



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 1: The Essence of Franciscan Spirituality

Chapter 9. In Imitation of Christ: following in the footprints of St Francis



CHRIST'S LIFE: the Lamb that was slain (Rev 13.8)

Mk 1.35 'he rose and went to a lonely place, and there he prayed'
Matt 4.1-2 'he fasted forty days and forty nights'
John 19.17 'he went out, bearing his own cross'
Lk 19.58 'the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head'
Matt 1.19 'a friend of tax collectors and sinners'



CHRISTIAN LIFE: running with perseverance the race (Heb 12.1)

Matt 6.7-13—prayer
Matt 6.16-17—fasting
Lk 14. 27—discipleship
II Cor 8. 9-15—poverty
Heb 13. 2-3—charity



FRANCISCAN LIFE

We recognise that they [Secular Franciscans] are called to follow Christ in the footsteps [footprints] of St Francis of Assisi. Rule 1

Secular Franciscans accept all people as the gift of Lord and an image of Christ...
Rule 13

Mindful that anyone who 'follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more a man himself', let them exercise their responsibilities competently... Rule 14

If a man gives up all that he has in the world, it is still nothing. If he does great penance, it is still a small thing. If he attains all knowledge, it still falls short. If he has great virtue and burning devotion, he still lacks much—the one thing in fact which he needs most of all. And that is to renounce everything, and then to renounce himself; to leave self entirely behind, and have no vestige left of love for self. Then when he has done everything which he knows he should do, he must realise he has done nothing. If he has done anything worthwhile he must think nothing of it, but honestly declare himself a worthless servant...Then that man will be really poor and naked in spirit...the man who knows how to renounce and all things, and put himself in the lowest place, has more riches, power and freedom than anyone.

Thomas a Kempis *The Imitation of Christ*

In the coming month, you might consider other ways you may follow in the footprints of St Francis in his way of imitating Christ

Scripture—



Col 3. 1-17

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. These are the ways you once also followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek or Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all in all!

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thank to God the Father through him.