

Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God,
give us the ability to act
in accordance with our knowledge of your will
and to desire always what pleases you.
Cleanse and enlighten our hearts
and enkindle in us the fire of the Holy Spirit,
that we may follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ,
your beloved Son,
and with your grace alone
make our way to you, Most High.
You live and reign in perfect Trinity and simple Unity,
glorified and all-powerful God, now and for ever. Amen.



Father in heaven,
our hearts desire the warmth of your love
and our minds are searching for the light of your Word.
Increase our longing for Christ our Savior
and give us the strength to grow in love,
that the dawn of his coming
may find us rejoicing in his presence
and welcoming the light of his truth.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.





Ongoing Formation

Key to a Strong Vocation

1

In order to keep our vocations and our fraternities strong and faithful to the Franciscan charism, a strong ongoing formation program is essential.

✓ What is the purpose of Ongoing Formation?

✓ Who is Responsible for Ongoing Formation?

IN THE
CHAT




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Use these questions to take stock of the formation program in your fraternity.

- Does your formation team (or your council) have a long-range plan for ongoing formation?
- What resources do you use? Are the resources Franciscan in nature? (See the separate list of links at the end of this document.)
- Do you give your folks plenty of time to share?



PURPOSE

- **Professed:** Strengthen the vocation
- **Newly professed:** Solidify vocation
- **Build** fraternity
- Help **integrate** newly professed (and those in initial formation)
- Focus on our **mission**
- Grow in the Franciscan Family

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The purpose of ongoing formation:

Strengthen the vocation and sense of belonging of the professed members and help the newly professed to **solidify their commitment** and **integrate into the fraternity**.

Respond to the church's call to mission as laity in the world by responding to the teachings of Jesus;

Give **new dimension to the lay vocation** as part of the Franciscan family by following the spirituality of Saint Francis and by developing a deep knowledge of the Gospel, the Rule and Constitutions and the writings of Saint Francis and Saint Clare.



AGENTS

- The Holy Spirit
- The member
- The local fraternity
- The fraternity council
- The formation director and formation team
- The spiritual assistant
- Higher levels of fraternity

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The agents of formation:

As above, but consider the following:

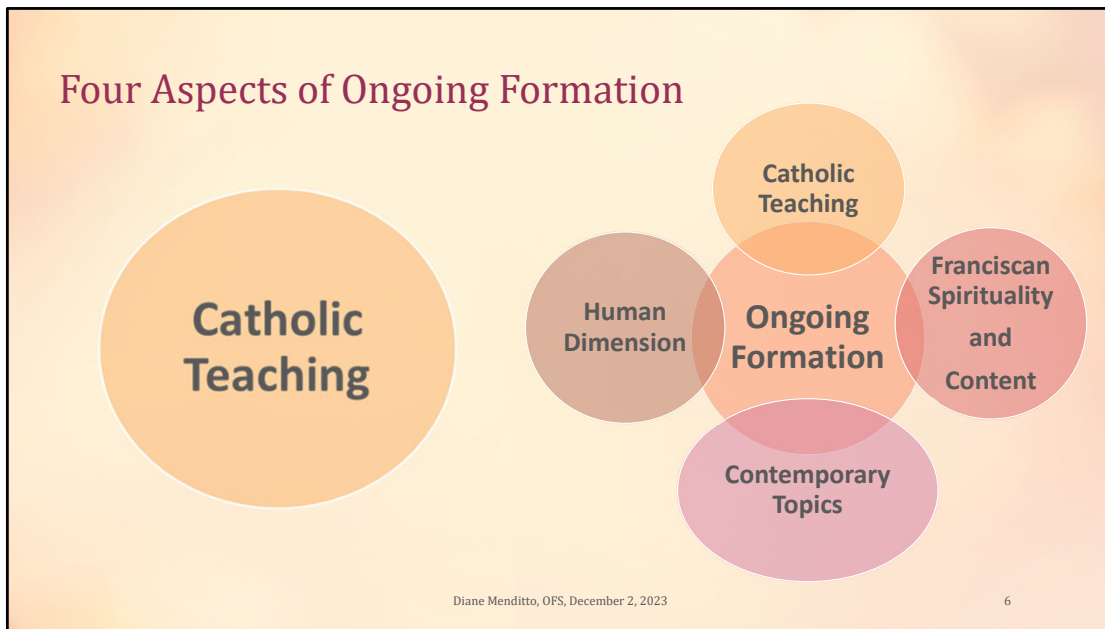
- How do you as an individual member provide ongoing formation for yourself? Do you keep up with the latest information from the Church and from Franciscan Sources?
- The local fraternity; the council; the formation director and the team should work together with the Spiritual Assistant to plan our the ongoing formation program. Topics should relate.
- Hight levels: Our region has many opportunities—Cluster events, Convivenza, Chapter, yearly retreat. The national fraternity has many resources on their website. (See link at end of this document.)

