1801-90)

Ant.1 Our short sleep past, * we wake eternally.

Prayer for God's help in time of distress Ps. 6

Now my spirit is disturbed; Father, save me from this hour. (Jn. 12:37)

Lord, do not reprove me in your anger; * punish me not in your rage.

Have mercy on me, Lord, I have no strength; †

Lord, heal me, my body is racked; * my soul is racked with pain.

But you, O Lord ... how long? * Return, Lord, rescue my soul. Save me in your merciful love; † for in death no one remembers you; * from the grave, who can give you praise?

I am exhausted with my groaning; † every night I drench my pillow with tears; * I bedew my bed with weeping. My eye wastes away with grief; * I have grown old surrounded by my foes.

Leave me, all you who do evil; * for the Lord has heard my weeping. The Lord has heard my plea; * The Lord will accept my prayer. All my foes will retire in confusion, * foiled and suddenly confounded.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant.1 Our short sleep past, we wake eternally.

Ant.2 Most kind and gentle death, * lead home thy child to God.

Out of the depths I cry Ps. 129 (130)

He will save his people from their sins

Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord,* Lord, hear my voice! O let your ears be attentive * to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, * Lord who would survive? But with you is found forgiveness: * for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord, * I count on his word. My soul is longing for the Lord * more than watchman for daybreak. Let the watchman count on daybreak * and Israel on the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy * and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem * from all its iniquity.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant.2 Most kind and gentle death, lead home thy child to God.

Ant.3 Let me be gathered, * Lord, to thy quiet rest.

Lamentations of a Just man who trusts in the Lord Ps. 12 (13)

This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments (1 Jn 5:3)

How long, O Lord, will you forget me? * How long will you hide your
face?

How long must I bear grief in my soul, † this sorrow in my heart day
and night? * How long shall my enemy prevail?

Look at me, answer me, Lord my God! * Give light to my eyes lest I fall asleep in death, lest my enemy say: 'I have overcome him'; * lest my foes rejoice to see my fall.

As for me, I trust in your merciful love. * Let my heart rejoice in your saving help: Let me sing to the Lord for his goodness to me, * singing psalms to the name of the Lord, the Most High.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant.3 Let me be gathered, Lord, to thy quiet rest.

READING. PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21

For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the Saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body.

℟. Lord, remember me, when you come into your kingdom. Repeat *℟.*

℣. This day you shall be with me in paradise. *℟.*

℟. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. ℞.

Magnificat Ant.

O grant them pardon, * Jesus, Saviour blest, and give their spirits light and endless rest.

Magnificat (See inside back cover)

Repeat Magnificat Antiphon.

INTERCESSIONS:

Lord Jesus, you are the resurrection and the life: lead your people through the gates of death to their homeland in heaven.

℟. Lord you are our life and our resurrection.

Lord Jesus, number among those for whom you have prepared a home in your Father's house our relatives and friends who have died, especially N.N. ℞.

Lord Jesus, when you gave back to the widow of Nain her only son, tears were dried, sorrow gave way to joy: comfort all those who on their mourning are stricken by a sense of grief and loss. *℟.*

Lord Jesus, to all who are in their last agony give something of the peace and calm that possessed your soul during the last moments of your earthly pilgrimage. “Father into your hands I commend my spirit”.
℟.

Our Father . . .

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord God, as you are the fount of mercy and wish all men to be saved, have mercy on our departed relatives and friends and on all the suffering souls in Purgatory.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints by their intercession help us to the fellowship of eternal joy.

Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

℞. Amen.

The Lord bless us and keep us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

℞. Amen.

Friday - Office of Intercession

℣. O God, come to our aid.

℞. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. *

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end

Amen.

(Alleluia! omitted during Lent)

HYMN

Christ be near at either hand,

Christ behind, before me stand.
Christ be with me where'er I go,
Christ above, around, below.
Christ be in my heart and mind,
Christ within my soul enshrined.
Christ, control my wayward heart;
Christ abide, and ne'er depart.
Christ my life and only way,
Christ my lantern night and day;
Christ be my unchanging friend,
Guide and shepherd to the end.
(Canon J. Fennelly)

Ant.1 You are * full of love to all who call.

Prayer of a poor man in distress Ps. 85 (86):1-6

Blessed be God who comforts us in all our sorrows. (2 Cor 1.3-4)

Turn your ear, O Lord, and give answer * for I am poor and needy.
Preserve my life, for I am faithful: * save the servant who trusts in you.

You are my God have mercy on me, Lord, * for I cry to you all the
day long . Give joy to your servant, O Lord, * for to you I lift up my soul.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving, * full of love to all who call. Give
heed, O Lord, to my prayer * and attend to the sound of my voice.

In the day of distress I will call * and surely you will reply. Among
the gods there is none like you, O Lord; * nor work to compare with yours.

All the nations shall come to adore you * and glorify your name, O Lord:
for you are great and do marvellous deeds, * you who alone are God.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant.1 You are full of love to all who call.

Ant.2 O give * your strength to your servant.

Ps 85 (86): 11 -17

Show me, Lord, your way † so that I may walk in your truth. * Guide my heart to fear your name.

I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart * and glorify your name for ever; for your love to me has been great * you have saved me from the depths of the grave.

The proud have risen against me; † ruthless men seek my life: * to you they pay no heed. But you, God of mercy and compassion, * slow to anger, O Lord, abounding in love and truth, * turn and take pity on me.

O give your strength to your servant * and save your handmaid's son. Show me a sign of your favour † that my foes may see to their shame *

that you console me and give me your help.

Glory be to the Father....

Ant.2 O give your strength to your servant.

Ant.3 He made us, * we belong to him.

The joy of those who enter the temple of the Lord. Ps. 99 (100)

The Lord calls all those he has redeemed to sing a hymn of victory (St Athanasius)

Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth. † Serve the Lord with gladness. * Come before him, singing for joy.

Know that he, the Lord, is God. † He made us, we belong to him, * we are his people, the sheep of his flock.

Go within his gates, giving thanks. † Enter his courts with songs of

praise. * Give thanks to him and bless his name.

Indeed, how good is the Lord, † eternal his merciful love. * He is faithful from age to age.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant.3 He made us, we belong to him.

READING. REV. 1:17-18

Do not be afraid; I am before all, I am at the end of all, and I live. I, who underwent death, am alive, as you see, to endless ages, and I hold the keys of death and hell.

℟. I called with all my heart: Lord, hear me. Repeat℟.

℟. I will keep the commandments.℟.

℟. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.℟.

Magnificat Ant.

Set your hearts * first on the Kingdom of God, and all other things will be given to you.

Magnificat (See inside back cover)

Repeat Magnificat Ant.

INTERCESSIONS:

God so loved the world that he gave up his only Son; with confidence we say,

℟. Lord, hear our prayer

Help us to cherish your Son and praise Him.

℟. Help us to understand the love He has for us.℟.

Help the afflicted, comfort those who are ill, convert sinners.℟.

Our Father . . .

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord our God, help us truly to love you with all our hearts and to love our neighbour as your Son loves us.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you

nd the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

℟. Amen.

The Lord bless us and keep us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

℟. Amen.

Saturday - Office of our Lady

℣. O God, come to our aid.

℟. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. *

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

(Alleluia! omitted during Lent)

HYMN

Mary, crowned with living light, Temple of the Lord Place of peace and holiness, Shelter of the Word.

Mystery of sinless life In our fallen race, Free from shadow, you reflect
Plenitude of grace.

Virgin mother of our God, Lift us when we fall, Who were named upon
the Cross Mother of us all.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Heaven sings your praise; Mary magnifies
your name Through eternal days.

Stanbrook Abbey Hymnal

Ant 1. Your word * is a lamp for my steps, Lord.

Ps. 118 (119): 105-112 XIV (NUN)

This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. (1 Jn 5:3)

Your word is a lamp for my steps * and a light for my path. I have
sworn and have made up my mind* to obey your decrees.

Lord I am deeply afflicted: * by your word give me life. Accept, Lord, the homage of my lips * and teach me your decrees.

Though I carry my life in my hands, * I remember your law. Though the wicked try to ensnare me * I do not stray from your precepts.

Your will is my heritage for ever, * the joy of my heart. I set myself to carry out your statutes * in fullness, for ever.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant.1 Your word is a lamp for my steps, Lord.

Ant 2. O Lord * you will show me the fullness of joy in your presence. The Lord is my portion. Ps. 15 (16)

God raised up Jesus, freeing him from the pains of death. (Acts 2.24)

Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you. † I say to the Lord: ‘you are my God. * My happiness lies in you alone.’

He has put into my heart a marvellous love * for the faithful ones who dwell in his land. Those who choose other gods increase their sorrows. †

Never will I offer their offerings of blood. * Never will I take their name upon my lips.

O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;*
it is you yourself who are my prize. The lot marked out for me is my delight: * welcome indeed the heritage that falls to me!

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel, * who even at night directs my heart.

I keep the Lord ever in my sight: * since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad; *
even my body shall rest in safety. For you will not leave my soul among
the dead,
* nor let your beloved know decay.

You will show me the path of life, † the fullness of joy in your presence,*
at your right hand happiness for ever.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant 2 O Lord, you will show me the fullness of joy in your presence.

