

Come and See Script

Slide 1 (Welcome) Good evening (Introductions)

Slide 2 I would like to share with you this prayer of St. Bonaventure to the Holy Spirit
Let's pray! In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Lord Jesus, as God's Spirit came down and rested upon you,
May the same Spirit rest on us, bestowing his sevenfold gifts.
First, grant us the gift of understanding, by which your precepts may enlighten our minds.
Second, grant us counsel, by which we may follow in your footsteps on the path of righteousness.
Third, grant us courage, by which we may ward off the enemy's attacks.
Fourth, grant us knowledge, by which we can distinguish good from evil.
Fifth, grant us piety, by which we may acquire compassionate hearts.
Sixth, grant us fear, by which we may draw back from evil and submit to what is good.
Seventh, grant us wisdom, that we may taste fully the life-giving sweetness of your love.
Amen

Slide 3 The members of Fraternity, welcome you.

We are delighted to have you here with us today. We have prepared a short presentation and we hope you enjoy the information we are going to share with you about St. Francis of Assisi and the Secular Franciscan Order. After this presentation, we will welcome any questions you may have.

Slide 4

So first of all, "Who was this world famous and much-loved saint, St. Francis of Assisi?" Francis was born sometime between late in the year 1181 and early 1182 in Assisi, Italy. He received the name Giovanni Bernardone at baptism, but soon afterwards his name was changed to Francesco by his father to reflect his love for France.

Francis died October 3, 1226.

Although much happened during Francis' short life span of less than 45 years, we do not have enough time today to cover it all in details.

Instead, we want to focus on Francis, being the Founder of 3 orders.

Thomas of Celano who was Francis first biographer, would write the following about Francis' early adulthood.

Slide 5 "No one loved pleasure more than Francis; he had a ready wit, sang merrily, delighted in fine clothes and showy display. Handsome, gay, gallant, and courteous, he soon became the prime favourite among the young nobles of Assisi, the foremost in every feat of arms, the leader of the civil revels, the very king of frolic."

However, despite Francis' weaknesses, God had extraordinary plans for Francis' life.

Slide 6 Francis the "King of frolic" was to become "Il Poverello"... The little poor one

Slide 7 One day, Francis was praying in front of a crucifix in the little church of San Damiano,...

"Most High, glorious God, bring light to the darkness of my heart. Give me right faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, insight and wisdom, so I can always observe Thy holy and true command."

From that cross, Francis heard the voice of Christ telling him to go and rebuild the Church. *"Go repair my Church, which as you see is falling completely in ruin"* the voice told him.

Slide 8 Francis first took the words literally and started to repair church buildings at San Damiano and nearby churches. But he soon realized that this "repair" of the Church was in fact calling him to establish a new Order... the Franciscan Order.

Come meet the Family... We are ONE BIG FRANCISCAN FAMILY
The first followers of Francis were friends of his and just men.
For them, Francis established:

Slide 9 The **First Order**, the Order of Friars Minor (to which St. Bonaventure belonged) Clare became the first lady to follow Francis...

- **Click** And the **Second Order** was founded for the Poor Ladies as they were called. After St. Clare died, the Poor ladies were known as the Poor Clares, and are still to this day
- **Click** Lastly the **Third Order** was founded for both religious and lay members of the Church. The Third Order counts in (Third Order Regular-TOR, including religious brothers, priests and sisters and Secular Franciscans - OFS)

Slide 10 The members of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd orders are all Franciscans
Priest, Brothers, Sisters, Religious who all take vows
and Lay people who make a profession of faith

Slide 11 Over the centuries, the Catholic Church has gained numerous Franciscan Saints. You may recognize quite a few on the screen. A lot of them were Popes. You may remember Mother Mary Angelica, the EWTN TV celebrity. She was a Poor Clare

Slide 12 This Family tree should help give you a better, clearer idea of our Franciscan Family, with the different branches within the First order:

The Red "branch" on the left is the First Order, Order of Friar Minors, OFM for short, and some branches with slightly different emphasis, OFM Conventual, OFM Capuchin.