Content of Ongoing Formation

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There are four aspects to ongoing formation

- Teaching about the Catholic Church
- Franciscan topics (our documents; writings of Francis and Clare; writings by Franciscan authors)
- Contemporary topics (How we live our lives as Secular Franciscans; writings of Catholic authors; documents like Laudato Sì; The Joy of the Gospel etc.)
- Prayer (Franciscan prayer life; praying the Scriptures)



There are four aspects to ongoing formation

- Teaching about the Catholic Church

+++++

+Application of the word of God to daily life: “Gospel to life and life to the Gospel.”

+Our Catholic faith and our role in the Church

+ Deepening of the sacramental aspect of life

+How we apply our faith to our daily life in all dimensions

+ Deepening of the study of Church documents

Catholic social teaching

+ Ecclesiology

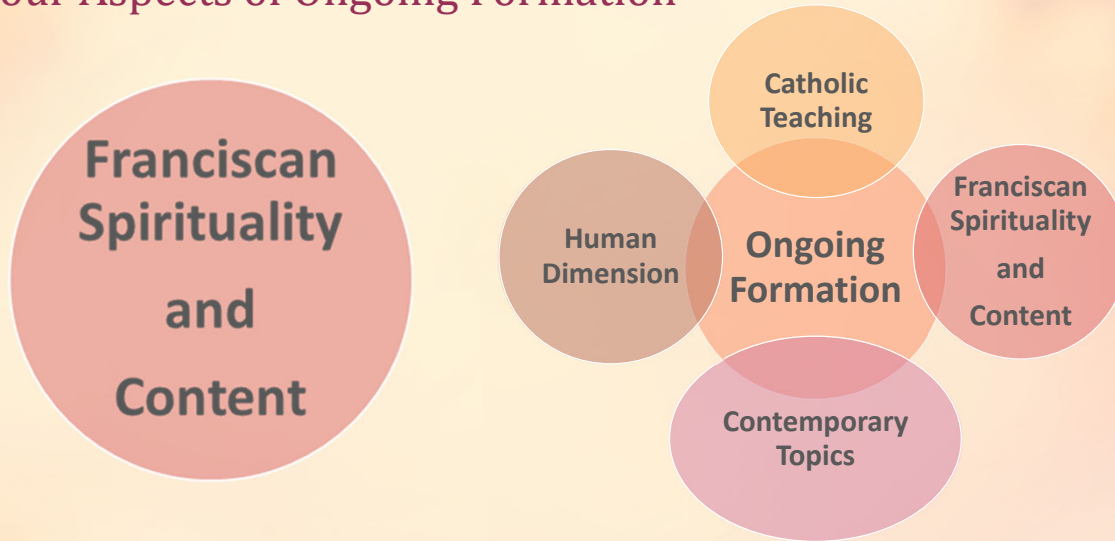
+ Magisterium of the Catholic Church

+ Commitment of the laity: the mission of the laity in the Church.