Ant 3. Let every * creature in heaven and on earth bend the knee at
the name of Jesus.

Canticle Phil. 2:6 -11

Though he was in the form of God, * Jesus did not count equality with
God a thing to be grasped.

He emptied himself, † taking the form of a servant, * being born in the likeness of men.

And being found in human form, †
he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, *
even death on a cross.

Therefore God has highly exalted him * and bestowed on him the name
which is above every name,

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, *
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, *
to the glory of God the Father.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Ant.3 Let every creature in heaven and on earth bend the knee at the

name of Jesus.

READING: FROM ST FRANCIS.

Our Lord Jesus is the glorious Word of God the Father, so holy and exalted, whose coming the Father made known by St Gabriel, the Archangel, to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In her womb He took on our weak human nature. He was rich beyond measure, and yet He and His holy Mother chose poverty.

℟. The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. Repeat ℟.

℣. Mother of God, intercede for us. ℞.

℣. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. ℞.

Magnificat Ant.

Hail, * full of grace, the Lord is with you.

Magnificat (See inside back cover)

Repeat Magnificat Antiphon.

INTERCESSIONS:

Heavenly Mother, look with pity on the needs of your children the world over.

℟. Pray for us now, and at the hour of our death.

Woman of faith, keep us always submissive in mind and will to the Word of God, your Son. ℟.

Star of the Sea, be ever a light to guide us through the darkness of our world. ℟.

Seat of Wisdom, invoke your spouse, the Holy Spirit, to open our understanding to eternal truth. ℟.

Our Father . . .

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God our Father,

you gave the Holy Spirit to your Son's apostles as they were joined in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus. By the help of her prayers keep us faithful to your service, and let all our words and actions bring glory to your name.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

℟. Amen.

The Lord bless us and keep us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

℟. Amen.

Office of the Passion

Traditional Office of Tertiaries

(This is a method of saying the Tertiary Office of twelve times the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be; the collects are from various feasts of St Francis, and may be recited or omitted as circumstances allow).

The Office of Readings - Matins

INVOCATIONS

1st Lord Jesus Christ, who on the eve of your sufferings instituted the Blessed Sacrament, have mercy on us.

(After this and each subsequent invocation one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father to be said).

2nd Lord Jesus Christ, who, sorrowful unto death, prayed to your heavenly Father, have mercy on us.

3rd Lord Jesus Christ, whose sacred body in your agony was bathed in a sweat of blood, have mercy on us.

4th Lord Jesus Christ, betrayed by Judas and taken captive, have mercy on us.

5th Lord Jesus Christ, led as a prisoner to Annas and Caiaphas, have mercy on us.

(It would be appropriate here, if opportunity offered, to read some short meditation on our Lord's Passion and/or some relevant passage from Sacred Scripture e.g. from the Book of Lamentations or from Isaiah).

Let us pray:

O God, you resist the proud and give grace to the humble; grant, we

beseech you, through the intercession of our holy father Francis, that we may not give way to pride, but may become more pleasing to you through humility, so that walking in his footsteps we may obtain the gifts of your grace. Through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

Morning Prayer - Lauds and Prime

6th Lord Jesus Christ, declared by the High Priest guilty of death, have mercy on us.

7th Lord Jesus Christ, at the first hour of the day you were delivered up to Pontius Pilate. Have mercy on us.

Let us pray:

O God, you have given to the soul of our blessed father Francis the reward of everlasting bliss: mercifully grant that we, who devoutly commemorate his death, may obtain the reward of eternal happiness. Through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

O God,

you caused the precious body of our blessed father Francis to be brought forth from darkness to light: grant us, we beseech you, to escape from the night of sin and to direct our steps in the way of peace and justice. Through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

Prayer During the Day – Terce, Sext, None

8th Lord Jesus Christ, at the third hour you were cruelly scourged and crowned with thorns: have mercy on us.

9th Lord Jesus Christ, at the sixth hour you were nailed to the cross: have mercy on us.

10th Lord Jesus Christ, at the ninth hour you gave up your spirit into the hands of your Father: have mercy on us.

Let us pray:

O God,

through the merits of our blessed father Francis,

you gave to your Church a new family; grant that, imitating him, we may use earthly things wisely and ever rejoice in the participation of heavenly gifts. Through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

O God,

you have glorified the body of our blessed father Francis by the stigmata of your Son and have wondrously elevated his soul in heaven: graciously grant that we who honour his memory may crucify our flesh and its desires here below, and thus become worthy to enter our heavenly home. Through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

O God, in many ways you have revealed the wonderful mysteries of the

Cross in your most devoted confessor, blessed Francis: grant to your servants that they always follow his example and obtain strength and power from devout meditation on the same Cross. Through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

Evening Prayer - Vespers

11th Lord Jesus Christ, at eventide you were taken down from the Cross and placed in the arms of your Mother: have mercy on us.

Let us pray:

O God, to enable us to walk in the ways of your only begotten Son, you deigned to give us the blessed Francis as a teacher and guide; mercifully grant that we may merit to share in the heavenly glory of him whom we seek to follow on earth. Through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

Night Prayer - Compline

12th Lord Jesus Christ, you were borne to the tomb by your sorrowing Mother and your dearest friends: have mercy on us.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, when the world was growing cold, you renewed the sacred marks of your Passion in the flesh of Blessed Francis to inflame our hearts with the fire of your love: mercifully grant that by his merits and prayers we may always carry the cross and bring forth worthy fruits of penance. Through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

Franciscan Way of the Cross

FR. PASCHAL BURLINSON O.F.M. CAP.

Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, with our father Francis we have committed ourselves to follow you in the Gospel way of life, the way that led you to the Cross in which we too must share, if we want to come after you. Let us walk with you now, Lord, on your way to Calvary, not

as sympathetic spectators but, like Francis, as willing sharers in your passion. We know only too well our weakness and our fears, and so we entrust ourselves to your grace so that this sharing of your way to Calvary may help us on our way to eternal life.

“Nothing delights me so much as the remembrance of the life and Passion of our Lord, which occupies me continually; and were I to live till the end of the world, I should still need no other book.” St Francis.

FIRST STATION. JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

“Those invested with power of judging should exercise it with mercy if they wish to obtain mercy from our Lord.”

St Francis

Our Lord is led before Pilate. What sort of a man is it who dares to condemn the Son of God to death? He had himself declared that he could find no fault in him. Yet here he is condemning Jesus to a scourging and crucifixion. What made him make such an unjust judgement? It was a sin of human respect. He was afraid of what people might say, what his bosses in Rome might do; so in weakness he condemned an innocent, a perfect man to a brutal death.

Are we any better? So often we are influenced by the opinion of those we work with, our neighbours, the secular society with its loose morals and ignorance of God. By our conformity, we so often condemn Christ to be crucified by a pagan world.

Pause for meditation.

The following act of contrition or another may be said after every station.

My God I love you with my whole heart and above all things and am heartily sorry for having offended you. May I never offend you any more. May I love you without ceasing and make it my delight to do in all things, your most holy will.

℟. Have mercy on us O Lord.

℞. Have mercy on us.

A verse from the Stabat Mater, or some other suitable hymn, may be sung after each station.

THE SECOND STATION.

JESUS RECEIVES HIS CROSS.

“A desire to imitate the sufferings of our Lord is a special gift of the Holy Spirit given to those who truly love and serve God” St Francis.

Of what does a cross remind you? A plus sign in a children’s sum. The big question the world asks is “Why suffering?”

Why should a good God allow it? Why allow even his own Son to suffer like this? What sort of Father is that? We can get some sort of answer if look at the willingness with which Jesus receives the cross. For it is this cross which joins us to Christ, he pinned to one side of it and we to the other. It is this plus sign which adds up the sum total of our debts of sin and places them on the shoulders of the only man who can bear them, Jesus the Saviour.

“By his wounds we are healed.” Is it too much to ask that we should share at least a small part of it? Life and suffering.

If you want to know the answer to that sum then put in the plus sign of the cross and it will add up.

℟̄. Have mercy on us O Lord.

℞̄. Have mercy on us.

THE THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME.

“Do not get angry at the sins of others for anger and trouble of spirit are a hindrance both to ourselves and others.” St Francis.

It is surprising that Jesus should have been able to walk at all let alone carry the heavy beam of the Cross, after the terrible scourging with a whip tipped with lead.

The loss of blood alone would weaken him.

No wonder he fell. But then he was not carrying only his cross. He was carrying all the crosses of the world. We can only guess at how much agony he suffered as he stumbled and fell with the sharp corners of the beam biting into his already mangled shoulders.

We hate brutality, we get angry with violence, we criticise a world given to cruelty but this fall of our Lord reminds us that we load this burden onto him by our unjust anger, loss of temper and intolerance of others. By his stripes we are healed.

✠. Have mercy on us O Lord.

℟. Have mercy on us.

FOURTH STATION.

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER.

“When I say ‘Hail Mary’ the angels smile and the devils flee.” St Francis

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the waving of palms and the acclamation of the people, everyone wanted to be associated with him except the Pharisees and priests in their envy. Now that he is a criminal, the same people spit at him, the followers hide, the apostles desert him, Peter denies that he even knows him. A woman pushes past the crowd of dangerous demonstrators and is not ashamed to acknowledge that she is his mother. She will not abandon him. She who was not seen in his hour of glory is now seen in his hour of disgrace. She would stand steadfastly by the Cross. How can we ignore her who did not ignore him in his bitterest hour. How can he recognise us if we do not recognise his mother as our mother also?

