

# FRANCISCAN STRATEGY FOR LIVING WHEN UNEMPLOYED

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**WHAT DOES A FRANCISCAN DO WHEN HE OR SHE IS UNEMPLOYED?** What does a Franciscan do when his or her income stops through job loss or “downsizing”? What resources for living do we have? Do we have to stand alone?

1. **YOU HAVE GOD:** *“So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you.”* (1 Peter 5:6-7) *“Cast your care upon the LORD, who will give you support.”* ( Psalm 55:23) *\*“We know that all things work for good for those who love God,\* who are called according to his purpose”* (Romans 8:28)
  - a. Ask God for more trust and faith in His Plan for you
  - b. Ask God to help you find work. God wants you to work, to share in divine creativity, to be happy now.
  
2. **YOU HAVE YOUR TALENTS:** Look for work.
  - a. Use your talents to look—send your resume out, search the classifieds, listen to word of mouth, etc..
  - b. Ask your Franciscan brothers and sisters to help you find work.
  - c. Do not be ashamed to ask other people to help you.
  
3. **YOU CAN GET HELP FROM OTHERS:** “Go to the Table of the Lord” if necessary—begging is to be done if your work doesn’t support you, and certainly if you have lost employment. Our poor little brother Francis tells us in his *Testament* (20-22): *“And I worked with my hands, and I still desire to work; and I earnestly desire all brothers to give themselves to honest work. Let those who do not know how to work learn, not from desire to receive wages, but for example and to avoid idleness. And when we are not paid for our work, let us have recourse to the table of the Lord, begging alms from door to door.”*
  - a. Governmental help is not begging, because your taxes support these programs.
  - b. And you can ask your Franciscan brothers and sisters for financial help if necessary—we are a family, and families care for their own especially in time of need.
  
4. **SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE:** Be realistic, you will have to simplify, and live on less. Work out strategies for this—make out a budget, see how little you and your dependents can live on.
  
5. **PLAN FOR THIS “DOWN-TIME”.** “Idleness is the devil’s workshop”
  - a. To keep from worrying, look at the projects you’ve had for when you “have time.” If the project is worthwhile, and affordable, now is the time to do it.
  - b. Make a schedule for yourself, to include community and family prayer, and private prayer. Now that you are not working...
    - i. What about daily Mass?
    - ii. The Liturgy of the Hours can be done at home.
    - iii. Read the Bible now that you have more time. Read the writings of Francis & Clare, make an intensive study of the Pauline *Rule* of

the S.F.O.

- c. Be cautious about becoming a couch potato, glued to the TV. Be very careful not to look for dangerous ways to ease the fear and pain you are experiencing—idleness, taking unnecessary drugs , overindulging in alcohol or food. You know how to watch your health.
- d. Be a volunteer (at your parish, at nursing homes, at soup kitchens, etc.). There is always so much to be done for others.

**THE FRANCISCAN COMMUNITY CAN HELP:** What is the Fraternity to do for their unemployed brothers and sisters? Be their community, as in the first days of the Church: *“They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”* (Acts 2:42-47).

- 1. Help them with immediate practical needs: *“Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ.”* (Galatians 6:2)
  - a. They may need food, rent, utilities, etc.
  - b. They may need help in finding new employment (looking for work is a lot of work!).
- 2. Encourage them. They have psychological needs, e.g., fear of unemployment, and they are unsure if they will find another job. They are suffering the embarrassment of losing a job—affirm their worth.
- 3. Pray for and with them, so that through your practical love they can experience God's love and strength.
- 4. Collaborate with the whole Fraternity in working for the unemployed; this is an issue affecting families, and Peace and Justice for all.

**IN OTHER WORDS: BE CHRISTIANS.** Followers of Christ Jesus know that the suffering of unemployment is one way of the Cross. Jesus showed us where the way ends: at the resurrection, not at the cross.