+Church and ecumenism: ecumenical and interreligious dialogue

+Annual liturgical celebrations

Four Aspects of Ongoing Formation



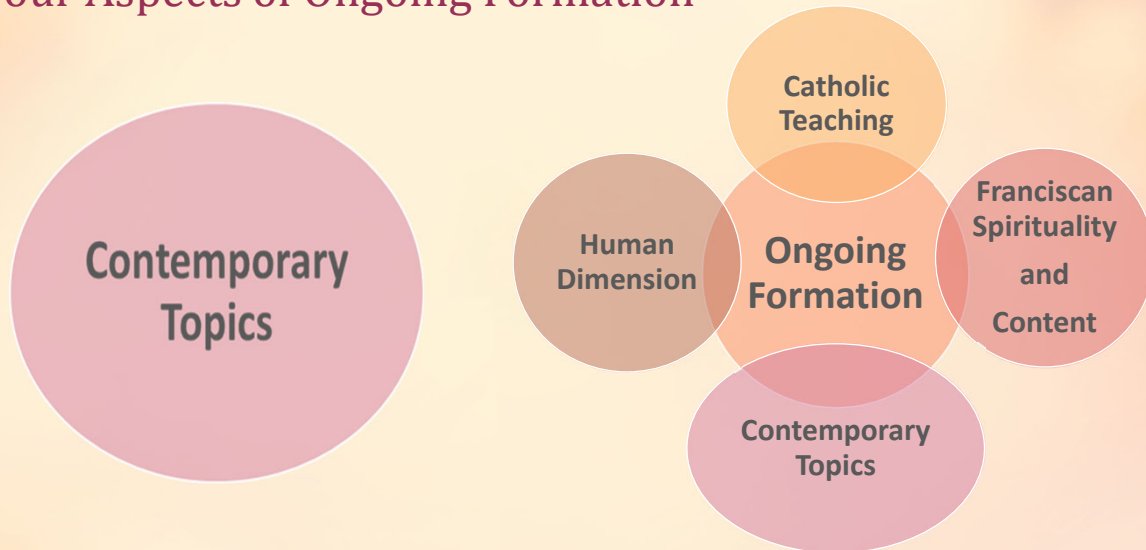
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- **Franciscan topics (our documents; writings of Francis and Clare; writings by Franciscan authors)**

- + Deepening of the knowledge of the Franciscan Sources (Writings of Saint Francis and Saint Clare, biographies and other Franciscan authors);
- + Saint Clare of Assisi: the feminine side of Franciscan spirituality;
- + Patrons of the OFS (Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Saint Louis IX) and other Franciscan Saints;
- + Deepening of the knowledge of the Franciscan Family;
- + Secular Franciscan Spirituality;
- + Franciscan Mission;
- + Franciscan Theology;
- + Fraternal Animation;
- + Fraternal bonding with the First and Second orders and TOR;
- + Franciscan Annual Celebrations.