℣. Have mercy on us O Lord

℟. Have mercy on us.

FIFTH STATION.

SIMON OF CYRENE, HELPS TO CARRY THE CROSS.

“We cannot help all who suffer; but we can at least have compassion on all and see Jesus Christ in all.” St Bonaventure.

Simon was a man from the country who did not want to be involved. He preferred to be an onlooker. He was in Jerusalem, minding his own business. Suddenly, the arm of authority dragged him into the scene and he found himself carrying the Cross. He wanted nothing to do with the tainted thing yet here he was carrying it.

His compassion for Christ, and the look of our Lord’s face must have helped him bear it bravely.

We sometimes find in life that we are expected to carry a cross we don’t want. An illness, a state of life, a partner, a relative, a defect which we would rather not have. But Christ looks at us and asks us to bear it for him and those who do he rewards. Rufus and Alexander could have told you that. Both became Christians. Their Christian faith came, no doubt, from their father, Simon of Cyrene.

℟̄. Have mercy on us O Lord.

℞. Have mercy on us.

SIXTH STATION.

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS.

“Try to see in the poor the person of Jesus Christ or His Blessed Mother who lived in poverty in this world. Do the same with the sick and infirm.” St Francis.

Tradition has it that Veronica was a pagan girl. Not a Jewess or even one who had a clear idea of God but a very human person full of kindness and compassion. When she saw the broken figure of Christ her heart bled for him. She risked her life to give him a few moments comfort by wiping his face with a towel. Those who are not Christians are so often prepared to spend themselves for human motives alone in nursing the sick and the aged, caring for the handicapped and the dying. Whereas we who call ourselves Christians do only what is essential. We could do more.

Jesus' image is thought to have been imprinted on the towel a true likeness - a Vero ikon which gave the girl her name.

By helping the least of our brothers and sisters we do for Christ what we do for them. He has said so. And our reward?

To have his image printed on our hearts.

℟̄. Have mercy on us O Lord.

℞. Have mercy on us.

THE SEVENTH STATION.

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME.

“The love of God makes all heavy things light and all bitter things sweet.” St Francis

Despite Simon’s help, such is the weakness of Jesus, that he falls again. The temptation to give up must be strong. Only death awaits him, only more pain, a greater agony than the jabs of the javelins the soldiers thrust at him to make him rise.

He knows so much of it will be in vain. Why should he persevere?

The answer is a deep desire that all men and women should be saved. Love lies at the root of his struggle to the end. Love for those who don’t care, love for those who reject his gospel way and become engrossed in

their own selfish needs. Love for the woman taken in adultery, for the young man who was too rich to follow, love for Peter who denied him and for Thomas who would doubt him. Love for the blind Pharisees and priests and love even for Judas Iscariot. He would stagger on in the hope that all can be saved.

℟̄. Have mercy on us O Lord.

℞. Have mercy on us.

THE EIGHTH STATION.

THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM WEEP OVER JESUS.

“Happy is he who receives reproaches with gentleness, confesses his fault humbly and hastens to make satisfaction for it” St Francis.

If they do this in the green wood what shall they do to the dry? This is the green wood of innocence, Jesus God. He was suffering enough to make the women lament. What they forgot and we forget is that the dry wood of guilt must also receive its punishment. The very children clinging to the skirts of the women would suffer frightful agonies thirty years from this event. One of them would roast her own child to satisfy

her mad frenzy of hunger in the siege of Jerusalem. Our Lord would gather these same women under his care as a hen gathers her chicks under her wing but they would have none of it. Let them weep then for themselves and their children but not for him.

We who hear his voice calling us to change our lives, weep for ourselves in true sorrow for our sins and seek his absolution. For his disfigurement is nothing compared to our ugliness if we die with our sins upon us.

V. Have mercy on us O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

THE NINTH STATION.

JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME.

“If it was fitting for the Divine Majesty to suffer and thus enter into His glory, with how much greater reason should we sinners tread the path of the cross and suffering?” St Francis.

Even that short but rough journey to Calvary, was too much for the human body of Christ. He fell again. But the body is only part of a human being. There is a stronger part, the spirit. It was this that lifted

him up. Like an athlete, he learned to break the pain barrier and push his body to extremes, not for the gold of an Olympic medal but for the crown which does not wither.

So many of us are dragged down by our bodies. We cannot rise above the comfort and pleasure seeking fashions of our age. We sink and wallow in the mud rather than make that effort to higher things by the self discipline of fasting and penance and an ordered life. May the fallen Christ lift us up so that our minds will dominate our actions, and our lower nature be subject to the law of Christ.

Ÿ. Have mercy on us O Lord.

Ź. Have mercy on us.

THE TENTH STATION.

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS.

“We are not to be wise and prudent according to the flesh: but simple, humble and pure.” St Francis.

The Jews were a modest people. They rightly thought that a man lost dignity and integrity through exposure. The Romans were a coarse and

vulgar nation. They knew how to humiliate this Jewish trouble maker. They would strip Jesus of every shred of clothing and expose him to a taunting mob. Then everyone would see that he was a man like everyone else. Indeed he was. There was no point in his suffering or in his dying if Jesus was not human like us all. But the stripping did not reveal his divinity. Only those who were pure in heart and mind had eyes to see that. Only they could pierce the garment of his humanity and see the Godhead.

Those whose eyes are riveted on wealth and pleasure, on power and prestige, comfort and security will never see God. Only those who have stripped themselves of more than garments but of all attachments will be poor enough in spirit, pure enough in heart to see the real Christ behind the blood stained manhood on the Cross.

℟̄. Have mercy on us O Lord.

℞̄. Have mercy on us.

ELEVENTH STATION.

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS.

“He truly loves his enemy who, instead of resenting the injury done to

himself, is distressed at the evil which the enemy has done to his own soul.” St Francis.

He was crucified. The most agonizing and brutal form of execution known to man. Fit only for slaves and traitors. No Roman Citizen could be crucified yet here was the Son of God with arms outstretched having rough square iron nails driven through his hands and feet. His whole body writhed in agony, his fingers convulsed and the blood spattered the soldiers. Christ’s blood. The only price big enough to pay the debt of our sins. Both arms pinioned, the cross beam was lifted into place with a jolt that shook his whole body and then his legs stretched to have the feet nailed to the upright.

“If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me.” Jesus had said. The feet of the shepherd are tied but he Still looks for the lost sheep. I thirst. The shedding of this blood was the greatest act of love for by it all sins can be forgiven.

The soldiers, usually drunk for a job like this, didn’t even know. We do.

Ÿ. Have mercy on us O Lord.

Ź. Have mercy on us.

THE TWELFTH STATION.

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS.

“All creatures in existence serve, know and adore their Creator better than you do. The devils did not crucify Him, but you crucified Him, and do so daily, each time you take pleasure in your vices and sins.” St Francis.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? It is a cry which shatters the oppressive stillness and the unnatural silence of the afternoon. Words written a thousand years before but which describe in vivid detail what was happening now. “They have pierced my hands and feet, they have numbered all my bones.” The Pharisees knew it, the priests and the scribes, knew it. The psalm was part of their mental furniture. They knew to what Jesus was referring. The utter frustration of Hell itself when there is no love any more, no God is visible just hatred. Hatred of others, hatred of self, the anguish of those who have chosen to be without God. Those who, in life, chose to be without love and turned their backs on the source of it, God himself. Those who preferred to satisfy their longings, no matter what they were, with things forbidden.

This very emptiness of Hell enters the Soul of the Saviour. He suffers that we might escape. Lord, you have not abandoned us it is we who have abandoned you.

℟̄. Have mercy on us O Lord.

℞̄. Have mercy on us.

THE THIRTEENTH STATION.

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS.

“O Holy Virgin Mary, there is none like you among women. You are the most Holy Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spouse of the Holy Spirit.” St Francis.

Joseph of Arimathea had permission to receive the body of Christ and bury it before the festival. The soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a lance to make sure that He was dead and the gruesome sight of blood and water gave them proof. Where now to put this wreck of a body? There would be only one place fit for it. From whence it came - the arms of this Mother. Tenderly she straightens the hair, clotted with blood, in agony she closes the blood filled eyes and picks out the thorns from his

head. This is her Son, smiling no longer, speaking no longer, moving no longer. He is in the awesome stillness of death.

Look how we have returned him to his mother. He came among us for a short time and this is what the human race has done to the Son of God and the son of Mary.

Surely our names are printed on her heart? Yes, not in hatred but in love. For she above all knew why it had to be. If we need comfort in sorrow who better to give it than this mother of sorrows.

Ÿ. Have mercy on us O Lord.

Ź. Have mercy on us.

FOURTEENTH STATION.

JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB.

“I entreat you to have always before your eyes the Passion of our Divine Redeemer: it will fortify you, and animate you to suffer courageously for Him.” St Francis.

It is finished. There is nothing so final as the grave. It is the full stop in the sentence of life. It is the closing of the door for ever on life on

Earth. Christ had to be buried to show that for him too, this life was ended. The task his Father had given him to do was accomplished.

