

Saint Francis Fraternity

Ongoing Formation

June 2014

Article 2

The Secular Franciscan Order holds a special place in this family circle. It is an organic union of all Catholic fraternities scattered throughout the world and open to every group of the faithful. In these fraternities the brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state. By their profession they pledge themselves to live the gospel in the manner of Saint Francis by means of this rule approved by the Church.

Article 3

The present rule, succeeding "Memoriale Propositi" (1221) and the rules approved by the Supreme Pontiffs Nicholas IV and Leo XIII, adapts the Secular Franciscan Order to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times. Its interpretation belongs to the Holy See and its application will be made by the General Constitutions and particular statutes.

The Secular Franciscan Order is truly secular, for it has a specialized style of evangelization: to transform the world from within with the life and teachings of Jesus, and to do so by means of change of heart, worship, simple things, community, service, justice, peace, ecology, and Christian attitudes toward work. For Secular Franciscans the workaday world is the arena of salvation and the altar for the consecration of creation.

~ Benet A. Fonck, OFM, *Called to Proclaim Christ*

But by reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit to the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they must manifest Christ to others.

~ *Lumen Gentium*, 31

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Questions for meditation and discussion

- Article 2 states: "In these fraternities the brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state." What does "strive for perfect charity" mean to you?
- What are some ways our fraternity and our order as a whole help us to strive for perfect charity?
- In what ways does the current rule adapt "the Secular Franciscan Order to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times?"
- What potential for a renewed identity for the Secular Franciscans themselves and new image to the public might this new rule provide?