



## - A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

### Part 6: Life in Fraternity

#### 6. The Fraternity Meeting

And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel.

Armstrong, Hellmann, Short *Francis of Assisi: early documents* Vol I Testament 14 (p 125)

The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members. Rule 22

### The Fraternity Meeting is:

both an occasion for visitors to experience life in fraternity and ongoing formation. Both of these are important in that visitors must have the chance to see for themselves what is central to OFS commitment—life in fraternity, and to experience for themselves the formative process—which is life-long.



#### Suggested Programme

Opening prayers

Introducing the theme

Scripture reading/  
reflection

Developing theme—  
formator

Socialising [at start/  
end]

Closing prayers

### Why “fraternity”?

...Francis could not remain alone for two reasons. He was a ‘people person’ and the Lord is also a ‘people person’. These reasons created Francis into a kind of human magnet to others who observed his way of life and who experienced his spiritual growth. He could not have remained alone if he had wanted to. The life he had chosen was simply too attractive to others who loved the Lord...For that reason, those who are called to follow Francis are called to **fraternity** as community...**Fraternity** keeps us from becoming self-centred. **Fraternity** creates the place where apostolic work in the world is fostered. **Fraternity** gives us strength where we are weak. **Fraternity** gives us opportunities to love others with all their goodness as well as their flaws and irritating ways. And they can do the same for us. **Fraternity** provides an intimate spiritual family within the larger spiritual family of the Church where we can grow in holiness...In **fraternity** we are reminded of our Franciscan charism. Meeting provides opportunities to work together. Individuals grow in friendship in the Lord and each other as they pray together, work together, motivate each other, share their faith journeys. **Fraternities** are havens of joy where laughter and humour lighten life’s burdens. **Fraternities** provide a place to learn to resolve disagreements peaceably. **Fraternities** are places to learn to forgive ourselves and others as we begin again and again to follow Francis and Jesus.

Foley, Weigel, Normile *To Live as Francis Lived* Reflection 48 (p 177-178)





## Scripture—

### Eph 4. 25-5.2

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. Be angry, but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labour and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.