



Brothers & Sisters of St. Francis Region
Alabama • Georgia • North Carolina • South Carolina • Tennessee

INQUIRY PHASE - Preparations before Admission into the Candidacy Phase

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”-Matt. 18:20. May we always remember to begin and end with prayer and thanksgiving for the presence of the Holy Spirit.

To be given to each Inquirer at h/her first class—please discuss.

Reflection Questions Inquiry Phase	Handout - midway through the Inquirer phase It is to reflect upon your CALL to the SFO. You have begun your sessions with the “Prayer before the San Damiano Crucifix” seeking insight and wisdom so that you might discern His holy and true will. This “guided reflection” is one answer to that prayer because it forces you to spend time in serious introspection.
Biography of St. Francis	Turn in a written report and give an oral report about the Franciscan vision and dream and how it attracts you to seek entry into the SFO.
Sessions	We recommend written homework assignments and making up any missed session before the next session.
Private Retreat	to discern, using the “Reflection Questions - Inquiry Phase”, upon your suitability and call to a vocation into the SFO. This is a time to draw aside, perhaps in Eucharistic Adoration or the silence of your home, etc., in prayer with a vibrancy and spirit that truly engages the Almighty: <i>[source Formation Pillar]</i>
Post Retreat	to meet with your ongoing formator after your private retreat and dialogue about your responses to the Reflection Questions. Please give your ongoing formator a copy of the completed “Reflection Questions - Inquiry Phase” in advance of this Conversation so there is ample time to review your responses.
Interview	On your behalf, the Formation Director will send a letter to your pastor requesting his input and recommendation for you to be admitted to the Order. The pastor’s response to the Letter of Recommendation should be made available to the Interviewers before the Interview. During an interview with chosen members of the council, you will dialogue about your time in the Orientation and Inquiry phase and your responses to the Reflection Questions. If it is discerned that you have a call to continue the formation process, you are asked to make a formal request, in writing if possible, to the minister for admission to the Order.
Rite of Admission	Upon approval of admission into the Secular Franciscan Order and the Candidacy Phase of formation by the fraternity council.

Sources: The Rule 23:1 General Constitutions 39:3



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REFLECTION QUESTIONS—INQUIRY PHASE

PURPOSE—"Knowledge seeks to form." Four Pillars

Before one can truly internalize and integrate the Franciscan Charism, it is important that the Inquirer has a basic understanding of our General Constitution, the SFO Rule, and the Four Pillars.

SOURCES FOR REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

THE RULE OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER GENERAL CONSTITUTIONS OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER, 2000 THE FOUR PILLARS

The Constitutions have as their purpose: to apply the Rule and to indicate concretely the conditions for belonging to the SFO, its government, the organization of life in fraternity, and its seat.

Rule 1:3 General Constitutions - Article 4:3

Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order is a life-time commitment to the gospel life. It is a vocation. It is the solemn ecclesial act, by which the candidate, remembering the call received from Christ, renews the promises of h/her Baptism and commitment of Confirmation and publicly affirms a personal commitment to live the Gospel in the world according to the example of Francis and following the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.

The Rule 23:3 General Constitutions: Article 42 Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order: Rite of Profession

CHAPTER ONE - THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

- 1.1 What does it mean to me that life in the Secular Franciscan Order is a vocation?
The Rule 1-19 General Constitutions - Articles 1-3, 8-27, 37:3, 100 Spirituality and Formation Pillars
- 1.2 Why do I believe that God may be calling me to the Secular Franciscan way of life?
The Rule 1-2 General Constitutions - Articles 1:3; 8-16; 17-23; 26-27; 30; 37:2,3; 42:1, 4; 44-45
Formation and Fraternity Pillars

CHAPTER TWO - THE WAY OF LIFE

- 2.1 What does it mean to go from the Gospel to life and life to the Gospel?
The Rule 4-19 General Constitutions - Articles 8:2, 9, 100 Spirituality and Formation Pillars
- 2.2 What is my understanding of Franciscan spirituality?
The Rule 4-5, 7-11, 13, 19 General Constitutions - Articles 1:3, 2:18, 3:3, 9:1, 10-11, 14:2, 15, 18:4, 40:2
Spirituality Pillar
- 2.3 What is my understanding of the Secular Franciscan way of life?
The Rule 4-19 General Constitutions - Articles 8-16 Spirituality and Formation Pillars

How do I understand that the Secular Franciscan way of life is more than a devotion to Sts. Francis and Clare?

