

ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS
- Initial Formation for Candidates -

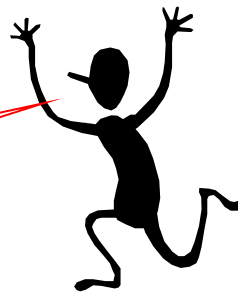
Module 4 PROFESSION
sheet 3

1. A Gift of the Spirit

[III] Relationship with the Church & Witnessing Instruments of Mission

Clear so far?

'Faint, but pursuing'!



RELATIONSHIP WITH CHURCH

The Christian separated from the life of the Church is like a coal separated from the fire in the grate – it just fades & dies. Francis understood this more than many a reformer before & after him. That is: Christ only calls us to work within his body—the Church. We 'Repair the Church' only from within it, for the Church is not a lost cause that needs to be scrapped & replaced. The Church will continue till Christ comes for it ['Parousia' - 'and he shall come again in glory']; nothing will prevail against it: 'we have Christ's own promise, and that cannot fail' - [Matt 16.18]. Rather—

- Profession = reinvigorates relationship with the Church
- the basic baptismal relationship is made 'stronger' & 'closer' [Rule, 6]
- Profession does not establish a new relationship with the Church but makes that relationship stronger & closer ['fortius et arctius']
- Profession acts upon us & produces ecclesial effects—though Rule, Constitutions & Ritual of OFS give no indication about these effects

WITNESSES & INSTRUMENTS OF THE CHURCH'S MISSION

The documents of the OFS are more concerned, therefore, to associate the stronger ecclesial bond arising from Profession with the ecclesial mission of Secular Franciscans:

'They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words. Called like St



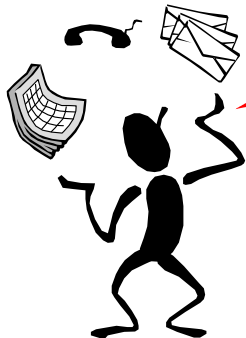
Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, the bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.' [Rule, 6]

- this section of the Rule = developed in Constitutions & Ritual
- the mission of St Francis must be continued in the work of all members of the Franciscan Family – 'Church repair' – in every generation, in every circumstance, in every eventuality, regardless of the personal cost
- not to be a 'rebuilder' is not to be Franciscan

'They should be recognised in it by their *being*, from which their mission springs.' [Constitutions 100.3]

- to live the Rule is to live as authentic members of the Church in line with the stronger & closer bond established with the Church by profession

So, have you got that then?



Let's just say I'm juggling with a lot of things quite new to me! [I really did think I was just joining a prayer group!] Given time [and the Holy Spirit's help] I think I'll be alright.

I'll pray for you!