On the right, the green "branch", is for the second Order, the Poor Clares, with slight distinctions such as the Order of Saint Clare, the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration (to which our Desert Nuns in Tonopah belong), the Poor Clares Colettines who live according to the 15th century reforms of St. Colette of Corbie, and the Poor Clares Capucin.

The branch in the middle represents the third Order which includes both Third Order Regular (known as TOR) friars, sisters and some cloistered nuns and the Secular Franciscan and Franciscan Youth.

Slide 13 After he founded the First and Second Orders, married men and women came to Francis and told him that they wished to also join him.

Francis, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote a Rule of Life for lay persons – a Rule for those living in the world who heard the call to live the Gospel.

These men and women were the first Secular Franciscans, just ordinary people living in the times of St. Francis who wanted to join his new order. St. Francis counseled them not to leave their families or abandon their work in the world, but to embrace the Gospel in the ordinary circumstances of their lives. They came to be known as the

Click “**Brothers and Sisters of Penance.**”

In later years, these brothers and sisters were called members of the

Click **Third Order of St. Francis.**

Today we are called

Click **Secular Franciscans**, and the initials after our name are “OFS” from the Latin:

Click Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis meaning Secular Franciscan Order.

Slide 14 The Secular Franciscan Order is one of the Orders of the Church.

It is for people who feel **called by God** to serve Christ and his Church in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi in their secular state.

Click The OFS is NOT a club. It is NOT a social organization.

Click The OFS is a religious order.

Secular Franciscans belong to a world-wide community of Catholic men and women who simply seek to pattern their lives after Jesus Christ in the spirit of Francis of Assisi.

Click The OFS is a big family!

Slide 15 So, what about the Tau we wear?

For Francis the Tau represented his lifelong fidelity to the crucified Christ.

He used the Tau as his signature.

Click For us, Secular Franciscans, the TAU is our “habit”

Click ... a sign that we are Franciscans on an amazing journey.

Slide 16 Here are some statistics about the OFS:

The Secular Franciscan Order is a world-wide Order with over 300,000 members.

Click The Order in the United States is structured into 30 geographic regions;

Click Our region here is St. Thomas More Region and covers Arizona and South/East Nevada

Click As of this day, our region has 11 fraternities

Click counting about 200 Active professed members and over 40 members in Initial formation at this time.

Slide 17 Here are some characteristics of Secular Franciscans:

- **Click** Secular Franciscans live in the world (hence the word Secular)
- **Click** We live and draw strength from the Gospel of Jesus.
Our Rule tells us "Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the Gospel, going from Gospel to life and life to Gospel."
- **Click** We are called to: practice social justice and serve others through ministries of charity and peacemaking.
Article 19 of our Rule says "Franciscans are bearers of peace. We seek ways of unity and harmony through dialogue, trusting in the divine seed in all people, and in the transforming power of love and pardon."
- **Click** Secular Franciscans should develop a prayerful spirit and seek a life of prayers
- **Click** We need to rely deeply on the power of the Holy Spirit
- **Click** We recognize the need for and observe daily conversion.
- **Click** We foster hope, love and joy – reflecting the truth, the reality that God is with us.
- **Click** We also enjoy a good sense of humor.
Life is serious, but not so serious that we lose our sense of joy.
- **Click** Lastly, Secular Franciscans walk through life with a Franciscan COMMUNITY called Fraternity and they truly value Fraternity life.

Slide 18 How do we define Fraternity life?

As Secular Franciscans, we live in our homes and with our families but come together on a regular basis with our local Franciscan communities which we call Fraternities.

In fraternities, the brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, strive for ongoing daily conversion, to turn away from sin and to be faithful to the Gospel. We seek, with and only with God's grace, perfect charity in our secular state, helping one another in this journey closer to Christ, following in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare.

