

***Franciscan Journey* chapter 10 notes**

Candidacy in the OFS

Candidacy

Candidacy is the final stage of initial formation. It is not the end of formation, but another step on the way. This period leads to your decision to make a permanent profession as a secular Franciscan. Profession opens the door to ongoing formation in Franciscan living.

USA National Statutes (article 19.2b) determine that candidacy is not less than 18 months nor more than 36 months. BSSF Guidelines call for a minimum of 2 years.

During Candidacy we will concentrate on the articles of the Rule along with parts of the OFS Constitutions that further explain the Rule. The primary purpose is to gain understanding of the commitment you will make in Profession, to begin to put the Rule into practice, and to discern whether this is what God is calling you to do. Profession is for life.

Kingdom of God

The will of God is LOVE. Not judgment, but a loving response to the Gospel. The spirit of Francis calls us to deepen our relationship with Jesus. Candidacy explores ways and means to achieve intimacy with Jesus. In faith we discover ways to express love in daily life. Our Franciscan spirit enables us to share love in the Church and the world.

Prologue to the Rule

Concerning those who do penance and concerning those who do not do penance. The Prologue begins with a call to love – love God with everything we have. Love neighbor in the same way. Love ourselves with an honest love. Recognize the importance of the Eucharist. Produce worthy fruits of penance.

Being in sin is a self-centered life. If our general status is a self-centered one that avoids loving God and neighbor as a first choice, then it is not the individual sins that hinder our growth. It is the fact that our inner spirit does not give God first place in our lives. We need a conversion that moves us to change that interior spirit. If we embrace the conversion the Spirit calls us to make, we find ourselves in a more peaceable stance.

We will be spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ (Cf. *Matthew 12:50*):

- Spouse - the Spirit that prompts and enables us to become intimate with Jesus. We not only avoid individual sins, but we root out the radical sources of sin. To be a spouse reminds us that a personal relationship with Jesus is important in our lives.
- Mother - through the Spirit we carry the presence of Jesus in our lives. Francis calls us to “give birth to him through a holy life which must give light to others by example” (Cf. *Matthew 5:16*).
- Brothers/Sisters - We are brothers (sisters) when our lives reflect the model of our brother, Jesus. Like Jesus, we embrace the way of the Father no matter what the cost. We imitate Jesus' compassion for the needy and concern for the poor and marginalized. They should respect spiritually and attentively one another, and honor one another without complaining. Let them be careful not to appear outwardly as sad and gloomy hypocrites; but show themselves joyful, cheerful and consistently gracious in the Lord.

Our relationship with the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit moves us to proclaim the Gospel.

Penance and conversion – (*metanoia* - change in one's way of life resulting from penitence or spiritual conversion.) It calls for a complete turn-around in our lives. It calls us to turn from self-centeredness. “Radical conversion.” Metanoia is a process that goes on and on and on as long as life lasts. Francis' way of life requires BEING someone in love. Warm, reaching out, serving, loving, vulnerable and human.

The Sacrament of Charity (*Sacramentum Caritatis*) – Pope Benedict XVI

Christians, in all their actions, are called to offer true worship to God. We can see the full human import of the radical newness brought by Christ in the Eucharist: the worship of God in our lives cannot be relegated to something private and individual, but tends by its nature to permeate every aspect of our existence. Becomes a new way of living our whole life.

Poverty and Joy – Wm. Short OFM

In his care for people with Hansen's disease, Francis was following that example of Jesus that he knew from the gospel. Jesus calls others, after his wilderness retreat, to conversion, to repent, to change their lives. To show the effects of this turning to God Jesus does something specific: He heals people who are suffering from disease, both physical disease and sickness of spirit (*Mt 4:23-4*).

Saved in Hope (*Spe Salvi*) – Pope Benedict XVI

Man is redeemed by love. It is a love that remains fragile. This is what it means to say: Jesus Christ has “redeemed” us. Through him we have become certain of God.

Scripture reflection: 2 Timothy 1:8-14

Salvation is a process initiated by God, so that the grace we receive is entirely free and unmerited by our efforts (Rom 6:23; Tit 3:5). At the same time, God calls us to cooperate with his grace in order to become holy and reach our heavenly home (Phil 2:12; Heb 12:14) (CCC 1996, 2008). - *Ignatius Study Bible*

The close connection of called with the saving act suggests that for the recipients the two are in reality one: God saves us in calling us to embrace the gospel (Gal 1:6) and baptism (Titus 3:5), to be united with his Son (1 Cor 1:9), and to enter the kingdom and share eternal life (1 Thess 2:12; 1 Tim 6:12). – *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*