

Orientation Discernment Activities¹

First Month:

Pray daily for calm, enlightenment, purification of intent, freedom from fear by praying St. Francis' Prayer:

**Most High, Glorious God,
Enlighten the darkness of my heart
And give me right faith,
Firm hope and perfect charity,
With wisdom and insight, O Lord,
That I may know and do
Your holy and true will
[through Christ our Lord]. Amen**

Second Month:

1. List the advantages and disadvantages of your becoming a member of the Secular Franciscan Order.
2. Moreover, list the advantages and disadvantages of not becoming a member of the Secular Franciscan Order.
3. Review the lists no sooner than 3 days after you write them and revise them if necessary.
4. Put the items listed into two categories:
 - I. Which are God centered?
 - II. Which are self centered?
5. As though placing the two orientations on a scale, which set of items "outweighs" the other?
6. What does this say about your leaning toward becoming a Secular Franciscan? Why?

Third Month:

Looking at the exercise from last month, what is your "gut" feeling or inner emotion or attitude of the heart concerning becoming a Secular Franciscan?

¹ Taken & Adapted from ***Fully Mature with the Fullness of Christ*** by Benet Fonck, 3rd Edition

- Does the feeling energize you, generate a sense of excitement or challenge, or produce a wonder filled “yes?”
- Or does the feeling bring about a “ho hum” or “so what” posture, cause you anxiety or fear or cause you to surface a “no”, “not yet” or “maybe” reaction?

Repeat this exercise a month after you did it the first time. Has it changed? What is the Spirit saying to you through this activity?

Fourth Month:

Confirm the results of Activities #2 & #3 (the advantages/disadvantages lists and the ‘gut feelings’) with 3 different people. Are they in accord with what you are discerning? Why or why not?

Fifth Month:

Confirm the lists of Advantages/disadvantages, gut feelings, and opinions of others with:

1. a least one quote from Scripture
2. at least one quote from a Vatican Document
3. a quote from the writings of St. Francis and/or St. Clare
4. a quote from another Catholic Christian source.

Share your findings with the Formation Director or Spiritual Assistant in a personal meeting.

Sixth Month:

If your journey this far has you saying “I do” want to be a member of the Secular Franciscan Order, write out your personal Statement of Intent and your formal Letter of Request to the Fraternity Council about why you want to be admitted to the Secular Franciscan Order. Submit this to the Formation Director who will take it to the Council.

If your journey has brought you to a “no”, the Secular Franciscan Order is not right for me, or not right for me at this time, Praise God. Your time has been well spent and you learned a lot about yourself. In either case, the Spirit is moving you in the direction you are to travel. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your journey.