In our ignorance we cannot look further than the grave. He came to teach us that life is just a short trial, as St Francis said: “Pleasure is fleeting, punishment is never ending, glory is infinite, suffering is small. To each will be given according to his deeds.”

He taught us to look past the stone, past the tomb, past time, to another life with him for ever.

Ÿ. Have mercy on us O Lord.

Ź. Have mercy on us.

Prayer After the Station

O God, our Father, we have tried to walk with your Son on his way to Calvary and there to share with him his crucifixion and death. You know with what hesitations of will and trembling of spirit we have striven to do this sincerely. Enable us now to rejoice with Christ, risen in your, the Father’s glory and to live with him a new life, freed from sin and death for ever. This is the freedom which changed into holy joy

for our father Francis all the trials and tribulations of life here on earth. May we share this freedom too. We ask it through Jesus Christ, your Son, our risen Lord.

℟. Amen

The Transitus of St Francis

St. Francis died about sunset on October 3rd He recited Psalm 142, and at the closing words his blessed soul passed from earth to heaven. The passing (Transitus) of St Francis is commemorated at sunset on Oct. 4th.

The Narrative of the Death of Francis compiled from the Early Sources on His Life.

1st Reader: When Brother Francis knew he was approaching death he burned with a great desire to return to his earliest steps toward humility; he planned to call his body back to its original servitude, although it had now reached its limit. When he had to relax this rigour because of

illness, he used to say:

2nd Reader: “Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord for up until now we have done little or nothing.”

1st Reader: He wanted to return to serving lepers. He intended to flee human company and go off to the most remote places, so that only the wall of flesh would stand between him and God. The days of his passing drew near. He asked to be taken to St Mary of the Portiuncula so that he might yield up the spirit of life where he had received the spirit of grace. Arriving there he said:

2nd Reader: “This is truly a holy place and the dwelling place of God. Here the Most High increased our numbers when we were only a few; here He enlightened the hearts of His poor ones with the light of His wisdom.”

1st Reader: When he saw his final day draw near, he called to him the brothers he chose. He blessed each one as it was given to him from above, just as Jacob of old, the patriarch, blessed his sons. He was like another Moses about to ascend the mountain that the Lord had shown

him, when imparting blessings on the children of Israel. When Brother Elias sat down on his left side with the other brothers around him, the blessed father crossed his arms and placed his right hand on Elias' head. He had lost the sight and the use of his bodily eyes, so he asked: "Over whom am I holding my right hand?" "Over Brother Elias," they replied.

2nd Reader: "This is what I wish to do," he said, "I bless you my son, in all and through all, and just as the most High has increased my brothers and sons in your hands, so too, upon you and in you, I bless them all. May God remember your work and labours, and may a place be reserved for you among the rewards of the just."

1st Reader: After he had rested for a few days in that place he had so longed for, knowing the time of his death was close at hand, he called to him two brothers, his special sons, and told them to sing The Praises of the Lord with a loud voice and joyful spirit rejoicing at his approaching death, or rather at the life that was so near. There was a brother there whom the holy man loved with great affection. Seeing what was happening and realising that the saint was nearing the end, he grew very concerned about all the brothers and said; "Oh kind father,

your sons will now be without a father. Remember the orphans you are leaving behind; forgive all their faults.” The holy man answered:

2nd Reader: “I forgive my brothers, present and absent, all their faults and offences, and I absolve them insofar as I am able. When you give them this message bless them all for me.”

1st Reader: He had them call to him all the brothers present there, and, comforting them about his death with words of consolation, he exhorted them to the love of God with fatherly affection. He spoke at length about patience, about preserving poverty, and about placing the Holy Gospel ahead of all other observances.

2nd Reader: “Let the brothers not make anything their own. As pilgrims and strangers in this world, serving the Lord in poverty and humility, let them go seeking alms with confidence, they should not be ashamed because, for our sakes, our Lord made Himself poor in this world. Let this be your portion which leads into the land of the living. Give yourselves totally to this, beloved brothers, never seek anything else under heaven for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1st Reader: He burned with great zeal for the common profession and Rule. He called it their Book of Life, the hope of salvation, the marrow of the Gospel, the way of perfection, the key of Paradise, the pact of an eternal covenant. He taught them to keep it always before their eyes as a reminder of the life they should lead and, what is more, they should die with it. He described for them how he, himself, began:

2nd Reader: “The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards I delayed a little and left the world. And the Lord gave me such faith in churches that I would pray with simplicity in this way and say:

‘We adore You, Lord Jesus Christ, in all Your churches throughout the whole world and we bless You because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.’

Afterwards the Lord gave me and gives me still, such faith in priests that, were they to persecute me, I would still want to have recourse

to them. And I act in this way because, in this world I see nothing corporally of the most high Son of God except His most holy Body and Blood which they receive and they alone administer to others.”

1st Reader: Respectfully the brothers listened to the wonderful deeds which the Lord had performed among them. They would love one another, be faithful to our Lady Holy Poverty, show themselves submissive to the prelates of the Holy Roman Church and serve them, as a sign of his blessing and their covenant. At this Francis’ soul rejoiced and he said:

2nd Reader: “Now let us sing aloud the Canticle of Brother Sun.”

1st Reader: Most High, all powerful, good Lord!

Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honour, and all blessing.

℟. To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no human is worthy to mention Your name.

1st Reader: Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures, especially

Sir Brother Sun, Who is the day and through whom You gave us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour; and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.

℞. Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

1st Reader: Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, in every kind of weather, through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.

℞. Praise to You, my Lord, through Sister Water, who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

1st Reader: Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom You light the night, and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

℞. Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs.

1st Reader: Praised be You, my Lord, for those who give pardon for Your love, and who bear infirmity and tribulation.

℞. Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.

1st Reader: Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin. Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will for the second death shall do them no harm.

℞. Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility.

1st Reader: Then Francis ordered the book of the Gospels to be brought in. He asked that the Gospel according to John be read to him, starting with the passage that begins: ‘Six days before the Passover, Jesus, knowing that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father.’

Brief pause

1st Reader: Then he had himself placed naked on the ground, stripped of his sackcloth garment. He lifted up his face to heaven as usual, and, totally intent upon that glory, he covered the wound on his right side with his left hand, so no one would see it. Then he said to his brothers:

2nd Reader: “I have done what is mine; may Christ teach you what is yours!”

1st Reader: Meanwhile, his guardian quickly got up, took a tunic, underwear and sackcloth hood, and said to Francis, “I command you under holy obedience to acknowledge that I am lending you this tunic, underwear and hood. And so that you know that they in no way belong to you, I take away all your authority to give them to anyone.”

The saint rejoiced and his heart leaped for joy seeing that he had kept faith to the end with Lady Poverty. Now, he had bread brought to him. He blessed and broke it and gave each of the Brothers a piece to eat. He also ordered the book of the Gospels to be opened and asked that the Gospel according to St John be read to him starting from the place

which begins: ‘Before the Feast of the Passover.’ He was remembering that most sacred Supper, the last one the Lord celebrated with His disciples. In reverent memory of this, to show his brothers how much he loved them, he did all of this.

1st Reader: The few days that remained to him before his passing he spent in praise of God, teaching his beloved companions how to praise Christ with him. As best he could, he broke out into this Psalm ‘With all my voice I cry to the Lord.’

Antiphon: O most holy soul, at whose entrance into eternity the citizens of Heaven come forth, choirs of angels rejoice, and the glorious Trinity invites, saying: Abide with us forever.

Psalm 141 (142)

With all my voice I cry to the Lord, with all my voice I beseech the Lord; I pour out my troubles before Him; I tell Him all my distress, while my spirit faints within me. But you, O Lord know my path.

On the way where I shall walk they have hidden a snare to entrap me.

Look on my right and see: there is no one who takes my part; I have no means of escape, not one who cares for my soul.

I cry to you, O Lord; I have said: “You are my refuge, all I have in the land of the living.” Listen then to my cry, I am in the depths of distress.

Rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of this prison, and then I shall praise your name. Around me the just will assemble, because of your goodness to me.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: O most holy soul, at whose entrance into eternity the citizens of Heaven come forth, choirs of angels rejoice, and the glorious Trinity invites, saying: Abide with us for ever.

SOLEMN SILENCE

(During this silence 5 Paters, Aves and Glorias may be said with arms extended.)

Let us pray:

O God, who gave to the soul of our holy father, St Francis, the reward of everlasting bliss, be pleased to grant that we, who with loving hearts celebrate the memory of his departure, may deserve to obtain the same happiness for our reward. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

℟. Amen.

℣. The Lord be with you.

℟. And also with you.

℣. Let us bless the Lord.

℟. Thanks be to God.

The Franciscan Crown

(The Rosary of the Seven Joys of Mary)

This 15th Century devotion is recited like the Rosary, but without any preliminary prayers. It consists of seven decades, after which two Hail Marys are added (bringing the number up to 72, the traditional years of Our Lady's life) and a Pater, Ave and Gloria for the Pope's intentions.

1st MYSTERY: THE ANNUNCIATION

Pater, 10 Aves, Gloria.

Virgin Mother of our Saviour, Who didst bear, at Heaven's favour,
God's own Word, as Gabriel said: Make us through thy Son's great
power, Fruitful in our final hour. Keep us safe and comforted.