Slide 19 In short Fraternity is:

A special place where we celebrate our love for God, and our love for one another

Click Fraternity is also a place where we pray, learn and fellowship with our brothers and sisters.

Generally, we gather in fraternity once or twice a month to pray, to share with one another about our lives, and to continue our life long journey of formation.

Both individually, and as a fraternity, we engage in apostolic work and various ministries, with a particular outreach to the poor and marginalized, and a focus on justice, peace, and care of creation. As Franciscans we are called to prayer and contemplation, as well as an active presence in the world.

Slide 20 Explanation for the name of your fraternity (Make a different slide)

~~Saint Maximilian Kolbe is the Patron Saint of our fraternity~~

~~**Click** Maximilian Kolbe was born in Poland on January 8, 1894.~~

~~He was a Polish OFM Conventual Franciscan Friar who volunteered to die in place of a stranger in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II.~~

~~**Click** Father Maximilian Kolbe died August 14, 1941~~

~~**Click** John 15:13 tells us:~~

~~*“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”.*~~

~~St. Maximilian Kolbe was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1982 and was declared a martyr of charity.~~

Slide 21 As Franciscans we embrace “Servant Leadership”.

Elected council members serve together to animate and guide the fraternity

Slide 22 To help manage our life in fraternity, the Order is gifted with what we call “Essential Documents”:

Click Our General Constitutions. The Constitutions help us apply

Click the Rule to our daily lives,

Click and our National Statutes that outline our organization and structure.

Our documents unify us, and help us organize ourselves.

To organize is a way to maintain the life of our Order.

Slide 23

One of the most important mandates for Secular Franciscans is stated in Article 4 of our Rule:

"The Rule of Life of the Secular Franciscan is this:
To observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi"

How does one become a member of the Secular Franciscan Order, you ask?

Slide 24 Briefly, the process of becoming a professed Secular Franciscan involves a commitment anywhere from 27 to 36 months of formation. The average duration of a monthly formation meeting is about two hours. At home, prayer and study are expected... especially prayer!

Click Initial formation is divided into 3 stages:

An Orientation stage, an Inquiry stage and a Candidacy stage.

Click The Orientation stage is a period of 3-6 months. It is a time for determining a person's interest, eligibility and disposition to enter into the rest of the process.

Click The Inquiry stage is a time of learning about the Franciscan charism and history. It is an important time of discernment to determine if the inquirer has a vocation to the Order. That stage consists of no less than 6 months. If a vocation is discerned, both by the individual and the local fraternity, the inquirer is admitted into the Order.

Click Lastly, the Candidacy phase will last no less than 18 months. The goal of that phase of formation is the candidate's profession to live the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.

Slide 25 Profession is:

Click A lifetime commitment to follow the Gospel in fraternal relationship with other Franciscan sisters and brothers;

It is also:

Click A form of Evangelical life

Profession is:

Click A consecration to God in the world and for the world, through the genuine spirit of the Gospel.

Slide 26 Each of us is on a spiritual journey. We invite you to come and walk with us. Come and see if this Franciscan life is something you are called to live.

Slide 27 Let's close with this prayer from the patron saint of our Region:
St. Thomas More prayer for good humor

Grant me oh Lord, good digestion,
and also something to digest.
Grant me a healthy body,
and the necessary good humor to maintain it.
Grant me a simple soul that knows to treasure all that is good
and that doesn't frighten easily at the sight of evil,
but rather finds the means to put things back in their place.
Give me a soul that knows not boredom,
grumbles, sighs, and laments,
nor excess of stress, because of that obstructing thing called "I."
Grant me O Lord, a good sense of humor,
Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke
to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others.
Amen

Slide 26 We, the Secular Franciscans of.....fraternity bestow upon you the
special blessing we received from St. Francis.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He show His face to you and be merciful to you.
May He turn His countenance to you and give you peace.

We wish you Pace e Bene....Peace and all Good

I invite you to share or ask any questions you may have.