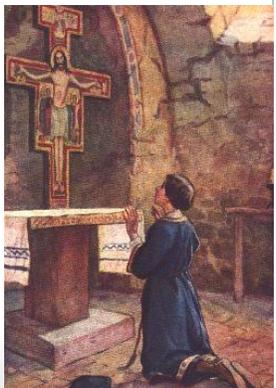


<p># 1</p>	<p>Prayer before the Crucifix at San Damiano</p>  <p>Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, Lord, that I may carry out Your holy and true command.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1]</p>	
<p># 2</p>	<p><i>Prayer Life of the Secular Franciscan</i></p>  <p><i>The bedrock of the Secular Franciscan life is prayer.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">[2]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bedrock of the Secular Franciscan life is prayer, stemming from the example Jesus has given us in the Gospels. • Jesus prayed before after and during each encounter of his day. • He never moved into action without first being present to and communicating with his Father. • It is this example that we are to follow. <p>All that Secular Franciscans are and do stems from this communication with God.</p> <p>FUN Manual</p>
<p># 3</p>	<p>Prayer is Fundamental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Franciscan life focuses on</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Trinity (God desires to relate to us—the love shared by the Trinity overflows to us)</i> • <i>The Incarnation (The Word made flesh--“The Humility of God”)</i> • <i>Love (Our prayerfulness leads to loving actions)</i>  <p style="text-align: right;">[3]</p>	<p>Francis, through his prayerful relationship with Jesus, grew in his love for everyone. Like Jesus, Francis is willing to give his life for the sake of other people. This is the ordinary result of a prayerful spirit. It seeks the spirit of Jesus and is responsive to the Holy Spirit. (See Ilia Delio, OSF, Franciscan Prayer p. 6—quoted in the Franciscan Journey)</p>

4

OFS Rule: Article 8

Prayer Life of the Secular Franciscan



[4]

5

Our Rule

- **Article 8**
As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do. Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.

[5]

6

What words or phrases from Article 8 call out to you?

WITHOUT PRAYER
NO ONE CAN
MAKE PROGRESS
IN THE SERVICE
OF GOD.

ST. FRANCIS OF
ASSISI

SIN LA ORACIÓN
NADIE PUEDE
PROGRESAR EN EL
SERVICIO DIVINO



SAN FRANCISCO
DE ASSISI

[6]

7

Our Rule

- **Article 8**
As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do. Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.

[7]

8

Prayer and Contemplation

General Constitutions #14

- “Contemplation is a normal prayerful stance of Franciscans” (See GC 14.5)*
- “The Trinity calls us to unity through our prayer.” (See GC 14.3)**
- “The Eucharist is the center of our lives. Parish Eucharist recommended.” (See GC 14.2)***
- “The Liturgy of the Hours unites us to the praying Church.” (See GC 14.4)****



[8]

*The Eucharist is the center of the life of the Church (GC 14.2) ***the source and summit of all its activity.*

****They should participate in the sacraments of the Church.**

*The brothers and sisters, as well as the fraternities, should adhere to the indications of the Ritual with respect to the different forms of participating in the liturgical prayer of the Church, giving priority to the celebration of the ****Liturgy of the Hours . . .*

***The brothers and sisters should try to find times of silence and recollection dedicated exclusively to prayer (GC 14.3, 4, 5).**

(From the FUN Manual)

Quotes from Franciscan Journey

9

Our Prayer Journey

- What are the kinds of prayer you are the most comfortable with?
- How do you pray every day?
- Devotional prayer
 - Rosary
 - Novenas
 - Litanies
 - Memorized Prayers/prayer cards
 - Prayers of petition

What do these have in common?

[9]

Devotional prayers can help us come closer to Jesus, but who is doing all the talking??

10 ***Transformed: to be changed; be better than the original; to become more and more like Jesus***

Our Prayer Journey



- As Secular Franciscans our Rule and Constitutions encourage us to deepen our prayer life.
- We are looking for a relationship with Jesus.
- When we pray we seek to be transformed. (What does this mean?)

[10]

1
1

Our Prayer Journey

- What kinds of prayer are compatible with this sort of journey?
 - Scripture and *spiritual reading
 - Meditation
 - Eucharist
 - Liturgical Prayer—Liturgy of the Hours
 - Conversations with Jesus
 - Contemplation



[11]

- *Our spiritual reading can include the writings of Francis and Clare; writings about them; writings by Franciscan authors
- We need to LISTEN to the voice of the Holy Spirit as He speaks to us.

