

Welcome to <FRATERNITY NAME> Fraternity . We'd like to share with you a bit about the Secular Franciscan Order.

Almost 800 years ago, St. Francis of Assisi established three orders; the Friars (Brothers); the order for religious women (St. Clare's order; known today as the Poor Clares) and an order for the laity. The lay order is today called the Secular Franciscans.

Secular Franciscans are professed lay people. This means we make a life long commitment to following Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis. This is our vocation. Therefore, we strive to follow the example and words of St. Francis. To do this, we must embrace St. Francis' way of Gospel living and apply it to the secular world.

Secular Franciscans use the phrase "from gospel to life and life to gospel". This phrase is actually part of our profession ritual. But what does it mean? We must educate ourselves about what it means to follow Christ by studying scripture, by prayer, and by learning from fellow Secular Franciscans and applying what we learn to our every day lives in the world. The goal is to discern what God wants us to do in each situation we find ourselves in and to do it!

Since Secular Franciscans are human, we must daily be nourished by prayer and scripture meditation. We are committed to praying the Liturgy of the Hours, the prayer of the Church, morning and evenings or other forms of Franciscan prayer. We have an acute understanding of the need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and therefore frequent the sacrament often.

Secular Franciscans make a commitment to fraternal life. As members of fraternities, we meet on a regular basis (usually once a month) to socialize, pray, and most importantly to learn and grow spiritually. We are committed to on-going formation.

St. Francis exhibited an awe of creation, great joy, and simplicity. Therefore, it is fitting that St. Francis is the patron saint of ecology. Secular Franciscans strive to see God in all of creation as St. Francis did and care for the environment. Secular Franciscans try to live simply, to not be attached to possessions and to be good stewards of the gifts that God gives us. We strive to be humble, knowing that all we have comes from God and therefore, we must use our possessions to do God's will.

St. Francis was very concerned with the poor and uncared for in his society. Secular Franciscans are therefore called to be active in social justice and show compassion for others. We are called to use our talents and finances to help people less fortunate than ourselves.

St. Francis loved and was obedient to the Catholic Church. He transformed the Church from within. As Secular Franciscans we must be practicing Roman Catholics, active members of our parishes, and working to bring Christ to the world.

St. Francis was a peacemaker. Therefore, as a Secular Franciscan we must work for peace within our homes, our workplaces, our communities, and our world.

So, we hope you understand better what it means to be a Secular Franciscan. Becoming a Secular Franciscan is a life commitment. It is a commitment to this fraternity. Secular Franciscans strive to live their lives from "gospel to life and life to gospel." We've listed a number of elements of Franciscan spirituality (prayerfulness, simplicity, humility, an awe of

creation, penitential, and working for social justice and peace). As you consider a vocation within the Secular Franciscans you must determine if Franciscan spirituality is what you are searching for. We welcome you to learn and grow with us on our spiritual journey. You and the fraternity will need to discern whether the Holy Spirit is calling you to join us, to join another third order group, or something else. You are here for a reason and we welcome you!

Pax et bonum (Peace and all good)