



### The Secular Franciscan Order (O.F.S.)

The Secular Franciscan Order, formerly known as the Third Order of St. Francis, is an official Order within the Catholic Church, established by St. Francis of Assisi early in the thirteenth century. There are approximately 13,000 members of the O.F.S. in the United States.

Members of the Secular Franciscan Order live their everyday lives in the world as single or married laypersons. The Order is also open to diocesan clergy. The brothers and sisters of the O.F.S., led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state. They gather together on a regular basis for prayer, ongoing formation, ministry and fellowship. Secular Franciscans join a local fraternity – a living active Christian community – and truly become a spiritual family. As brothers and sisters they help one another in living out their call to the Gospel life. Secular Franciscans are not expected to be perfect imitators of Christ in order to qualify for admission. Rather, conversion and conformity to Christ is a lifelong process, carried out daily because of our human frailty. The Rule of Life and the support of the fraternity are great helps as Secular Franciscans seek daily to follow Christ and live out their Franciscan vocation.

**NAME** Fraternity welcomes your inquiries about the Secular Franciscan Order. If you would like more information or would like to explore a possible vocation to the O.F.S. please contact our Formation Director, **NAME**, O.F.S., **TELEPHONE/EMAIL**.

*May The Lord give you peace!*

## CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST AND PROFESSION IN THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

**ST. FRANCIS SOLANUS CHURCH, QUINCY IL**  
**DATE**

Today **NAME** will make **her** profession in the Secular Franciscan Order (O.F.S.). **NAME**, O.F.S. is the Minister of **NAME** Fraternity and will receive the profession. **NAME**, O.F.S., is the Spiritual Assistant of the Fraternity and will represent the wider Franciscan family.

Profession in the Order is the culmination of over three years of initial formation. The candidate at **her** profession will promise to follow the “Rule of Life” of the Secular Franciscan Order and pledge **herself** to live the Gospel in the manner of St. Francis by means of this Rule. St. Francis himself wrote the first “Rule of Life” for members of the Secular Franciscan Order. Since Vatican II the Rule has been updated but is still true to the vision of St. Francis of Assisi for the “Order of Penitents”. Secular Franciscans live out their calling to the Franciscan life in their homes and families, at work, in their parishes, and in the world.

**NAME** Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order, canonically established in **DATE**, thanks you for witnessing this special celebration today.

We are assembled as a community to take part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In this celebration of the Eucharist **NAME** is going to make **her** profession of the Gospel life in the Secular Franciscan Order. In doing so, **she** makes present again and renews the promises of **her** Baptism and the commitment of her Confirmation.

While giving thanks to the Father through Christ for all the gifts we have received from him, we have a special reason for gratitude today: the gift of his grace which he has given to the one about to be professed to live in the world according to the spirit of the Beatitudes, and also the gift of his grace which he has given to the whole community by adding a new member to the fraternity.

The permanent commitment to the Gospel life publicly proclaimed today during this celebration reminds us of something which is also made present every day in the Eucharist: After the example of Christ and in union with his own act of thanksgiving, we are to present ourselves before the Father as living sacrifices of praise given for the life of the world.

### **RITE OF PROFESSION**

After the reading of the Gospel:

#### **Candidate's Request for Profession:**

I ask to be admitted to profession of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order and to make a permanent commitment to the Gospel life. The experience during my time of formation has strengthened me in the conviction that the Lord is calling me to observe the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by following the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.

*[The community acknowledges its assent with applause.]*

After the homily and questioning:

#### **Profession to the Gospel Life:**

I, **NAME** by the grace of God,  
renew my baptismal promises  
and consecrate myself  
to the service of his kingdom.

Therefore, in my secular state I promise  
to live all the days of my life  
the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
in the Secular Franciscan Order  
by observing its rule of life.

May the grace of the Holy Spirit,  
the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
and our holy father St. Francis,  
and the fraternal bonds of community always be my help,  
so that I may reach the goal of perfect Christian love.

#### **The Minister Receives the Profession:**

Thanks be to God! As Minister of this fraternity, I accept your profession and receive you into this fraternity of **NAME** of the Secular Franciscan Order. Your membership in the fraternity is a cause of great joy and hope for all the members of the community and for the whole Church.

#### **Celebrant Confirms the Commitment:**

I confirm your commitment in the name of the Church. Our Seraphic Father himself encourages you in the words of his Testament: "May whoever 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, and all the powers of heaven and all the saints."

#### **Presentation of Symbols of Profession:**

**Bible:** 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. By your lifelong profession to go from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel, may you continually encounter the living and active person of Christ.

**San Damiano Crucifix:** May you conform your thoughts and deeds to those of Christ and build a more fraternal and evangelical world by fulfilling your vocation as a "**sister** of penance."

**Candle:** By your profession you are the light of Christ in the world. Your light must shine before all so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father.

**Ring:** You have been made a living member of the Church in Baptism; you have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Through this special covenant of union, may you be a faithful witness and instrument of her mission among all people.