

***Franciscan Journey* chapter 5 notes**

Lay Secular Spirituality

Living in the spirit of the founder:

Founder's Charism: The distinctive spirituality of the founder or foundress of a religious institute, which then distinguishes a religious family from other forms of consecrated life approved by the Church. It is the personality of a religious community bequeathed by the one who founded the institute. According to the Second Vatican Council, this charism is "the spirit and aims of each founder [which] should be faithfully accepted and retained" (Perfectae Caritatis, 2).

"Secular" - in the world – presence in the world leads to impact upon the community.

Secular Franciscan Order – lay order:

- as much Franciscan as OFM and Poor Clares.
- participation in discipline and penitential practices by following the Rule.
- autonomous order collaborating with OFM and TOR.
- strive for perfect charity.

Foundation in Baptism:

- members of community of believers.
- responsibility to listen and implement the Word of God.
- contribute to building the Kingdom of God.
- participation in priestly service.
- accepting and living the Word of God
- place in the Kingdom of God.

The Secular Franciscan Order differs from other Third Orders in significant way, and it is important that we be aware of the characteristics specific to the OFS:

- common founder with the First and Second Order—St Francis of Assisi.
- not associated with the First Order or TOR—autonomous and self-governing.
- shares in vital reciprocity with other branches of Franciscan family and has equal dignity.
- given same charism and mission as other branches of the Franciscan family. In our secular state, we, too, continue the mission of St. Francis to rebuild God's Church.
- Rule and Constitutions approved by the Holy See, not by the Ministers General of the First Order and Third Order Regular.
- members of other third orders may be in more than one order. Secular Franciscans may not.

Francis embraced biblical ideals:

- relation to all creation – creation is an outpouring of God's love.
- continuous conversion.
- relate to God in prayer.

Show respectful and reverent way of dealing with all people:

- "Meet people where they are." - Fr Aubrey
- personal wisdom and collaboration with people of good will.

Tau cross (page 58):

- the external sign of the OFS in the United States is the TAU. (USA National Statutes Article 16.4)

***Poverty and Joy* - William Short, OFM, pages 30 to 36**

“Christocentric” - Francis lived a life centered on Jesus Christ. (We follow Jesus in the footsteps of Francis.)

Themes of Franciscan Tradition:

- the Incarnation.
- life in poverty.
- the lepers (service to others)
 - led Francis to see the suffering of Christ in vividly physical terms.
- the cross – depth of charity.
- creation - “Canticle of the Creatures”

***FUN Manual* - “Our Identity as a Secular Franciscan” - Anne Mulqueen, OFS**

Secular = in the world.

Franciscan = follow rule of Francis.

Order = our relationship with the Church.

Secular

The identity of the Secular Franciscan is rooted in our secularity. St. Francis brought the practice of gospel life out of the monasteries into the world of the family and society.

Secular life is sacred when we offer the work of our hands and the desire of our hearts to the Lord.

Our secular nature gives us a forum to witness to our Christian and Franciscan values. We take stands against exploitation and discrimination. We protest reckless and evil disregard for human life. We work to protect our environment. And as people of peace, we bring the essential ingredients of prayer and peace to penetrate society.

Franciscan

OFS is one branch of a single Franciscan family.

Spiritual emphasis:

- spiritual emphasis for the First Order is minority.
- spiritual emphasis for the Second Order (Poor Clares) is poverty.
- spiritual emphasis for the Third Order Regular and the OFS is conversion (penance).

The roots of our Secular Franciscan identity begin in the penitential movement that St. Francis joined and influenced in the early 13th Century. Conversion for St. Francis meant turning away from self-centeredness and turning to Christ.

Secular Franciscans, called in earlier times “the brothers and sisters of penance,” propose to live in the spirit of continual conversion.

St. Francis considered penance a gift from God.

What Francis asks us to do is positive: (1) love God totally, (2) love our neighbor as ourselves, (3) hate our sinful tendencies, (4) receive the body and blood of Christ in a worthy manner, and (5) produce good fruits of penance.

Order

Article 2 of the Rule contains all the essential elements of an Order. It is a movement led by the Spirit. It is an organic union of Catholic fraternities throughout the world. Its people strive for perfect charity in a secular state. They profess to live the gospel in the manner of its founder, Francis of Assisi.

