

Overview

The respective folders – Visitor, Enquirer, Candidate, Ongoing, & Additional Resources – contain the courses and some of the resources currently in use. Each folder has its own introductory word which helps explain the contents.

Formation: a two-stage process

Being a member of a religious Order is all about formation since ‘metamorphosis’ [‘a change of form’] is the express purpose of the call of the Holy Spirit. We can rightly speak of formation in the OFS as a two-stage process – Initial and Ongoing [the former, the length of which is defined by the National Statutes, leads to Profession; the latter, is life-long].

- Having attended local fraternity meetings for at least six months, the ‘Visitor’, who senses a call to the OFS, with the agreement of the Fraternity Council, is welcomed as an ‘Enquirer’, and embarks on a period of Initiation following the prescribed course (National Statutes, art. 7.2) – which gives an introduction to our way of life, including our beginning, the Rule, the importance of prayer, the bible, and the meaning of secularity. Where a genuine vocation to the OFS is discerned, the Enquirer may then be
- Admitted to the Order as a Candidate for Profession, and begins the course of Initial Formation (National Statutes, art. 8.1) – a much deeper programme, which includes further study of the Rule, vocation, our history, and distinctive Franciscan theology.

Formation is about undergoing a change in form – a ‘metamorphosis’

Formation is not just ‘training’, ‘education’, ‘acquisition of knowledge and skills’ – important as all these are in both life in general and the Christian life in particular. Formation in religious life is about undergoing a change in form. For us, as members of the OFS, it is by study and sharing the Franciscan charism with the rest of St Francis’ family that we experience ‘metamorphosis’ – in the form of Christ in the footprints of St Francis of Assisi.