

Formation in the OFS

This describes the process for becoming a professed Secular Franciscan and the three stages of formation.

THE PROCESS

The process of becoming a professed Secular Franciscan is a journey that involves three separate stages and culminates in a lifelong commitment to live the gospel following the example of St. Francis of Assisi. This formation process unfolds in regularly scheduled formation sessions during which the home study material is thoroughly discussed.

The first stage, Orientation, provides time for dialogue and developing relationships in fraternity. During Orientation you will be introduced to the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare and share in Franciscan prayer life. You will be given general information about the Secular Franciscan Order. Orientation is a time to discern if the Spirit is calling you to a Secular Franciscan vocation. The period of Orientation is a minimum of three months.

The second stage, Inquiry, is the first formal period of initiation. It is a time of in-depth study of the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare. During Inquiry you will learn about the Franciscan charism and Franciscan history. You will deepen your understanding of what it means to be secular and Franciscan, and you will continue to discern if the Spirit is calling you to the Secular Franciscan way of life. The period of Inquiry is a minimum of six months. If a vocation is discerned, the Inquirer is received into the Order.

The third stage, Candidacy, is the final formal period of initiation. It is a time of preparing for permanent commitment by immersion into fraternity life. Central to this stage of formation is Article 4 of The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order which states, “The rule and life of the Secular Franciscan is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.” The period of Candidacy is a minimum of eighteen months and culminates in permanent commitment to the gospel life.

Source: http://www.nafra-sfo.org/is_god_calling.html

Those in initial formation are expected to attend fraternity and formation meetings. Participation in the meetings of the local fraternity is an indispensable presupposition for initiation into community prayer and into fraternity life. General Constitutions SFO, 40, 3.

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