The Franciscan Journey – Chapter 5 “Lay Secular Spirituality” - Questions

1. Franciscan spirituality:
 - a. Rooted in the gospel and Christ centered.
 - b. Humility and poverty of the Incarnation is the model for Franciscan life, theology, and approach to all creation.
 - c. Fraternity is essential to Franciscan life.
 - d. We are people of penance, i.e., ongoing, continuous conversion.
 - e. The fruit of Franciscan spirituality is the perfection of love, with a particular emphasis on peace and joy. [*Source*](#)
2. How spiritualities differ from one another:
 - a. The various spiritualities among Catholic orders have the common goal of reaching everlasting life with Christ, but differ in emphasis and approach:
 - i. Franciscan spirituality is action oriented, with a focus upon humility, penance, and justice.
 - ii. Dominican spirituality is more focused upon study and preaching.
 - iii. Carmelite spirituality emphasizes the interior life.
 - b. The source of these differences rests in the charisms of the orders' founders.
3. The offices of priest, prophet, and king are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and we are baptized into Him:
 - a. We are priests in that we offer sacrifices and prophets in that we are called to spread the Word of God.
 - b. **CCC 1213**: “Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: ‘Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word.’”
 - c. **CCC 1241**: “The anointing with sacred chrism, perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop, signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized, who has become a Christian, that is, one ‘anointed’ by the Holy Spirit, incorporated into Christ who is anointed priest, prophet, and king.
 - d. **CCC 1279**: “The fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, is a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins, birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ.”
4. OFS as God’s way of calling me to a certain way of living:
 - a. Franciscan Rule mirrors the gospel’s call to a Christian life.
 - b. In profession, we sacrifice ourselves and commit ourselves to God’s service, to continual conversion, to daily prayer, etc.
 - c. This is a lifelong commitment – a rule for life.
5. How the Trinity’s inner life influences Franciscan spirituality:
 - a. See “Bonaventure on the Trinity” at the end of the chapter’s notes.
6. How the “love” Franciscans speak of differs from society’s way of speaking of love:
 - a. Pope Benedict XVI pointed three kinds of love in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*:
 - i. **eros** = love between man and woman which is neither planned nor willed, but somehow imposes itself upon human beings.

- ii. **philia** = the love of friendship.
 - iii. **agape** = totally selfless love, which seeks not one's own advantage but only to benefit or share with another.
 - 1. This is the love that Jesus speaks of when he says in *John 15:13*: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
 - 2. *Matthew 5:43-44* quotes Jesus: "love your neighbor... love your enemies..." using the word *agape*.
 - 3. *1 John 4* says "God is love," the word used is *agape*.
 - 4. Christ used the word *agape* to describe the love among the persons of the Trinity.
 - 5. Jesus used the word *agape* to describe how "God so loved the world" in *John 3:16*.
 - b. Thomas of Celano spoke of the stigmata as a symbol of **Seraphic Love** = perfect conformity with Christ.
 - c. Pope Benedict in a general audience address on Bonaventure:
 - i. Pseudo-Dionysius speaks of nine orders of angels whose names he had found in Scripture and then organized in his own way, from the simple angels to the seraphim. St Bonaventure interprets these orders of angels as steps on the human creature's way to God. Thus they can represent the human journey, the ascent towards communion with God. For St Bonaventure there is no doubt: St Francis of Assisi belonged to the Seraphic Order, to the supreme Order, to the choir of seraphim, namely, he was a pure flame of love. And this is what Franciscans should have been. But St Bonaventure knew well that this final step in the approach to God could not be inserted into a juridical order but is always a special gift of God. For this reason the structure of the Franciscan Order is more modest, more realistic, but nevertheless must help its members to come ever closer to a seraphic existence of pure love. [Source](#)
 - 7. My understanding of religion in general and Franciscan spirituality in particular tends to be intellectual rather than a deeply rooted way of life. In my journey of continual conversion, this is my greatest challenge: how do I convert intellectual understanding into love-filled, apostolate action?
 - 8. Scripture reflection **Luke 8:9-15**:
- Ignatius Study Bible**
Matthew 13:18-23 The parable of the Sower illustrates how indifferent responses to the **word of the kingdom** (13:19) prove unfruitful (CCC 29). Distractions come from the world (13:22; 19:24), the flesh (13:21; 10:22; 26:41), and the devil (13:19; 10:28). On the other hand, **fruit** brought forth from the responsive heart abounds (13:23). Fruit is a common biblical image for the good works and faithfulness that flow from God's grace (7:17; 12:33; cf. Ps 1:1-3; Jer 17:10; Jn 15:5; Gal 5:22-23).¹