2nd MYSTERY: THE VISITATION

Pater, 10 Aves, Gloria

Mary, by thy visitation, When thou sangst in exultation Of the works
God wrought in thee: Fill us, poor, with heavenly graces; Guide our
footsteps, turn our faces Ever towards eternity

3rd MYSTERY: THE BIRTH OF JESUS IN BETHLEHEM

Pater, 10 Aves, Gloria

Hail, thou Mother of thy Maker, Purest virgin, yet partaker Of the joys of motherhood. Grant thy servants, gentle Mother, To desire nothing other Than the peace that flows from good.

4th MYSTERY: THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

Pater, 10 Aves, Gloria

Mary, by the adoration Which the kings of eastern nation Offered to thine infant Son, Make us now to love and serve him, Hope in him and so deserve him Whom, through faith, the Magi won.

5th MYSTERY: THE FINDING IN THE TEMPLE

Pater, 10 Aves, Gloria.

Jesus lost, in deepest sorrow Thou didst seek, and on the morrow Find, mid doctors of the Law. Mary, refuge of the sinful, Grant that those who, blind and wilful, Follow evil may withdraw.

6th MYSTERY: THE RISEN SAVIOUR APPEARS TO HIS MOTHER ON EASTER MORNING

Pater, 10 Aves, Gloria.

Mother by the joy that filled thee, When the glorious vision thrilled thee
Of thy resurrected Son, Filled us with a shame all-burning, And our
hearts from evil turning, Make us seek the Eternal One.

7th MYSTERY: THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IS ASSUMED INTO
HEAVEN AND CROWNED QUEEN OF THE UNIVERSE

Pater, 10 Aves, Gloria.

Oh rejoice! Mid stars enthroned, Queen of men and angels owned,
Sharer of Christ's regal might, Grant that, mid the thrones of Heaven,
E'er through thee may we be given Joys of everlasting light.
AMEN. ALLELUIA.

Prayers of St Francis

EJACULATIONS

My God and my all!

Who are you, O God most dear, and who am I, your worthless, useless
little worm of a servant!

You are my God; teach me to do your will.

Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Lord, take pity on my infirmities, so that I may be able to bear them patiently.

You are my Father most holy, my King and my God.

ON PASSING A CHURCH

We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, in all Your Churches throughout the whole world and we bless You because by Your holy cross You redeemed the world.

THE PREFACE OF ST FRANCIS

All powerful, most holy, almighty and supreme God, holy and just Father, Lord King of heaven and earth we thank You for Yourself, for through Your holy will and through Your only Son with the Holy Spirit You have created everything spiritual and corporal and, after making us in Your own image and likeness, You placed us in paradise. Through our own fault we fell.

We thank You for as through Your Son You created us, so through Your holy love with which You loved us You brought about His birth as true

God and true man by the Glorious, ever Virgin, most blessed, holy Mary and You willed to redeem us captives through His cross and blood and death.

We thank You for Your Son Himself who will come again in glory of His majesty to send into the eternal fire the wicked ones who have not done penance and have not known You, and to say to those who have known You, adored You and served YOU in penance: “Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for You from the beginning of the world.” Because all of us wretches and sinners are not worthy to pronounce Your name, we humbly ask our Lord Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, in Whom You are well pleased together with the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, to give You thanks for everything as it pleases You and Him, Who always satisfies You in everything, through Whom You have done so much for us. Alleluia!

Because of Your love we humbly beg the glorious Mother, the most blessed, ever virgin Mary, Blessed Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, all the choirs of the blessed seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominations, principalities, powers, virtues, angels, archangels, Blessed John the

Baptist, John the Evangelist, Peter, Paul, the blessed patriarchs and prophets, the innocents, apostles, evangelists, disciples, the martyrs, confessors and virgins, the blessed Elijah and Enoch, all the saints who were, who will be and who are to give You thanks for these things, as it pleases You, God true and supreme, eternal and living, with Your most holy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

St. Francis Hymn of Praise

You are the holy God Who does wonderful things.

You are strong. You are great. You are the most high.

You are the almighty King, You holy Father, King of heaven and earth.

You are three and one, the Lord God of Gods; You are the good. All good, the highest good, Lord God living and true.

You are love, charity: You are wisdom, You are humility, You are patience,

You are beauty, You are meekness, You are security, You are rest,

You are gladness and joy, You are our hope, You are justice, You are moderation You are all our riches to sufficiency.

You are beauty, You are meekness, You are the protector, You are our
custodian and defender, You are our strength,
You are refreshment, You are our hope, You are our faith, You are our
charity,
You are our sweetness, You are our eternal life: Great and wonderful
Lord, Almighty God, Merciful Saviour.

Blessing of St Francis

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May He show His face to you and
be merciful to you. May He turn His countenance to you and give you
peace. May the Lord bless you.

Canticle of Brother Sun

Most High, all powerful, good Lord! Yours are the praises, the glory,
and the honour, and all blessing,

To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no human is worthy to

mention Your name.

praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun,

Who is the day and through whom You gave us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour; and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, in every kind of weather, through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.

Praise to You, my Lord, through Sister Water, who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom You

light the night, and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs.

Praised be You, my Lord, for those who give pardon for Your love, and who bear infirmity and tribulation.

Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin.

Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will for the second death shall do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility.

Prayers of St Francis to our Lady

Hail, O Lady, holy Queen, Mary, Holy Mother of God, who are the Virgin made Church,

chosen by the most Holy Father in heaven whom He consecrated with His most holy beloved Son and with the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, in whom there was and is all fullness of grace and every good.

Hail His Palace! Hail His Tabernacle! Hail His Dwelling! Hail His Robe! Hail His Servant! Hail His Mother! And hail all you holy virtues which are poured into the hearts of the faithful through grace and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, that from being unbelievers, You may make them faithful to God.

Holy Virgin Mary, among the women born into the world, there is no one like you. Daughter and servant of the most high and supreme King and of the Father in heaven, Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Holy Spirit,

pray for us with Michael the Archangel, all the powers of heaven and all the saints, at the side of your most holy beloved Son, our Lord and Teacher. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Prayer of St Francis for the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God, give us miserable ones the grace to do for You alone what we know You want us to do and always to desire what pleases You. Inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, may we be able to follow in the footprints of Your beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and, by Your grace alone, may we make our way to You, Most High, Who live and rule in perfect Trinity and simple Unity, and are glorified God almighty, forever and ever.

℟. Amen.

Franciscan Peace Prayer

Lord,
make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,
where there is injury, pardon,
where there is doubt, faith,
where there is despair, hope,
where there is darkness, light,
and where there is sadness, joy.

Lord,
that I may seek to console rather than to be consoled,
to understand rather than to be understood,
to love rather than to be loved.

For it is in giving that we receive
in self forgetfulness that we find our true selves,
in forgiving that we are forgiven,
and in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Franciscan Devotion

The Responsory of St Anthony

(SI QUAERIS MIRACULA)

(This reponsory was composed in the first half of the 13th century by Brother Julian of Spires. Some attribute it to St Bonaventure.)

Ask, if you will, for miracles; Death, heresy, disaster yield, Demon and foul disease depart, The sick arise, in body healed.

The sea submits, the fetters fall, The withered limb regains its strength. Things lost are once more found by those Who, young or old, will plead at length.

No danger but will disappear, No need too great to be removed. Let men of Padua testify, Who first the saint's assistance proved. The sea submits

All glory to the Father be And to the one begotten Son, The Spirit too, eternally, Who with the Two is ever One. The sea submits...

℣. Blessed Anthony, pray for us.

℟. That we may become worthy of Christ's promises.

Let us pray:

Almighty, ever loving God, you gave St Anthony to your people as a preacher of great power and a patron in their needs. Grant that, with his help, we may follow the Franciscan way of life and feel your aid in all our trials. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

(This responsory is customarily used in the devotion of the 'Thirteen Tuesdays' in honour of St Anthony, which end on the Tuesday preceding his feast. In some Franciscan churches a perpetual novena in the saint's honour is similarly offered).

St Anthony's Brief

(This letter (brief) is said to have been given by the saint to someone

suffering severe temptations, from which they were completely freed. Many now carry it on their person, printed on linen or engraved on metal, saying the words and making the sign of the cross in time of need.)

“Behold the cross of the Lord. Begone, malevolent powers. The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, rules victorious. Alleluia Alleluia!”

Prayer to St Clare

Great St Clare, your steadfast faith and burning love brought down on you from God sublime gifts of grace and great power of intercession.

Win for us by your prayers the grace to trust God completely and, like you, always to cling to him in faith and love, living in the consciousness of divine protection.

Ÿ. Pray for us, blessed mother Clare.

Ź. That we may become worthy of Christ’s promises.

Let us pray:

God our Father,
we remember with joy your holy handmaid, Clare. Raise our vision with
hers to Heaven, so that we too may come to our fulfilment as co-heirs
with your only begotten Son, who lives and reigns with you and the
Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

℟. Amen.