1
2

Prayer and Contemplation The Soul of all We are



- The pattern of Francis's life shows that he spent long hours in contemplative prayer.
- He sought out quiet places...

[12]

- "Francis, the servant of Christ ... strove to keep his spirit present to God ... For whether walking or sitting, inside or outside, working or resting, he was so focused on prayer that he seemed to have dedicated to it not only whatever was in his heart and body, but also his effort and time." (Bonaventure *Legend*, X.1)

1
3

Prayer and Contemplation The Carceri



[13]

14

Prayer and Contemplation Greccio



[14]

1
5

Prayer and Contemplation La Verna



[15]

Visited several times a year and later received the stigmata there.

St. Bonaventure also made a retreat on LaVerna and received a vision of the Seraph. (He did not receive the stigmata) However, he came to a unique understanding of prayer which influences us as Franciscans.

16

Prayer and Contemplation LaVerna Stigmata



[16]

1
7

St. Bonaventure: Directives for coming to know God in our lives

"If you wish to know how these things come about, ask grace not instruction, desire not understanding, the groaning of prayer not diligent reading, the Spouse not the teacher, God not man, darkness not clarity, not light but

the fire that totally inflames and carries us into God by ecstatic unctions and burning affections. This fire is God, and His furnace is in Jerusalem; and Christ enkindles it in the heat of His burning passion."



[17]

<p># 1 8</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Saint Bonaventure <i><u>Itinerarium</u></i> (The Soul's Journey into God)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stages of prayer</i> • <u>Vestiges</u> (all things in creation) • <u>Images</u> (our memories-our senses-what is in us) • <u>Likenesses</u> (Grace-contemplation-mysticism) • The <u>fire which is God</u> (<i>complete surrender-we rest in God</i>)  <p style="text-align: right;">[18]</p>	<p>Saint Bonaventure—Franciscan theologian who lived after St. Francis; was a friar minor. Bishop and Doctor of the Church. He was chosen to be the Minister General of the Order when he was 35.</p> <p>Vestiges—human experiences—footprints of God in everything created—what is outside of us—<u>the light of evening</u></p> <p>Images—Our memories, our psyche, God within us. We shift to God-centered prayer (gift of the Holy Spirit)—<u>morning, dawn</u></p> <p>Likenesses-abstractions—we reach out with the mind—try to name God—contemplation—<u>noon light</u></p> <p>Surrender—we rest in God—completely absorbed—not thinking of anything—the heart is awake in God—<u>luminous darkness—if you look into the sun at a certain angle, it is so bright that everything is BLACK!</u></p>
<p># 1 9</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Saint Bonaventure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Speaks of Humility</i> • Being rooted or grounded • Primary in Francis's life • "Totally turned to the other."  <p style="text-align: right;">[19]</p>	<p>Bonaventure describes humility as <i>the root and guardian of all virtues</i></p> <p><i>Humility</i> comes from the root word, <i>humus, dirt, or ground</i>, and it suggests for Bonaventure the concept of being rooted or grounded.</p> <p>He saw it as the primary underpinning in Francis' life, as Francis tried to follow Jesus in his poverty and his humility.</p> <p>Humility is also the primary characteristic of God in Bonaventure's theology.</p> <p>He defines humility as being "<u>totally turned to the other.</u>"</p>
<p># 2 0</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Saint Bonaventure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Humility of God</i> • Two names for God: <u>Being and Goodness</u> • <u>God's love flows continually</u> • <u>His love cannot be contained-He chooses to communicate GOODNESS</u>  <p style="text-align: right;">[20]</p> <p>Perichoresis*</p> <p>Within the Trinity, God the Father shares LOVE with a Being exactly like himself, God the Son—the Word. In turn, God the Son returns that LOVE to the Father.</p>	<p>The love they share is a continuous outpouring one to the other, yet it is still not contained. The LOVE they share overflows to a third, God the Holy Spirit—the Gift. Bonaventure insists that this outpouring of Love is a primary example of the humility of God. He contends that the humility of God is shown in the fact that the Father chooses to turn to another—to be "other-centered." <i>FUN Manual The Rule of the SFO p. 9 of 46. *Perichoresis "dynamic and creative energy, eternal movement, mutuality and interrelatedness" (The three Divine Persons are what they are by relation to one another.) Found in: Catholic update #CO212A Kenneth R. Overberg, SJ</i></p>