Four Aspects of Ongoing Formation

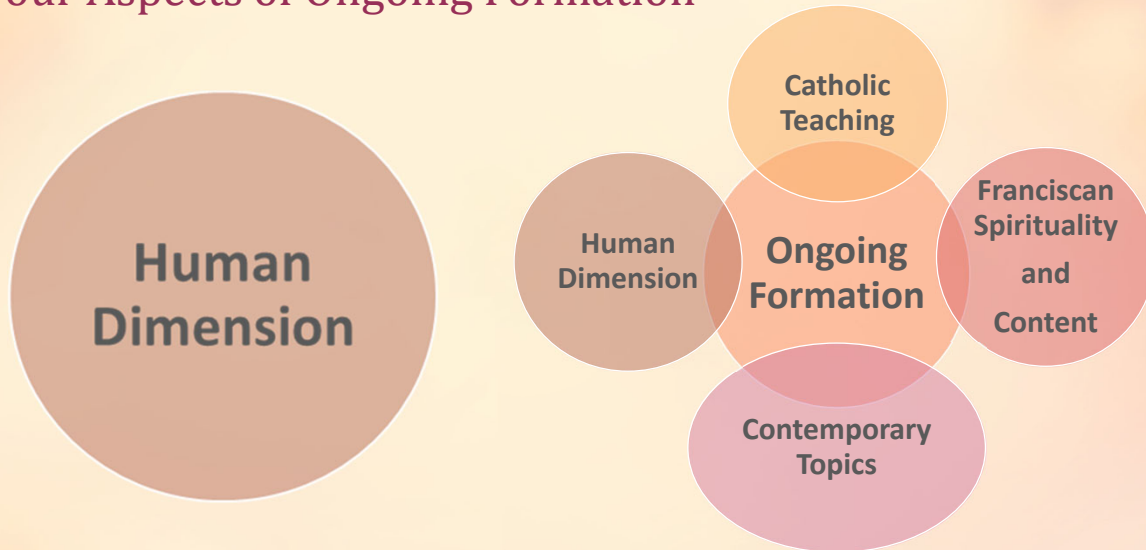


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- **Contemporary topics** (How we live our lives as Secular Franciscans; writings of Catholic authors; documents like *Laudato Si*; *The Joy of the Gospel* etc.)
- Writings of Catholic authors;
- Videos on Catholic teachings—Example Bishop Barron and Fr. Mike Schmitz. Also websites and Apps like Hallow and Ascension
- Documents like *Laudato Si*; *The Joy of the Gospel* etc.

Four Aspects of Ongoing Formation



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- Human dimension (Good material on USCCB website)

Self knowledge

- + Interpersonal relationships;
- + Conflict resolution, dialogue, mediation;
- + Servant leadership;
- + Family and professional life;
- + Work as a gift from God;
- + Emotional health;
- + Meaning of human existence:
 - Right to life and Bioethics;
 - Suffering and death;
- + The family:
 - Responsible Parenthood;
 - Children's education;
 - Kinship and Sexuality;
- + The world:
 - The political, economic and socio-cultural reality
 - Human rights

Suggested Formats

- Short presentations followed by small group or partner sharing (Formation Fridays are good for this.)—Rotate presenters
- Collective Wisdom conversations on topics familiar to the fraternity (some prior preparation)
- Large group sharing after a talk or video
- Action items that might arise personally or for the fraternity—link it to an article of the Rule or Constitutions whenever possible
- Choose a Franciscan Book that lends itself to discussion of individual chapters
- Discussions on Scripture or on the Rule

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Give plenty of time for discussion

- +Partners
- +Small groups
- +Large group

Be sure that the facilitator of discussions has a clear picture of what the goal of the discussion is. She or he should always lead the topic back to the desired focus.

Random chatting is good for the social time, but not for ongoing formation.

Breakout groups

- How is ongoing formation carried out in your fraternity?
- Share some ideas for ongoing formation.
- Discuss any portion of the presentation on the Thematic Guide.

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Another chance to take stock of what you can do and remember the ideas that came up in the small group discussions.

Some Resources

- Franciscan Intellectual Tradition video lectures
<https://franciscantradition.org/resources/video-clips>
- Custodians of the Tradition (Excellent)
<https://franciscantradition.org/resources/custodians-of-the-tradition>
- The writings of and about Francis and Clare <https://franciscantradition.org/early-sources>
- CD Contents from the FUN Manual
<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/fun-cd-contents/>
- Ongoing formation resources on our website (including Formation Fridays)
<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/ongoing-formation-resources/>
- Gospel Life of St. Francis from St. Bonaventure University FREE DOWNLOAD WITH VIDEOS <https://www.sbu.edu/academics/academic-resources/franciscan-institute/gospel-life-of-st.-francis-handbook>
<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/2022/08/06/gospel-life-of-st-francis-handbook-available-for-free-digital-download/>

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See document that follows this slide. You will be able to click on those links.

Ongoing Formation Resources

- Franciscan Intellectual Tradition website—writings of Francis and Clare
<https://www.franciscantradition.org/>
- Franciscan Intellectual Tradition video lectures
<https://franciscantradition.org/resources/video-clips>
- Custodians of the Tradition (Excellent) <https://franciscantradition.org/resources/custodians-of-the-tradition>
- The writings of and about Francis and Clare <https://franciscantradition.org/early-sources>
- CD Contents from the FUN Manual
<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/fun-cd-contents/>
- Ongoing formation resources on our national website (including Formation Fridays)
<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/ongoing-formation-resources/>
- Gospel Life of St. Francis from St. Bonaventure University FREE DOWNLOAD WITH VIDEOS
<https://www.sbu.edu/academics/academic-resources/franciscan-institute/gospel-life-of-st.-francis-handbook>
- Bookstore (Gospel to Life—Rule with Commentary)

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