Prayer to St Louts and St Elizabeth of Hungary

(PATRON AND PATRONESS OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN
ORDER)

Great servants of God you were born, each of you, to great wealth and
to the highest worldly status. By grace you preferred to direct your lives
to the service of God, rather than to the maintenance and enhancement
of your position among men. Louis, you used your royal power for the
honour of God on earth, for the service of peace and of God's poor.
Elizabeth, for love of God you abandoned wealth and royal dignity to
serve the poor and sick with your own hands and to share their lowly
life. By your sublime example you have shown us how to follow in the

footsteps of Francis while fulfilling completely the duties of our secular life. By your powerful intercession in Heaven we ask you to win for us the grace to resist the pressures and temptations of life in our world today and, following our Saviour in the way of Franciscan poverty, to come to everlasting union with him and with you in Heaven. May God grant this to all who, like you, follow Francis here on earth.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen

Prayer to St Margaret of Cortona

Holy Margaret, Christ, who came to call sinners to repentance, raised you by his grace from a life of sin to a life of sublime love and penitence. Through your inspiring example and by the power of your prayers in Heaven, may we be enabled to rise from our own sins and to live lives of true repentance, following, as you did, the humble way of Francis.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

℞. Amen.

Prayer to the Archangel Michael

Great St Michael, sublime defender of the supreme dignity of the Godhead, following the example of our holy father Francis, we honour you and the entire angelic host. We place ourselves under the angelic care and protection which our heavenly Father in his merciful goodness affords us, and we beg of you, Prince of the armies of the Lord, that you will be our strong defence in our ceaseless battle here on earth against the powers of darkness. May our thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on earth, so that we may come, when God calls us, to stand with you before his face for all eternity.

We ask it through Christ the Lord.

℞. Amen.

A Litany of Franciscan Saints

Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy

Lord have mercy

Holy Mary, Mother of God

Queen, conceived without original sin

Queen of the Franciscan Order

Holy Father Francis

All holy Martyrs of the Franciscan Order

St Bernard and the Martyrs of Africa

St. Peter-Baptist and the Martyrs of Japan

St John Jones and St John Wall

All holy Priests of the First Order

St. Anthony of Padua

St. Bonaventure

St. Bernardine of Siena

St. Lawrence of Brindisi

St. Joseph of Cupertino

St. Leonard of Port Maurice

Lord have mercy

Christ have mercy

Lord have mercy

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

Pray for us

St. Maximilian Kolbe	Pray for us
St. Leopold Mandic	Pray for us
St. Padre Pio	Pray for us
All holy Brothers of the First Order	Pray for us
St. Felix of Cantalice	Pray for us
St. Benedict the Black	Pray for us
St. Paschal Baylon	Pray for us
St. Crispin of Viterbo	Pray for us
All holy Virgins of the Second Order	Pray for us
St. Clare of Assisi	Pray for us
St Agnes of Assisi	Pray for us
St. Colette of Corbie	Pray for us
All holy priests of the Third Order	Pray for us
St. John Vianney	Pray for us
St. John Bosco	Pray for us
St. Pius the Tenth	Pray for us
All consecrated Virgins of the Third Order	Pray for us
St. Angela Merici	Pray for us
St. Mary-Magdelan Postel	Pray for us
St. Francis Xavier Cabrini	Pray for us

All holy men of the Third Order	Pray for us
St. Ferdinand, King of Castile & Leon	Pray for us
St. Louis, King of France	Pray for us
St. Elzear of Sabran	Pray for us
All holy women of the Third Order	Pray for us
St. Elizabeth of Hungary	Pray for us
St. Margaret of Cortona	Pray for us
St. Elizabeth of Portugal	Pray for us
All holy Cordbearers of St Francis St. Francis de Sales	Pray for us
St. Benedict-Joseph Labre	Pray for us
St. Bernadette Soubirous	Pray for us
All Saints who followed Francis	Pray for us
All Saints we name as patrons	Pray for us
All Saints of God from all ages	Pray for us
From all evil Lord,	deliver us
From all sin	Lord, deliver us
From everlasting death	Lord, deliver us
By your incarnation	Lord, deliver us
By your death and resurrection	Lord, deliver us
By the coming of the Holy Spirit	Lord, deliver us

That you will watch over and guard your Holy Church We beseech you, h
That you will grant peace and concord to all nations We beseech you, h

At Profession

That you will preserve in We beseech you, hear us
their resolve those who
dedicate themselves to you
today

That you will keep us all We beseech you, hear us
faithful to your service

Let us pray:

God our Father,
who raised up blessed Francis as a most faithful follower and sign of
Christ in our world, and through him have established the Franciscan
way of life as a means of salvation and sanctification, grant us through
the intercession of the vast multitude of Franciscan saints and blessed
ones

who now with our father Francis share your glory in Heaven and praise you unceasingly for ever,
that we too may walk faithfully after Francis in the way of Jesus Christ, your Son, through whom we offer you these and all our prayers.

℟. Amen.

General Prayers and Devotions

CONFITEOR.

I confess to Almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do; and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord, our God.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus

Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Apostles Creed:

I believe in God

the Father almighty,

creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

The resurrection of the body,

and life everlasting.

Amen.

An Act of Faith

My God, you have made yourself known to me, have made me aware beyond reason that from ever to ever you are, One in Being, Three in Persons, Begetter, only Begotten, Bond of living Love; that you alone are my Creator, my Redeemer, my Sanctifier, my Beginning and my last End; that it is in you that I live and move and have my being. I acknowledge from my heart and with the full response of my intellect and will this gift of faith, which surpasses my power and my deserving. Whatever doubts, fears or intellectual torments may assail my mind and heart, in this faith I pledge myself to you absolutely and to the end.

An Act of Hope

My God, you are the very Truth, undecieving and undeceived, infinite in power and in love. Despite my unworthiness, you have promised me the bliss of absolute self-fulfilment in the eternal possession of yourself, the infinite Good, if only I keep faith in Jesus Christ your Son, the Way,

the Truth and the Life. My God, because I believe absolutely, I trust absolutely that you will fulfil your promise and enable me to realise it by your grace.

An Act of Love

My God, you have made me for yourself so that, enabled by your grace, I may of my own free will belong to you forever. I have failed you, and I know that I shall fail you again because of my human weakness. But my will is that I may never turn away from you to any created good. I pray that, despite my frailty I may always be able to say: “Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you.”

An Act of Contrition

My God, I come to humble myself before you, confessing that I have sinned again. No excuse will serve, Lord, however much I want to make my faults excusable. But you do not ask for excuse, only that I admit and repent of what I have done and what I have failed to do. I do admit,

I do repent, Lord, of my evil in offending against your own infinite goodness. Forgive me, my Lord and my Love.

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, be my sanctification; Body of Christ, be my salvation. Blood of Christ, fill my veins; Water from Christ's side, wash out my stains.

Passion of Christ, my comfort be; O good Jesus, listen to me. In your wounds I fain would hide, Ne'er to be parted from your side; Guard me, should the foe assail me; Call me, when my life shall fail me. Bid me come to you above, With your saints to sing your love. World without end. Amen.

Franciscan Consecration to the Sacred Heart

O Divine Heart, O Heart worthy of all adoration and love, O wounded and bleeding heart of Jesus, I consecrate and bind myself to you for ever;

and in you I place together with myself this fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order and the whole spiritual family of our Seraphic Father, St Francis of Assisi.

Design with your Precious blood to render it ever more pure, ever more inflamed with love of you, mark us indelibly with the sign of your holy cross so that, always and everywhere and in all things, we who belong to the Franciscan Family may show ourselves ever more worthy of the vocation in which we are called, of our stigmatised father, St Francis, of the Seraphic Doctor, St Bonaventure, ever more worthy of your wounded Heart, O crucified Lord and Saviour, to whom we consecrate ourselves. We earnestly beseech you to grant us to attain to this object of our desire, through the merits and prayers of the transfixed heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your most holy Mother and ours, and through the intercession of all the saints who in this life were devoted to your Most Sacred Heart. Amen

The Holy Spirit

Cardinal Mercier's "Secret of Sanctity"

I am going to reveal to you a secret of sanctity and happiness. Every day, during five minutes, keep your imagination quiet, shut your eyes to all the things of sense, and close your ears to all the sounds of the earth, so as to be able to withdraw into the sanctuary of your baptised soul, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Then speak to the Holy Spirit, saying:

O Holy Spirit, Soul of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten, strengthen and console me. Tell me what I ought to do and command me to do it. I promise to be submissive in everything you allow to happen to me: only show me what is your will.

If you do this, your life will pass happily and serenely. Consolation will abound even in the midst of troubles. Grace will be given in proportion to the trial as well as strength to bear it, bringing you to the gates of Paradise full of merit.

The Angelus

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary. . . .

Behold the handmaid of the Lord
Be it done to me according to your word.

Hail Mary. . .

And the word was made flesh
And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary. . .

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, so that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, your Son, was made known by

the message of an angel, may be brought by his Passion and Cross to the glory of his Resurrection. Through Christ Our Lord.

℟. Amen.

Regina Coeli

Queen of Heaven, rejoice. Alleluia.

For he whom you merited to bear. Alleluia,

Has risen, as he said. Alleluia.

Pray for us to God. Alleluia.

Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary. Alleluia.

Because the Lord is truly risen. Alleluia

Let us pray:

O God, who deigned to give joy to the world through the Resurrection of your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, grant, we beseech you that, through the Virgin Mary who bore him, we may obtain the joys of eternal life.

Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tota Pulchra Es

You are all fair, O Mary,
and the stain of original sin is not found in you.

