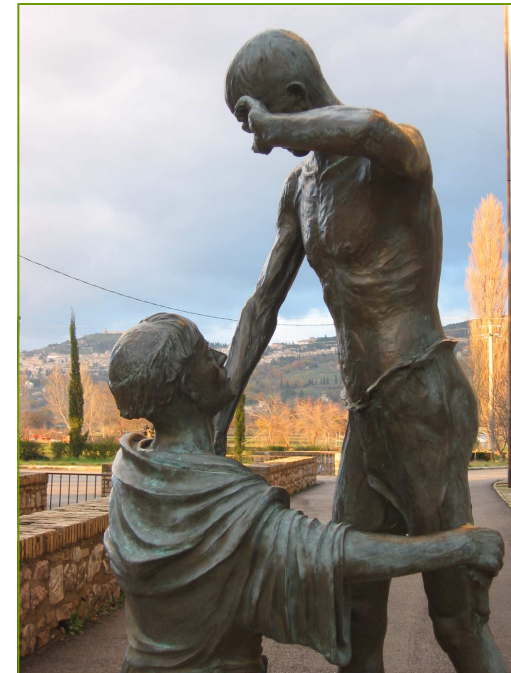


- Faithful and prudent is the servant who does not delay in punishing himself for all his offences, inwardly through contrition and outwardly through confession and penance for what he did.
- Blessed is the servant who loves his brother as much when he is sick and cannot repay him as when he is well and can repay him.
- Where there is charity and wisdom,  
there is neither fear nor ignorance.
- Where there is patience and humility,  
there is neither anger nor disturbance.
- Where there is poverty with joy,  
there is neither greed nor avarice.
- Where there is rest and meditation,  
there is neither anxiety nor restlessness.
- Where there is a heart full of mercy and discernment,  
there is neither excess nor hardness of heart.
- Blessed is the servant who stores up in heaven the good things which the Lord shows him and does not wish to reveal them to people under the guise of a reward, because the Most High himself will reveal his deeds to whomever he wishes.
- Blessed is the servant who safeguards the secrets of the Lord in his heart.

[St Francis of Assisi: *Early Documents*, Volume I, 136-137]



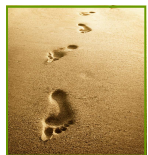
## The Call to Holiness



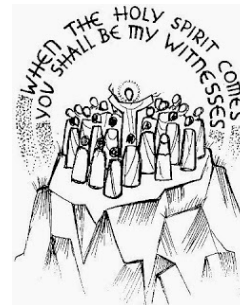
The classes and duties of life are many, but holiness is one—that sanctity which is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God, and who obey the voice of the Father and worship God the Father in spirit and in truth. These people follow the poor Christ, the humble and cross-bearing Christ in order to be worthy of being sharers in his glory. Every person must walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of living faith, which arouses hope and works through charity. [Lumen Gentium, 41]

All Christians are called to holiness, but fundamental to our Franciscan way of life is the fulfilling of this quotation from the Second Vatican Council.

- We do not disengage with the world; as Secular Franciscans *the world is the sphere of our calling's activity*
- We are present to the world as Jesus' witnesses, living the Gospel in everyday life
- 'we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us' [II Cor 5.20] & 'as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way...as having nothing, and yet possessing everything' [II Cor 6.4, 10]
- We make no false distinctions between the professional and the spiritual since separation runs counter to a Franciscan vision of life—unity is important to us, personally and as community, in implementing the Gospel and reaching out in love to a needy world
- Our calling is to live our Christian life through the OFS—which calls for a radical interior change which the Gospel calls CONVERSION
- Striving to live by the Rule of the OFS is our way of contributing to building up the Church; following the poor Christ in the footprints of St Francis of Assisi



'United by their vocation as "brothers & 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.' [OFS Rule, 7]



- The Spirit of Jesus propels the Church now as always. It is the Spirit of Jesus working through God's people called the Church.
- Franciscans always begin with Scripture—we are exhorted 'do not grieve the Holy Spirit' [Eph 4.30]; we are told 'the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him' [Lk 11.13]; that 'the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control' and that 'those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us be also guided by the Spirit' [Gal 5.22-25].
- We see the bible as the guide for our way of life. St Francis willingly accepted the implications that the Gospel required of him and his trust in God found expression in poverty and contemplation. Within the framework of the Church, he brought new life to the Church of his day—the 13th Century. We, as Seculars, can do no less in our world. He could indeed say,



- 'I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body. [Gal 6.17]