CCHS:

¹ Mitch, C. (2010). [Introduction to the Gospels](#). In *The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The New Testament* (pp. 30-31). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Matthew 13:18-23 The Sower Parable explained (*Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:11-15*)—‘You therefore’, says our Lord, ‘hear ye the parable’. Actually it is the meaning of the parable that they are about to hear, but in Aramaic there is no exact expression for ‘significance, explanation’. The seed is the doctrine of the Kingdom, sown by our Lord and later by the Apostles. For three classes of men it remained fruitless.

19. In some it is a total lack of spiritual appreciation. The word lies un-regarded. Satan alone benefits. ‘This is he that was sown by the wayside’. ‘The various kinds of soil represent the various kinds of hearers. But since the fate of the seed really represents the spiritual fate of the hearers, the seed and the hearers are in part identified’, WV.

20-21. In others there is a thin layer of spiritual perception, but the superficial are given to sudden and ephemeral enthusiasms. The quick growth is not of deep root and soon disappears; the personal sacrifice entailed and even active opposition ‘presently’ (i. e. ‘immediately’) prove a snare in the moral path of such men.

22. The third category is of those in whom the root strikes deepest. Yet here too the seed will not come to maturity if side by side with it grow preoccupation with the affairs of the world and particularly with the seductive glamour (WV) of riches. 23. Not all the successful seed bears the same fruit, but in all cases it is abundant.

Bonaventure on the Trinity

These three – the mind that generates, the word, and love – are in the soul as memory, intelligence, and will... therefore, when the soul reflects upon itself and through itself as through a mirror, it rises to the consideration of the Blessed Trinity of Father, Word, and Love.

All of philosophy is either...

natural – cause of being, which therefore points to the Father. Natural philosophy is divided into metaphysics, mathematics, and physics.

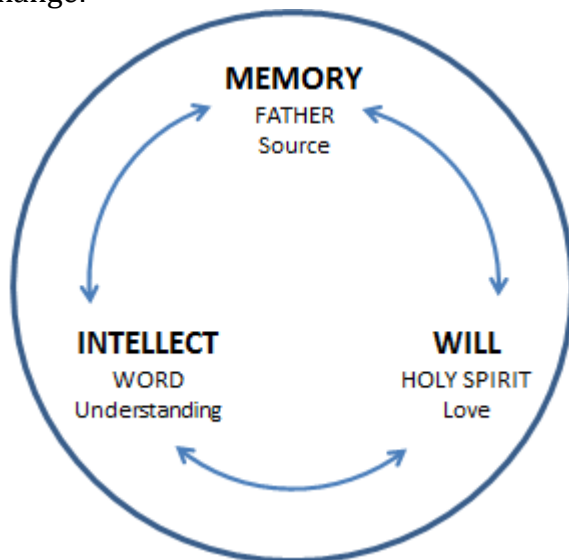
rational – the basis of understanding, which therefore points to the Word. Rational philosophy is divided into grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

moral – the order of living, which therefore points to the Holy Spirit. Moral philosophy is divided into the monastic, familial, and political.

Sciences governed by certain and infallible laws that are like lights and beams coming down from that eternal law into our minds. Mind, therefore, can be guided to reflect on this eternal light through itself if it has not been blinded.

Psalm 76:4-5: “ You enlighten wonderfully from the everlasting hills. All the foolish of heart were troubled.” (CCHS – “everlasting hills” refers to Jerusalem.)

The inner relationship of our three inner powers, experienced as limited by humanity, points to the perfect inner Trinitarian exchange:



In a healthy human psyche, memory should set free all its capacities, fantasies, and dreams – even the dark shadows of early childhood – to lead one to greater awareness and articulation.

Bonaventure says that it is only in God, the perfect psyche, where one person gives all to the other. Every second of our lives, this mechanism of our human psyche, memory / understanding / will, reproduces the mutual cooperation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are indeed created in the image and likeness of God!

In the Trinity we find the highest...

communicability
consubstantiality
conformability
co-equality
co-eternity
intimacy

together with...

the property of the persons
the plurality of hypostases
discrete personality
order
emanation
mission