<p># 2 1</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Saint Bonaventure</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>God turns to US</u> • <i>God continues to share his LOVE outside of the Trinity</i> • <i>God chooses to create and to love creation fully</i> • <i>God entered creation in the person of Jesus Christ</i> • <i>Jesus came to <u>share God's love with us and to show us how to love God in return.</u></i>  <p style="text-align: right;">[21]</p>	<p>God turns to US because he is so generous that His love not only flows among the persons of the Trinity, he wanted to share it with us—it OVERFLOWS.</p> <p>Recurrent themes in Franciscan prayer/spirituality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trinity • The Incarnation (the Crib to the Cross)
<p># 2 2</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Saint Bonaventure</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>God turns to US</i> • <i>“God humbly bends down to lift the dust of our nature into unity with his very own person.”</i> • <i>Humility of God</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Humble Savior</i> • <i>Humble God in a manger</i> • <i>Humble Christ</i>  <p style="text-align: right;">[22]</p>	<p>For St. Bonaventure, humility is at the heart of God. It is the basis for the relational aspect of the Trinity. It is the basis for God's relationship with us and with all of creation. We are striving to discover how humility is at the basis of the OFS Rule and its prescriptions for gospel living.</p>
<p># 2 3</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">So...Prayer is a Journey</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We do not achieve unity with God in one day or even in one life time.</i> • <i>As Secular Franciscans we look for guidance.</i> • <i>Our Rule and Constitutions have laid it out for us, but we need examples!</i>  <p style="text-align: right;">[23]</p>	

2
4

The Gospel: Core of Franciscan Life



Francis's highest purpose was to observe the Gospel.

- He knew the Scriptures by heart.
- If you look at his writings (See Admonition #1)—or look at our Rule—you will see that references to Scripture are many.

[24]

Rule Article 4: The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to **observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.** Christ, the **gift of the Father's love**, is the way to him, the **truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us**, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.

Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to **careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to gospel.**

The Secular Franciscan, committed to following the example and the teachings of Christ, must personally and assiduously study the Gospel and Sacred Scripture (GC 9.2)

2
5

Scripture in our Prayer Life

- Using Scripture to pray is more than an intellectual exercise
- We listen to God—He initiates the conversation
- We encounter God in the living word

[Franciscan Journey]



[25]

Scripture in our Prayer Life

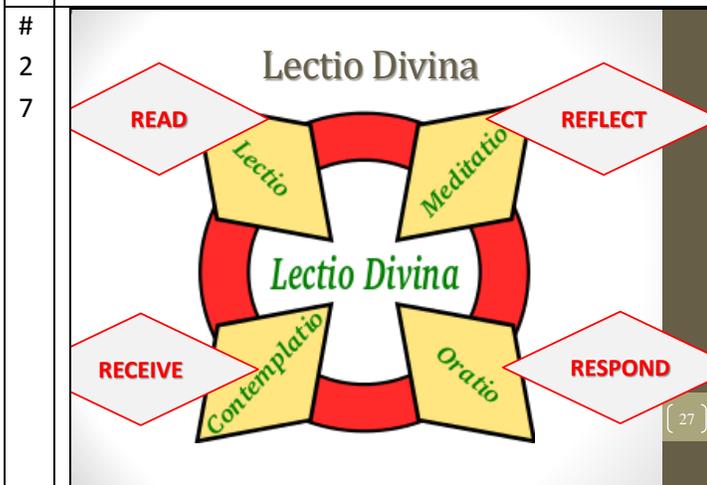


- We listen with an open heart and no personal agenda
- Scripture is one manifestation of God
- We trust the biblical word to transform us

[Franciscan Journey]

[26]

26



- "Lectio Divina invites us to quiet
 - Can be prayed alone or in a group
 - Gives God freedom to speak openly to us
 - Allow God's word to speak freely to your heart and your life." (Franciscan Journey)
1. Read slowly and thoughtfully (perhaps read the selection twice)
 2. Reflect on what the Scripture has to say to you in your life
 3. Respond to the reading—talk to God about your response
 4. Receive quietly what God has to give to you. How will you be transformed by the reading?

