



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 1: The Essence of Franciscan Spirituality

Chapter 1. The Essence of Franciscan Spirituality

A spirituality is a particular way, or *emphasis*, in following Christ...many things are common to all Christians...There is no difference in our goals and in many of our ways and means. But there is a difference in what we can only be called *emphasis*...

Perhaps the idea can best be illustrated in this way. Several bands may each play the same piece. But the results from a rock group playing are not the same as those heard on your public broadcasting station!...

Differing spiritualities depend largely on the personalities of their founders and times in which religious communities developed...

One Franciscan writer has said, 'If anything specific can be observed about St Francis, it is his great concern to desire *nothing* specific.' Francis' spirituality was simply to 'observe the Gospel.' Yet because he was a unique and attractive personality, the Church gained a unique charism called Franciscan spirituality...The great Franciscan emphasis, then, is on the fact that God is love...[and] Franciscans choose to emphasise it as St Francis did.

Foley, Weigel, Normile *To Live as Francis Lived: a guide for Secular Franciscans* Reflection 4 (p 13-15)

The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the centre of his life with God and people.

Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.

Secular Franciscans should **devote themselves especially to careful reading of the Gospel, going from Gospel to Life and Life to the Gospel.** (Rule 4)

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is that soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.

William Cowper, 1731-1800

Progress reflection....

- Totally committed to living the gospel life in the manner of St Francis?
- In constant communion with Poor Christ of Bethlehem & Calvary?
- Seeing God's loving work of all creation as our brothers and sisters
- Observing continuing Presence of Christ in Eucharist?
- Living a life of penance & daily conversion?
- Committed to the Church
- Committed to the study & keeping of the Rule of the OFS?
- Being instruments of peace in the world?
- Following God's will in our lives as Our Lady, Francis & Clare did?
- Carefully reading the Gospels—not occasionally but—regularly?
- **and so on, and so on....**



Scripture—

John 1. 14, 16, 18; 10. 7-10

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father 's only son, full of grace and truth...From his fullness we have all received , grace upon grace...No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father 's heart, who has made him known.

‘ Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to him. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I am come that they may have life, and have it abundantly. ’