

## ***Franciscan Journey* chapter 9 notes**

### **Vatican II + OFS Rule and Constitutions**

#### **Vatican II**

Vatican II invites us to continue the re-building of the Church as Jesus asked of Francis. We do this out of love, seeking to share the treasure of the word of God in Scripture and the wonder of the Word-made-flesh in Jesus.

Lay people share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ. Apostolate is exercised when we evangelize people, when we endeavor to have the gospel spirit, and bear witness to Christ. Lay people are called by God to make of their apostolate, through the vigor of their Christian spirit, a leaven in the world.

OFS Rule of 1978 takes this direction seriously. It is a particular way of living the Gospel. The new rule makes Francis's spirit clear for our times:

- Balance between prayer and action – how prayer and action are partners.
- Social action.
- Approach people with gentleness, care, and compassion.
- Personal need for radical conversion.
- Must be inviting, seek justice rather than allowing injustice, seek peace, spirit of community rather than individuality, recognizing need for God, hope and guidance from the Bible.

#### **Secular Spirituality**

"Secular" simply describes where your "Spirituality" takes place and blossoms – not in a monastery or convent, not necessarily in a church. You live it wherever you go,

#### **The Rule**

In candidacy we explore the implications of the Rule as well as examining the insights offered by the OFS General Constitutions.

Seventeen points served as guidelines – (see pp. 103-104).

In the Rule, *radical conversion* has a much wider meaning than a one-time change that happens all at once. It is both an initial and an ongoing decision to live Franciscan values, relate to God and to people in new ways, and develop qualities and virtues that may be missing in our lives. Radical conversion is an ongoing process throughout life, supported by a community of people with the same goal and desire.

A Secular Franciscan assumes personal responsibility for following the Rule of 1978. We make a public profession proclaiming the commitment to do so.

#### **Constitutions and Statutes**

The OFS Constitutions contain comments on the Rule and insights for understanding the Rule, spell out canonical procedures, ways and means to deal with issues that may arise in fraternity life. They are a wide-ranging commentary on the Secular Franciscan way of life.

The structure of the Constitutions mirrors the Rule itself:

**Rule Chapter**

- 1 – The Secular Franciscan Order
- 2 – The Way of Life
- 3 – Life in Fraternity

**Constitutions Chapter**

- I – The Secular Franciscan Order
- II – Form of Life and Apostolic Activity
- III – Life in Fraternity

Statutes are specific documents that spell out governing details not contained in the Constitutions. Regions may develop Guidelines for specific need of the region.

Example: We follow the *BSSF Regional Formators' Guidelines* for your formation. That is where the initial formation steps are outlined: reflection questions, report on St Francis biography, private retreat, etc.

**General Constitutions – Articles 17 & 18**

This is an example of how the Constitutions comment on the Rule. Constitution article 17 comments on Rule Article 6, and Constitution article 18 comments on Rule Article 13. Note how the Rule is quoted, followed by additional comments on how to live that rule.

**Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul; Discernment of St. Francis -- *The Founder***

The brothers of St Francis did their best to follow Francis's strict fasts. In this story, one of the brothers overdid it. Rather than have that brother suffer embarrassment, Francis had all the brothers prepare a table and eat together. He concluded: "Let the charity, not the food, be an example to you, for the latter feeds the belly while the former feeds the spirit."

**The Minor Legend of St. Francis - Sixth lesson – *The Founder***

This passage gives us some insight into how embracing Lady Poverty led Francis to grow spiritually – in holy simplicity and innocence. He recognized God as Artisan of all Creation, and he praised God in all things: "he possessed all things in God and God in all things."

**Review Questions Franciscan Journey pages 107-108**

Question 1 may be more of a one-on-one question as part of the Post-Retreat meeting with ongoing formation director outlined in the *BSSF Regional Formators' Guidelines*.

Most of the other questions are answered in the notes above.

**Scripture reflection: *Hosea 14:1-9***