

Our role—as Secular Franciscans—is to be light for the world (people) who are often in darkness and despair. Reflecting and persevering in the Franciscan way of life helps us come to see people and creation through the eyes of love—no matter what! Our task—to bring life to others in this world, often absorbed by destruction, greed and the disappointment of transience. We are called to be instruments of

- **celebration**
- **hope**
- **forgiveness**
- **acceptance**
- **life**
- **respect**
- **community (rather than individualism)**
- **prayerfulness and blessing**

but above all the POWER OF LOVE—God’s love flowing through us, for we are his channels of his love and peace.

We do this not by ourselves, but in the fraternity of the ‘Monthly Meeting’. It is here that we share in Franciscan fellowship and grow as we journey together in our common calling—that of following Christ in the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi who reminds us:

“O how happy and blessed are these men and women while they do such things and persevere in doing them...they are children of the Heavenly Father whose works they do, and they are spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. 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. We are mothers when we carry him in our heart and body through the 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.” [Letter to the Faithful (1209-1215), 7]



Franciscan Values and Theology

There is a Franciscan way of perceiving God, the world, and humanity. It offers a way of seeing God as acting through love and goodness—rather than an all-seeing judge. Franciscans are encouraged to understand and embrace this way of looking at God and his relationship with all creation.



Sharing, compassion for others:

serving, caring for the poor and oppressed;
concern for social justice; taking responsible social action

- call for interaction with others & creation
- 'love the Lord your God with all your heart,...and your neighbour as yourself' [Lk 10.27]
- healthy respect for our dignity makes us able to respect the dignity of others
- As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn 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. [OFS Rule, 13]

Creating a caring community:

respect for individual dignity;
hospitality, courtesy, kindness, friendship, openness, fostering loving relationships

- respect of individual means taking an active stance when people are oppressed—solidarity with poor and oppressed wherever they are
- St Francis saw in all things the footprint of the Creator, reverencing all creatures as God's imprint
- Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which "bear the imprint of the Most High"...[OFS Rule, 18]

Reverence for creation:

respect for all creatures; fostering a simple lifestyle, stewardship;
human dignity and empowerment of people; concern for environmental issues

- resources of our planet are meant to be shared by all people
- we choose the kind of lifestyle that best reflects our priorities
- Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that...they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God's children. [OFS Rule, 11]
- love of the creation was the reason for the Incarnation
- God's desire was to be with his people on earth & Jesus is the perfect expression of God's love

Peacemaking:

healing and reconciliation, conflict resolution, forgiveness, care and understanding to eliminate fears

- as we promote & support the God-given dignity of all people, reconciliation & peacemaking become the hallmark of our Franciscan life
- we are ambassadors of peace
- 'Blessed are those who endure in peace' [St Francis]
- in following Francis, his thinking permeates us, helping us, like him, to be conformed to Christ who said, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.' [John 14.27]