



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS  
- Initiation and Formation -

## Guidelines for Formators

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing,

**Jesus himself** [that's good!]

**came near** [that's better!]

**and went with them,** [that's best!]

but their eyes were kept from recognising him. And Jesus said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh! How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him, and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, **'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?'** [Lk 24.13-32]



So, what is Formation and how can it best be done?

- It's not just about 'information'; it is about 'transformation'
- There are not two, but three, involved in it—just as in the story above
- As New and Professed Franciscan journey they are both being *formed*, helping each other as they are thrilled by the presence of the living Christ who accompanies them
- Jesus himself—good; comes alongside—better; and goes with them—best of all.

## Time Scale

1. Enquiry—duration, one year
2. Candidate—duration, two years

## Sessions & Methodology

- Little and often is better than lots and infrequent.
- Frequency: weekly/fortnightly—depending on circumstances [as well as needs]
- length: probably should not be more than two hours [some people have to travel a distance/ may have lots of other commitments etc]
- method: as described in Candidacy, Module 8 'What is Formation?' sheet 4
- Use of other materials: must not be a substitute for this material but may help to develop, explain, clarify etc

## As Visitors

- At this stage we have given nothing much more than an 'overview' of things
- Time to introduce ourselves to new people who may/may not feel they want to join us: an Order of the Church
- At this stage we have been interested in helping them to experience us, and taken the opportunity to find out about them—their Catholic Christian life; what brought them to us/what they are looking for etc. Asking, 'Will they be able to make the commitment that being a member of an Order in the Church demands?' [There will have been practical matters considered here: physical/health restraints; getting to the Fraternity; family commitments; spiritual and canonical matters *investigated*: 'orthodoxy', 'divorced & remarried' etc.]
- This has been a time of 'chewing over' things—and the booklets should have been of help at this stage: Discernment, Franciscan Values & Theology, Listening, Pointers for Discerning an OFS Vocation, The Call to Holiness, What OFS is about, You and the Holy Spirit

Initiation—the programme as stipulated in the National Statutes

[1] **Enquirer** OFS—Initiation [Enquirer], The Six Chapters

- [1] In the beginning—Francis
- [2] Formation
- [3] Rule of the OFS
- [4] Scripture
- [5] Prayer
- [6] A Secular Calling

{Booklets etc. referred to in The Six Chapters are to be found in *Additional Resources*:

- (1) Scripture: Praying the Scriptures—a guide to Lectio Divina; Using the Bible; The Bible—a breakdown of the Canon
- (2) Christ
- (3) Prayer
- (4) St Francis; Wolf without, Leper within
- (5) St Clare
- (6) Mary
- (7) Peace
- (8) Creation}

- It is important at this stage that the Enquirer starts putting together a 'Portfolio'. You will be giving out lots of material and this needs to be kept together in an organised way by each Enquirer so that they can refer back, as well as see how things are developing. This is a very personal thing. Some sort of large binder is suggested; perhaps a box file...
- To this Portfolio can be added other material—photographs from a trip to Assisi; something taken from the internet; CDs; videos or whatever; Ongoing Formation material—things resulting/given out at the Fraternal Meeting
- In fact: whatever takes their fancy! [Perhaps encourage the keeping of a Spiritual Diary/Journal?]

**[2] Candidate** OFS—Initial Formation [Candidate], Preamble & Modules

- Having introduced a number of themes at Enquiry stage, those now admitted to the Order as Candidates begin a time of initial formation—revisiting earlier themes, introducing new ones
- The Modules themselves are divided into MAJOR and MINOR
- It is envisaged that all Candidates will cover all the material in the prescribed course. The division of the Modules into ‘MAJOR’ and ‘Minor’ is not intended to signify ‘important’ and ‘less important’, but should be seen more in terms of music—with its major and minor keys—the minor introducing the “darker” [deeper shade] as one moves from the major to the more sombre of the minor. The time allocation for this approach and the depth will depend on considerations such as ability/interest/time available etc. for the individual in question and will be, in the final analysis, at the discretion of the Formator

PREAMBLE: RULE, CONSTITUTIONS & STATUTES

MAJOR MODULES [1] VOCATION, CHARISM & MISSION

[2] HISTORY OF THE OFS

[3] ELEMENTS OF ECCLESIOLOGY & THE THEOLOGY OF THE LAITY

[4] PROFESSION

MINOR MODULES [5] The Nature of the OFS

[6] Fraternity & St Francis

[7] Francis’ Approach to Divinity

[8] What is Formation?