How do I understand that the Secular Franciscan way of life differs from the church ministries I perform or the church organizations to which I belong?

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- 2.4 How will I know that I am internalizing the way of Francis and Clare?
The Rule 7-9, 11, 13 General Constitutions - Articles 14, 16, 17:3, 18, 40:2 Spirituality and Formation Pillars
- 2.5 At this time in my journey what does the following promise at profession mean to me?
“I promise to live all the days of my life the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Secular Franciscan Order by observing its rule of life.” Ritual of the SFO, p. 24
The Rule 2, 4-19, 23, 25 General Constitutions - Articles 8; 42:1, 4; 44-45
Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity and Apostolic Pillars

CHAPTER THREE - LIFE IN FRATERNITY

- 3.1 Why is life in fraternity so vital to members of the Secular Franciscan Order?
The Rule 20-26 General Constitutions - Articles 3:3, 26:2, 27:2, 28:1, 33:1, 37:3
Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity and Apostolic Pillars
- 3.2 How am I living the conditions for admission into the Secular Franciscan Order, i.e., to profess the Catholic faith, to live in communion with the Church, to be of good moral standing, and to show clear signs of a vocation? The Rule 22; 23:1, 2; 24 General Constitutions - Articles 39:2, 40:2
- *HOW THE ABOVE QUESTION IS MEANT TO BE UNDERSTOOD - “The commentary on Canon 316 makes it clear that ‘departure from the faith’ includes two elements 1) An expressed disavowal of affiliation with the Catholic Church; 2) The ‘public’ nature of this disavowal. In practice this Canon does not include people who may doubt or question only one element (or even several of them) of the faith. Holding unpopular theological opinions would not inhibit membership. A great deal of caution and restraint is needed in applying Canon 316 (cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 251).
- Lester Bach, OFM Cap.
- 3.3 What are my expectations of life in fraternity?
The Rule 20-22, 24 General Constitutions - Articles 9:2; 13:1; 14:4; 17:2,4; 22:2; 26:2; 27:2; 28:1; 30-33
Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity and Apostolic Pillars
- 3.4 If my expectations of fraternal life are not met, how will I respond?
The Rule 10; 19; 23:3, 4 General Constitutions - Article 30 Spirituality, Formation and Fraternity Pillars
- 3.5 What are my gifts?
The Rule 4, 6, 13-19, 21, 25 General Constitutions - Articles 12, 30:3, 31, 32:2, 37:3
Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity and Apostolic Pillars
- How can I share my gifts with the local fraternity, the regional fraternity and the national fraternity?
- 3.6 What spiritual growth have I experienced during the Orientation and Inquiry Phases of formation?
The Rule 22, 24 General Constitutions - Articles 37:2, 3; 40:3 Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity and Apostolic Pillars

- 3.7 How do I understand the statement: “Participation in the meetings of the local fraternity is an indispensable presupposition for initiation into community prayer and into fraternity life”?
The Rule 24 General Constitutions - Articles 40:3, 53:1-3 Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity and Apostolic Pillars
- 3.8 In what church ministries or clubs and organizations am I involved?
The Rule 24 General Constitutions - Article 100 Formation, Fraternity and Apostolic Pillars
- 3.9 If necessary, what changes/adjustments am I willing to make with these other commitments so that my Secular Franciscan commitments will be a priority?
The Rule 24 General Constitutions - Articles 11, 30, 40:3, 100, 102, 103 Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity and Apostolic Pillars
- 4.0 How do I understand the following “Profession incorporates the candidate into the Order and is by its nature a perpetual/life-time commitment”?
GC article 42:4 and the Rule #23.

*Called to Rebuild the Church, a Spiritual Commentary on the General Constitutions of the SFO, page 97, By Lester Bach, OFM Cap.