

Our specific vocation in the Secular Franciscan Order

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Our vocation is a **real vocation**.
Like every vocation, it is the **call of God**.

Vocation is the **initiative** of God
The **response** is ours

Everyone has a vocation
we **only** have to hear the call

OPEN THE EARS
OPEN THE HEARTS

This vocation calls us **to become holy**
like being the **image of God**
and to “scatter” this holiness **in the world.**

All the faithful are called to holiness and have a right to follow
their own spiritual way in communion with the Church.
(GGCC 1.)

For the Christian vocation by its very nature
is also a vocation to the apostolate. *(AA 2.)*

The apostolate of the laity derives from their
Christian vocation and the Church can never be without it.
(AA 1.)

Our specific vocation is
to live our charism and our mission
in the **Secular Franciscan Order**.

God could invite us to other spiritual journeys

it is HIM who only knows why has invited us to this
very special vocation

Vocation is never completed.

God never stops talking to us

God never stops inviting us

- to love
- to live our charism
- to show our joy
- to turn to those in need

Franciscan

Francis - the image of **Christ**

Francis - the new experience of God, the father

We are sisters and brothers and have to [respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which bear the imprint of the Most High] (OFS Rule 18)

Being sisters and brothers we have to **love** one another as sisters and brothers

Franciscan

Fraternity - much more than a Christian community of the other, though valuable, but very much different spiritual/renewal movements!

Fraternal bonds is an **essential part** and an **instrument** on the vocational journey to help each other to **salvation**

It would be terrible, if my sisters and brother couldn't help me to salvation, couldn't make **the love of Christ** visible, who

- guides
- helps
- corrects
- takes care
- provides

Franciscan

Christ on the cross – Francis on his last night

Both were nude – exposed to others

We have to be same exposed to our sisters and brothers, whom we love and who love us.

We have to take off the so many spiritual veils, garments, robes, that are to hide our weakness, sometimes our shames.

LET US LET CHRIST LOVE US

LET US LET OTHERS LOVE US

This is fraternity: open us, take the courage to be exposed, share our problems, share our joy, share our everyday and share our feasts, share the great, solemn moments of our life, but also share our little things.

Franciscan

Fraternity is not a social club.

We come here in order

- to know God
- to know each other

Do we really love each other? Do we really want to know each other? If yes, why do we not want to see each other as often as possible?

Fraternity – **meet as often as possible!**

Franciscan

Some of the Franciscan **characteristics**

- free to the love of God, i.e. free to do what is good
- inventive and talented
- sensitive for the justice
- respectful to the creation
- seeking peace
- seeking simple solutions
- seeking the minimum in instruments and maximum of compassion and solidarity
- courageous meekness
- tender determination

Secular

"... the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in **temporal affairs** and by **ordering them according to the plan of God**. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the **secular professions** and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of **family and social life**, from which the very **web** of their existence **is woven**. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the **sanctification** of the world from within **as a leaven**. In this way they may **make Christ known to others**, especially by the **testimony** of a life resplendent in **faith, hope and charity**. Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their **special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs** in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer." (LG 31.)

Secular

"Furthermore, the laity who have followed their vocation and have become members of one of the associations or institutes approved by the Church try faithfully to adopt the **special characteristics of the spiritual life which are proper to them** as well. They should also hold in **high esteem professional skill, family and civic spirit**, and the **virtues** relating to social customs, namely, **honesty, justice, sincerity, kindness, and courage**, without which no true Christian life can exist." (AA 4.)

Secular

They should bear witness to this faith before all:

- in their family life;
- in their work;
- in their joys and sufferings;
- in their associations with all men and women, brothers and sisters of the same Father;
- in their presence and participation in the life of society;
- in their fraternal relationships with all creatures.

(GGCC 12.1.)

Secular

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Family is the very first place of our secular vocation.

It is our **privilege**.

Making the love of God visible in human relationships

Being partners of God in the creation

Secular

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Working is a grace

Partners in creation

Strengthening human relationships

Building the sense of collaboration

Grateful for being able to work

Do our best, high quality, good skill

Secular

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Bear witness of our joys and sufferings,
i.e. being opened, being transparent

Bearing witness: sharing and testifying that all we have, joy or suffering, is a kind of love of God

Secular

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Being brothers and sisters means being associated with **all** men and women. With all of them.

We can choose our friends. Being secular franciscans is not about friendship, but about being brothers and sisters. Of **all**.

Secular

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How can we participate, if we are invisible?

Let's go out, show up where our presence is necessary

Not only presence, but **active participation**

Secular

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- in their presence and participation in the life of society;
- **in their fraternal relationships with all creatures.**

Laudato si!

Again, ALL. It is not for us to select which creatures we want to have fraternal relationship, God has already decided. With ALL creatures. Respect all kinds of life, born and not born yet, each and every life is of a great value. Respect all the creatures, because they “bear the imprint of the most high” (1Cel80)

Order

We are living in an Order. This means a structure, and organization, an institution.

Living a charism needs an organization. And vice versa, each organization needs a charism.

Order

OFS has a specific juridical character. We are a **REAL ORDER**, according to CIC 303. among the Third Orders.

We are members of the Franciscan Family,
one of the Franciscan Orders.

We have a certain **autonomy**, but it does **not** mean **independence!**

Order

We have our own structure, our own organization.

OFS is of pontifical right, our Rule is given by pp. Paul VI.

All our basic documents are approved by the Holy See

Juridically we belong to the CIVCSA (Congregation of the Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life)

We are a Public association of Christian Faithful

Order

DO WE REALLY NEED ALL THIS?

Order

The structural aspect of being a real Order is like the **skeleton**.

- Keeps the body
- Gives its shape
- If it weren't there, the body would collapse

BUT

If it functions well, it is invisible, if it comes out, there's a problem.

We only see the bones when there's an accident

Bleeding, often an immediate surgery is needed

The body loses its shape, it is inoperable

Order

We are a real Order, we have the structures, what structures work well only in the background

It is always an instrument, not the goal.

We need the order, because “a charism without an institution is a daydream, an institution without charism is a nightmare”
(Fr. Lester Bach OFM Cap, 2005, Assisi)

Order

We are a real Order, and this Order inserts us into the universal Church.

This makes the distinction, that we are not a spiritual movement

And finally, this makes an order among the 350.000 members

Our vocation is a **real vocation**.
Like every vocation, it is the **call of God**.

Our specific vocation is the call of God to live in the
**Secular
Franciscan
Order**

We have no idea, **how many** have already
heard and followed this call **since 1221**

This is a **journey**, which leads us to **salvation**,
and I'd like to **meet God and meet those many**

**“And may whoever (of you all) observes all this
be filled in heaven
with the blessing of the most high Father,
and on earth
with that of his beloved Son,
together with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.”**

(Blessing of St. Francis – Testament)

Thank you for your kind attention!

Pace e bene!