“Concordances”

Module 4

SECRETARIAT FOR FORMATION CIOFS

Cari Dear Brothers and Sisters
of the Secular Franciscan Order
Peace and Good

The CIOFS Formation Secretariat continues working in your service, always seeking to strengthen our formation process and support our formators.

"Concordances," Module 4, focuses on reflecting on our OFS Rule and aims to: provide OFS members with a didactic approach to deepen their understanding of each article of the Rule through a reading that helps us to know and reflect from the sources, thus comprehending and deepening our sense of belonging from the Christian, Franciscan, and Ecclesial dimensions. It emphasizes that all these aspects are fundamental to any reflection on our Franciscan journey of life, not through an isolated and disconnected reading, but rather an integrated reading of the Rule and the cited sources.

- In the Christian sense: The Gospel
- In the Franciscan sense: Sources and biographical texts on the life of Saint Francis of Assisi
- In the Ecclesial sense: Texts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Words and reflections of the Holy Father.

This formation material is intended for the stage of our ongoing formation and especially for formators.

We consider it important to deepen our understanding of our way of life, “Our Rule,” throughout our lives. Therefore, we want to offer this new material for our fraternities, keeping in mind that our formators can further enrich our formation programs.

Your brothers and sisters,

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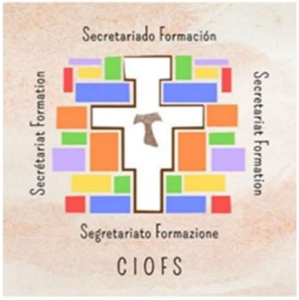

CONCORDANCES

Module 4
SECRETARIAT for Formation
Secular Franciscan Order

CHAPTER II
THE WAY OF LIFE
Article 6 Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

Chapter II of the OFS Rule, entitled "Form of Life," invites us in a concrete way to live spirituality in daily life.

In the light of the Gospel, and together with the writings of St. Francis, our legislation and the Magisterium of the Church reinforce our Franciscan option.

IN COMMUNION WITH THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH, ART. 6 OF THE OFS RULE

JESUS INVITES US...

MATTHEW 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they prostrated themselves, but some doubted.

Jesus came near and spoke to them: "I have been given full authority in heaven and on earth.

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptize them—consecrating them to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit—and teach them to observe everything I have commanded you. I will be with you until the end of the world."

ST. FRANCIS INVITES US

TESTAMENT OF SIENA

Write down how I bless all my brothers—those who are in our Order and those who will join it until the end of time... Since, due to the weakness and pain of illness, I lack the strength to speak, I briefly declare my will to my brothers in these three points: namely, that as a sign of the memory of my blessing and my testament, they should always love one another; that they should always love and observe holy poverty, our Lady; and that they should always show themselves faithful and submissive to the prelates and all the clergy of Holy Mother Church.(1)

THE RULE INVITES US.

Article 6

Buried and raised with Christ in Baptism—which makes them living members of the Church—and more closely bound to her through their Profession, let them become witnesses and instruments of her mission among people, proclaiming Christ through their lives and words.

Inspired by Saint Francis and called with him to rebuild the Church, let them strive to live in full communion with the Pope, the Bishops, and the priests, in an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic creativity.(2)

THE GENERAL COSTITUTIONS INVITE US.

Art. 14

2. Within the Fraternities, the preparation of the brothers and sisters should be promoted for the spreading of the Gospel message “in the ordinary conditions of the world” and for their collaboration in the catechesis of ecclesial communities.

3. Those called to exercise the mission of catechists, leaders of ecclesial communities, or other ministries—as well as sacred ministers—should live out Saint Francis’s love for the Word of God, his faith in those who proclaim it, and the great fervor with which he received the mission to preach penance from the Pope.

4. The brothers and sisters should put into practice the participation in the sanctifying office—which the Church exercises through liturgy, prayer, and works of penance and charity—first within their own families, then in the Fraternity, and finally through their active presence in the local Church and in society.

Art. 17

1. Called to collaborate in building up the Church as a sacrament of salvation for all people, and constituted by baptism and profession as “witnesses and instruments of its mission,” Secular Franciscans proclaim Christ through their lives and words.

Their primary apostolate is personal witness in the environment where they live and service toward building up the Kingdom of God within earthly realities.

Art. 99

1. As a living part of the People of God and inspired by the Seraphic Father, Secular Franciscans—"united in full communion with the Pope and the Bishops"—should strive to know and deepen their understanding of the doctrine proposed by the Church’s Magisterium through its most significant documents, and remain attentive to the presence of the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the faith and charity of the People of God. Collaborate in initiatives promoted by the Holy See, particularly in those fields where they are called to work by virtue of their Secular Franciscan vocation.

2. The OFS, as an international public association, is united by a special bond to the Roman Pontiff, from whom it has received approval of the Rule and confirmation of its mission in the Church and in the world.

. (3)

THE CHURCH INVITES US.

THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

820.- That unity "which Christ bestowed on the Church from the beginning [...] we believe subsists unfailingly in the Catholic Church and we hope that it will grow day by day until the end of time." Christ constantly gives his Church the gift of unity, but the Church must always pray and work to maintain,

reinforce, and perfect the unity that Christ wills for her. That is why Christ himself prayed at the hour of his Passion, and does not cease praying to the Father for the unity of his disciples: "That they all may be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (Jn 17:21). The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift from Christ and a call from the Holy Spirit.(4)

THE POPE INVITES US.

"A reflection naturally arises here. Saint Francis could have chosen not to go to the Pope. At that time, many religious groups and movements were forming, and some of them opposed the Church as an institution, or at least did not seek its approval. A confrontational attitude toward the hierarchy would surely have won Saint Francis quite a few followers. Instead, he immediately thought of placing his own path and that of his companions in the hands of the Bishop of Rome, the Successor of Peter. This fact reveals his authentic ecclesial spirit. From the very beginning, he conceived the small 'we' that had begun with his first friars within the great 'we' of the one, universal Church. And the Pope recognized and appreciated this."(5)

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY
Castel Gandolfo, Saturday, 18 April 2009

FOR OUR JOURNEY OF REFLECTION:

1- ¿Am I living out my spirituality in relationship and communion with the Church?
2- ¿Are we, as a Fraternity, aware of the importance of journeying with the whole Church to fulfill our mission?

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