You are the glory of Jerusalem;

You are the joy of Israel.

You are the honour of our people.

You are the advocate of sinners.

O Mary, virgin most prudent,

Mother most merciful,

Pray for us.

Intercede for us with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Memorare

Remember, O most loving Virgin Mary, that it is a thing unheard of that anyone ever had recourse to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession, and was left forsaken. Inspired with confidence

in your goodness I fly to you, O Mother, Virgin of virgins. To you I come, before you I stand, a sorrowful sinner. Despise not my words, O Mother of the Word of God, but graciously hear and grant my prayer. Amen.

A St Joseph Memorare

Remember, O just Joseph, that of all God's holy ones, you were chosen by his Church to be the universal patron and protector of his people, just as you were chosen by the Holy Spirit to be the husband of Mary and the foster father of Jesus.

With absolute confidence we submit ourselves to your care and guidance. How could we do otherwise, when God himself did not hesitate to confide his own Son to your protection! We know that you will never forsake us.

Before God we humbly confess our unworthiness. Do not despise our poor prayers, since your divine foster child himself does not despise us, but offers himself unceasingly on our behalf. With Mary, your virgin spouse, commend us to Jesus, to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, so

that we may come to glorify them in heaven for all eternity. Amen.

A Prayer of Petition in Honour of St Joseph

God our Father, out of all mankind you chose Joseph, the just man, to be the guardian on earth of your Son, Jesus, and of Mary his Mother. You prepared his soul for this high purpose eminently enriching it with the manly virtues of prudence, fortitude, loyalty and responsibility. You enabled him to protect Mary's virginity from the tongue of scandal, to save the infant Jesus from the malice of Herod, to rear him in accordance with the Law you gave to Moses, and so you prepared him for his saving mission to all people.

You have kept hidden from our view most of Joseph's life and his death, but your Holy Spirit has enabled your Church to discern something of the inner mysteries of your grace in him, and has led her to make him the universal patron of your people and their special protector at the hour of death.

Through the intercession of this powerful patron we submit to you our

petitions (here name them). In the spirit of Joseph we yield them and ourselves wholly to your will, knowing that your answer to our prayers will be what we would choose ourselves, had we your understanding of our needs.

May Mary join her intercession to that of her chaste spouse, offering us to you, together with all that concerns us, through Jesus Christ, your Son, whom she bore and he reared as his own. Amen.

The Crib

It may never be fully realised just how far the Christian world owes its awareness of Christmas to St. Francis. Thomas of Celano says of him: “Francis observed the birthday of the Child Jesus with inexplicable eagerness over all other feasts, saying that it was the feast of feasts, on which God, having become a tiny infant, clung to human breasts.” Francis wanted everyone to share its joy: the poor and hungry to sit at the tables of the rich, the birds and beasts to be given food in abundance.

Celano tells us what he did, three years prior to his death, at the town

of Greccio, on the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was a certain man in that area named John. Blessed Francis loved him with special affection. He had John summoned to him some fifteen days prior to the birthday of the Lord. ‘If you desire to celebrate the coming feast together at Greccio,’ he said to him, ‘hurry before me and carefully make ready the things I tell you. For I wish to enact the memory of that Babe who was born in Bethlehem: to see as much as possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he rested on the hay.’

It might commend itself to families animated with the spirit of Francis to hold their own joyful service before their crib at home, or to Secular Franciscan Fraternities to come together some time during the Christmas octave before the crib in church. An appropriate beginning of either service would be for the following passage from Celano to be read aloud:

“The day of joy has drawn near, the time of exultation has come. From many different places the brethren have been called. As they could, the men and women of that land with exultant hearts prepare torches

and candles to light up that night whose shining star has enlightened every day and year. Finally, the holy man of God comes and, finding all things prepared, he saw them and was glad. Indeed, the manger is prepared, the hay is carried in, the ox and the ass are led to the spot. Their simplicity is given a place of honour, poverty is exulted, humility is commended, and out of Greccio is made a new Bethlehem. The night is lit up like day, delighting both men and beasts. The people arrive, ecstatic at this new mystery of new joy. The forest amplifies the cries and the boulders echo back the joyful crowd. The brothers sing, giving God due praise, and the whole night abounds with jubilation. The holy man of God stands before the manger, filled with heartfelt sighs, contrite in his piety, and overcome with wondrous joy. Over the manger the solemnities of the Mass are celebrated and the priest enjoys a new consolation...in the hearts of many the Child Jesus has been given over to oblivion. Now he is awakened and impressed on their loving memory by His own grace through His holy servant, Francis.”

Then might he read the wonderful mystical poem on the primacy of Christ from St Paul’s letter to the Colossians, Chapter 1, 15-20, followed by a reponsorial psalm.

℞. The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it (Is. 40. 5)

O sing a new song to the Lord, Sing to the Lord, all the earth, O sing to the Lord, bless his name.℞.

Proclaim his help day by day, Tell among the nations his glory, And his wonders among all the peoples.℞.

Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad, Let the sea and all within it thunder praise, Let the land and all it bears rejoice,℞.

All the trees of the wood shout for joy At the presence of the Lord, for he comes, He comes to rule the earth.℞.

With justice he will rule the world, He will judge the peoples with his truth.℞.

(From Psalm 96)

Then a Gospel reading: Luke 2:8-20 followed by a fitting hymn.

Let us pray:

Father in heaven, you raised Jesus on high and gave him the name which is above every other name; may all things in heaven, on earth and in the underworld bend the knee at the name of Jesus, and every tongue acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to your glory. Amen.

A Blessing For a Crib

Blessed are you, God of our fathers, for sending the prophets to prepare a way for your Son.

℟. Blessed be God forever.

May we all remember his presence among us in the Scriptures, in the tabernacle and among the poor of the world, and so through the intercession of his Mother Mary, come to rejoice with him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Service of Franciscan Renewal

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Entrance Song

An Easter hymn or a song/psalm celebrating Christ the Light (e.g. “The light of Christ”, “ At the Lamb’s high feast”.)

The Paschal Candle (lit) is carried in at the head of the procession and placed in the midst of the assembled brethren or by the altar. The Candle and altar may be incensed.

GREETING

℟̄. In the name of the most holy Trinity and holy Unity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

℞. Amen.

℟̄. May God give you peace, and may the fellowship of his love be with you all.

℞. And also with you.

PRAYER

℞. Let us pray.

All-powerful, most holy, Almighty and supreme God,
Holy and just Father,
Lord King of heaven and earth
we thank You for Yourself.

You spread in our world the radiance of Your glory,
through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Risen Lord.

He is the light no darkness can overpower. He is the light who sets our hearts aflame. He is the light guiding us to Your kingdom. We have seen His light and left all things to follow His path.

Be with us now to strengthen our purpose and renew our hearts so that, following in the footsteps of Your Son, we may come at last to the light of Your eternal glory. We ask this through our Lord. . . .

RITE OF REPENTANCE

All are seated

INTRODUCTION

C. (in these or similar words)

God has loved the world from the beginning and called us all to share in his divine life. He has sent his only Son into the world to set us free from sin and open for us the gates of holiness. Prompted by his spirit many have left all things to follow Christ and build up the Church in holiness. We who have committed ourselves to Christ under the inspiration of St Francis, come together to rejoice in God's power and to seek his help to persevere. If, up to now, we seem to have made little or no progress in serving the Lord, then let us take heart and begin again as our father St Francis would have us continually do.

READING I

From the Major Life of St Francis by St Bonaventure.

One day when Francis went out to meditate in the fields, he walked near to the church of San Damiano which was threatening to collapse

because of age. Impelled by the Spirit, he went inside to pray. Prostrate before an image of the Crucified, he was filled with no little consolation as he prayed. While his tear-filled eyes were gazing at the Lord's cross, 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."

He prepared himself to obey and pulled himself together to carry out the command of repairing the material church, although the principal intention of the words referred to that which Christ purchased with His own Blood, as the Holy Spirit taught Him and as he himself later disclosed to the brothers.

(LMj II-I)

Pause for reflection

READING II

From the Major Life of St Francis by St Bonaventure.

One day when Francis was devoutly hearing a Mass of the Apostles, the

Gospel was read in which Christ sends out His disciples to preach and gives them the Gospel form of life, that they may not keep gold or silver or money in their belts, nor have a wallet for their journey nor may they have two tunics, nor shoes, nor staff. Hearing, understanding, and committing this to memory, this friend of apostolic poverty was then overwhelmed with an indescribable joy. “This is what I want,” he said, “this is what I desire with all my heart!”

By divine inspiration he now began to strive after Gospel perfection, inviting others also to lead a life of penance.

(LMj III:1-2)

Pause for reflection

PENITENTIAL LITANY

C.: The call made to St Francis is made to us today: “Rebuild my Church”; “Live, the Gospel Life”. In so far as we have failed to live up to this calling, let us turn to the Lord now and ask for his merciful help. For our failure to live a life worthy of our calling, let us pray to the Lord:

℟. Have mercy on us, Lord, and give us your saving help.

For our failure to support more fully the Pope and the Bishops in their task of building up the Church, let us pray to the Lord. *℟*.

For our lack of commitment in the service of the local Church community, let us pray to the Lord. *℟*.

For our lack of commitment to the life of penance and the demands of following the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord. *℟*.

