

Franciscan Journey chapter 4 notes

Inquiry in the OFS

Initial Formation

- The purpose of initial formation is to discern whether you have a vocation to become a secular Franciscan. Three phases.
- Orientation – getting to know each other and a general feel for what we do.
- Inquiry – the focus is on the lives of Francis and Clare and the history of the OFS.
- Candidacy – focus is on the Rule and discernment of whether you are called to live that Rule.

Inquiry

- BSSF Guideline is one year for Inquiry.
- Participate in both initial formation sessions and in regular gatherings.
- Call to life as a secular Franciscan is a vocation, a call of the Holy Spirit.
- The call of the Spirit may come in many ways and forms.

Franciscan Spirituality

- It is a call to follow Christ in the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi.
- We make present the charism of St Francis in the life and mission of the Church.
- Spirituality: our way of perceiving things and people.
- We grow in our ability to see reality with the eyes of the Trinity.
- Respond to difficult situations with sense of respect and reverence, open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Build relationships: listen, forgive, reconcile, apologize, avoid dominating attitude.
- Brothers and sisters of penance: radical interior change = daily conversion.
- Find expression of Franciscan spirit in the actions of daily life.
- Bear witness:
 - in family life
 - in work
 - in joys and sufferings
 - in associations with all men and women
 - in presence and participation in life of society
 - in fraternal relationships with all creatures

Review BSSF Guidelines for Inquiry Phase

SFO Constitutions – Articles 11, 12.2, 13.1

- Seek the Spirit of God at work within us.
- Seek to know the will of the Father.
- Make courageous choices with decisiveness and serenity.
- Live in the spirit of continual conversion.

The Saint – Prayer inspired by the Our Father

- Written by St Francis, a commentary on the Lord's Prayer suggest that this style of prayer forms a "catechism of prayer"

Deus Caritas Est – Pope Benedict XVI – Paragraph 31:

The distinctiveness of the Church's charitable activity

- Love of neighbour is inscribed by the Creator in man's very nature.
- Christian charity is first of all the simple response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc.
- Service to others – professionally competent, committed, heartfelt concern, faith that becomes active through love.
- This heart sees where love is needed and acts accordingly.
- A pure and generous love is the best witness to God.

Scripture Reflection: *Mark 3:1-6*

The Man with a Withered Hand

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. And they watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come here." And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out, and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture – Is it permissible to perform a good deed on the Sabbath in contravention of the letter of the law, or must one allow evil to happen, by refraining from action in order to keep the letter of the law? ... The silence of the Pharisees is proof of their obduracy.

Anchor Yale Bible – many of the correspondences contrast Jesus with the Pharisees and thus emphasize the element of conflict; his entrance into the synagogue at the beginning, for example, is opposed to their exit at the end, and his intention of "giving life" on the Sabbath is contrasted to their plot to kill... Jesus makes withholding the cure of the man's paralyzed hand, even for a few hours, tantamount to killing him, and performing the cure immediately tantamount to saving his life... His Sabbath-day healing of the man with the paralyzed hand is a fulfillment rather than an infraction of the commandment to "remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy" ... The Pharisees cannot either disavow their principle of saving life on the Sabbath or go along with Jesus' radicalization of it. **They are silent** – ominously so, because disputants who have lost face by being reduced to speechlessness in public... **The Pharisees went out** – a significant verb implying self-exclusion from the divine presence.

Sacra Pagina – The deeper meaning of holy institutions such as the Sabbath, which honor God, can be lost sight of in the very act of careful observance of such institutions. When faced with unexpected and serious challenges to their concept of God and traditional practices, even deeply committed religious people can end up doing evil.