2
8

Lectio Divina

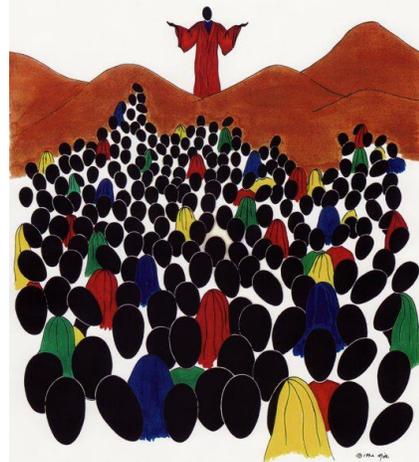


Let us pray a Scripture passage together

Matthew 5: 1-16

[28]

29

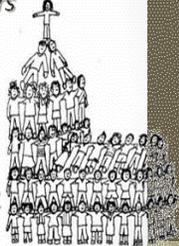


[29]

3
0

Liturgy of the Hours

- *Constitutions ask that we engage in a form of Liturgical Prayer—Liturgy of the Hours*
- *Pray in community or personally*
- *Why Liturgy of the Hours?*
 - *Unites us to the praying Church*
 - *Sanctifies the hours of the day*
 - *Immerses our prayer in Scripture*
 - *Follows the Liturgical Year*



[30]

*The Franciscan way of life is a vital part of the life and growth of the Church. Those who embrace this way of life **unite themselves with all others who carry the responsibility of praying with and for the Church**—not only privately but in an official capacity. (Benet Fonck, OFM)*

- Liturgical prayer is Trinitarian and Christological
- Liturgical prayer must be the official prayer of the Church
- The Mass; the Liturgy of the Hours; the Office of the Passion

3
1

Liturgy of the Hours

- *Shorter Christian Prayer**
- *Christian Prayer**
- *I-breviary*
- *Divine Office.org*
- **If you choose to use one of these books, have someone help you learn to use it.*
- *The online or app versions only require that you know how to read!*



[31]

Five Hours

Office of Readings

Morning Prayer

Daytime Prayer

Evening Prayer

Night Prayer

Morning and Evening prayer—perhaps Night Prayer for us.

3
2

Other Possibilities for Liturgical Prayer



- Office of the Passion (p. 117 *SF Companion*)
- Liturgical Office of the Twelve Our Fathers (p. 113 *SF Companion*)
- There are also non-liturgical offices in the Secular Franciscan Companion

[32]

3
3

The Eucharist

- A time for common praise and thanks to God
- We develop an openness to the needs of the world
- Reminds us of the presence of the Holy Spirit to transform us just as bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ
- Reminds us again of the humility of God.



[33]

Quotes from Franciscan Journey

“God humbly bends down to lift the dust of our nature into unity with his very own person.” (Bonaventure)

3
4

The Fruits of Holy Communion

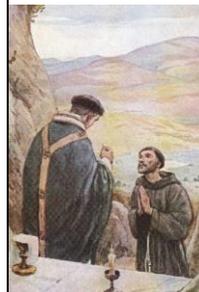
- Deeper union with Christ
- Closer identity with all the faithful
- A commitment to the poor
- A pledge of future glory



[United States Catholic Catechism for Adults p. 229]

[34]

Franciscans and the Eucharist



- “Franciscans will regularly be present at their parish Eucharist”
- We conform to the ritual actions of the celebrating community
- We are “one with” the community and do not “stand out” by personal ritual choices
- We are sensitive to the unifying role of the Eucharist”

[35]

35

Quotes from Franciscan Journey

3
6

For our Journey

- We take as our "book" the poor and crucified Christ
- Our "inspiration" the writings of Francis, Clare, Bonaventure
- Our "guide" the Holy Spirit
- Our "model" Mary
- Our "core" the gospel
- Our "focus" the life of penance we profess to live
- Our "sustenance" Eucharist, Sacraments and prayer.



[36]

FUN Manual The rule of the SFO page 27 of 46

37

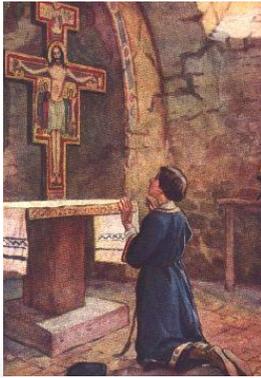
Discussion

- What is the practical result of taking time for contemplation?
- What is the value of using the Liturgy of the Hours and Lectio Divina?
- Why is the Eucharist so important to us as Catholics and Franciscans?
- What is your definition of the purpose of prayer?
- How does your prayer overflow into your actions? (Transformation)

[37]

3
8

The Praises of God



*You are charity;
 You are wisdom;
 You are humility;
 You are patience;
 You are beauty;
 You are meekness;
 You are sincerity;
 You are rest;
 You are gladness and joy;
 You are our hope;
 You are justice;
 You are moderation
 You are all our riches to
 sufficiency!*

[38]