For our lack of generous love and reverence for one another, let us pray to the Lord. *℟*.

For our failure to be poor and humble, obedient and chaste, proclaiming to all the peace of God's kingdom, let us pray to the Lord. *℟*.

For our lack of faith and hope and perseverance in prayer, let us pray to the Lord. *℟*.

Other penitential petitions may be added

℟. May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

℟. Amen.

INVOCATION

All stand to invoke the power of the Holy Spirit:

Veni Creator Spiritus

or any other hymn to the Spirit.

C.: Let us pray

Almighty Father,

send forth your Spirit into our hearts

and create us anew.

Come, inspire our actions with your all-powerful help,

so that our every word, deed, and prayer may always begin in you and

bear fruit for your glory

and the spread of your kingdom.

We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

READING

All are seated for the readings

1 Peter 1:5-9.

PSALM 115

℟. My vows to the Lord I will fulfil before all his people.

GOSPEL

Luke 12:35-40 (Longer form: 12:35-48).

A short homily or exhortation may follow the Gospel.

Renewal of Commitment

All stand. Those who are renewing their Franciscan commitment should have a candle which is now lit from the Paschal Candle, while the following is sung or recited:

Canticle of Brother Sun (e.g. All creatures of our God and King,
“Laudato si”.)

The Celebrant may incense the Candle, the altar, and the people.

All then say together:

With our whole heart and soul and mind and strength; with all our
might and understanding,
with all our powers,
with all our energies and affections,
with our deepest longings,
with our every desire and all our will,
we give you thanks, Lord most high, everlasting God.
For you have given us and still give us
everything that we are and have,
our body and soul and our very life.
You created us and redeemed us,
and out of your loving kindness alone you will save us.

Accept us now as we come to renew our love and service.
Gathered, then, in your name and by your grace,
we pledge and promise once again to you, almighty God,
to the blessed Mary, ever-Virgin
to our holy father Francis
and to all the saints,
to observe all our days the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, and
the life of the Gospel..

PRAYER

C: Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God,
grant that we may seek always to know and do your will alone;
may we desire only what pleases you.
Then, with the light of your Spirit deep in our hearts, and the flame of
your love enlivening us,
may we be able to follow in the footsteps of your Son, our Lord Jesus
Christ,

and so make our way to you, who live and reign in perfect Trinity and simple Unity,
and are glorified, God all-powerful, for ever and ever.

℟. Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

BLESSING

C: In the words of our father Francis I bless you: May whoever observes all these things be filled in heaven with the blessing of the Most High Father, and on earth with the blessing of his Beloved Son, in union with the most Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and all the powers of heaven and all the saints. And I, Brother Francis, your poor servant, as much as I am able, confirm for you internally and externally this most holy blessing.

℟. Amen

C: Most beloved brothers/sisters and blessed children, hear me, hear the voice of your father. We have promised great things, still greater are promised to us. Let us keep our promises and strive to attain what

has been promised us. Pleasure is short, punishment is everlasting. Suffering is slight, glory is infinite. Many are called, few are chosen. To all retribution shall be made.

℟. Amen.

DISMISSAL

C: Finally, brethren,

whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things, and the God of peace shall be with you. So go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

℟. Thanks be to God.

FINAL HYMN

A hymn to St Francis or 'Christ be beside me' or an Easter Hymn.

Indulgences

In 1968 the Church abrogated all former indulgences. It laid down that in future only one plenary indulgence might be gained on any one day, with the exception of the plenary indulgence at the time of death, which may be gained even though a plenary indulgence has already been gained on that day. It did away with all other designations of indulgences except plenary and partial.

The two general requirements for the gaining of a plenary indulgence are the performance of a designated good work or act of piety, and freedom from all attachment to sin, even venial sin. Three other conditions must be fulfilled in order to gain any plenary indulgence except that granted at the moment of death. These are sacramental confession (one confession will suffice for several indulgences), the reception of Holy Communion (once for each indulgence), and prayer for the Pope's intentions.

The occasions on which plenary indulgences may be gained are listed in the *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* (Vatican Press 1969, also CTS

translation). In addition to these occasions however, members of the Secular Franciscan Order may gain a plenary indulgence on two 'once in a lifetime' occasions: the beginning of the novitiate and the making of profession. You may also gain a plenary indulgence if you renew your commitment on the following days: the annual visitation; April 18 Bl. Luchesius; May 16 Margaret of Cortona; August 11 St Clare; August 25 St Louis of France; October 4 St Francis; November 17 St Elizabeth of Hungary; November 29 All Saints of the Franciscan Order; December 8 Immaculate Conception. Other occasions worth noting are: on all the Fridays of Lent, by saying the prayer after Communion before a Crucifix; Maundy Thursday by joining in the hymn during the procession to the Altar of Repose; Good Friday by taking part in the Adoration of the Cross and Holy Saturday by renewing your Baptismal Vows

My God and My All

God who is Father,
Be merciful to us.
God who is Son,

Be Brother to us.
God who is Spirit,
Be Love to us
God who is One,
Unite us who are many.
God who is Three,
Watch over each one of us.
God who is Truth,
Blot out our lies.
God who is Life,
Live on in all of us.
God the Incomprehensible,
Make us understand.
God the Unutterable,
Say but the word
God the Unmeasurable, Widen our vision God the Unchangeable,
Make us our true selves
God Ancient of everlasting days,
Be near us this moment.
God of Light Inaccessible,

Help us to see.

God of Fire All-Consuming,

Melt our cold hearts.

God of Air All-Pervading,

Be in each one of us.

God of Water All-Cleansing,

Wash out our guilt.

God of Each All-Sustaining,

Inspire us to share.

God the All-Holy,

Teach us your ways.

God the All Merciful,

Make us kind to each other.

God the All-Powerful,

Be strength in our weakness.

God the Transcendent,

Draw closer to us.

God the Eternal,

Take care of our time.

God the Creator,

Watch over the world.
God of the Universe,
Bless all you have made.
Amen.

A Prayer of Life and Death

Lord of my origin,
Draw me closer to you.
Lord of my existence,
Direct all my ways.
Lord of my calling,
Give me strength to go on.
Lord of my faith,
Preserve me from doubt.
Lord of my hope,
Keep me from despair.
Lord of my love,
Let me never grow cold.

Lord of my past,
May I never forget you.
Lord of my present,
Be near me always.
Lord of my future,
Keep me faithful to the end.
Lord of my life,
Let me live in your presence.
Lord of my death,
Receive me at last.
Lord of my eternity,
Bless me for ever.
Amen.

The above prayer poems - though not the titles - are taken from *Francis and the Song of Brotherhood' by Fr. Eric Doyle, O.F.M.

Hymn to St Francis

Blessed Francis, holy father, now our hearts to thee we raise, as we gather round thine altar pouring forth our hymn of praise. Bless thy children, holy Francis, who thy mighty help implore, for in Heaven thou remainest still the father of the poor.

By thy love so deep and burning for thy Saviour crucified; By the token which he gave thee on thy hands and feet and side; Bless thy children, holy Francis with those wounded hands of thine, from thy glorious throne in Heaven where resplendently they shine.

Humble follower of Jesus, likened to him in thy birth, from thy tender youth despising

For his sake the goods of earth, make us love the priceless virtue by our hidden God esteemed, make it valued, holy Francis, by the souls of the redeemed.

In thine own beloved Assisi thou didst stir men's hearts to love, teaching

them that holy penance was the road to Heaven above. Bless thy children, holy Francis, who thy mighty help implore, for in Heaven thou remainest still the father of the poor.

Teach us also, dear St Francis, how to mourn for every sin; May we walk in thy dear footsteps till the crown of life we win. Bless thy children, holy Francis With those wounded hands of thine, from thy glorious throne in Heaven, where resplendently they shine.

Fr. Martin, O.F.M.Cap

A Franciscan Hymn

1. Lord make me a means of your peace. Where there's hatred grown, let me sow your love. Where there's injury, Lord, let forgiveness be my sword. Lord, make me a means of your peace.
2. Lord, make me a means of your peace. Where there's doubt and fear, let me sow your faith. In this world's despair, give me hope

in you to share.

3. Lord, make me a means of your peace. Where there's sadness here, let me sow your joy. When the darkness nears, may your light dispel our fears.
4. Lord, grant me to seek and to share: less to be consoled than to help console, less be understood than to understand your good.
5. Lord, grant me to seek and to share: to receive love less than to give love free, just to give in thee, just receiving from your tree.
6. Lord, grant me to seek and to share: to forgive in thee, you've forgiven me: for to die in thee is eternal life to me.

John Foley S.J. from the 'Prayer of St Francis.

Salve Regina

Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus, exules filii Hevae.
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes,
in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia ergo, Advocata nostra,
illos tuos misericordes oculos
ad nos converte.
Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis. Virgo Maria.

[More Franciscan hymns may be found in the new Franciscan Hymn Book](#)

The Magnificat

My soul glorifies the lord, *
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness; *
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me. *
Holy is his name!
His mercy is from age to age, *
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength *
and scatters the proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones *
and raises the lowly.
He fills the starving with good things, * sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant, * remembering his mercy, the mercy
promised to our fathers, * to Abraham and his sons forever.

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Paschal Burlinson O.F.M. Cap. Mary J. McCormick S.F.O.