



Initial Formation Program of the OFS of Canada



What is Formation? To Enter into the Experience of Franciscan Life

When we speak of formation, there are many facets to look at.

Spontaneously, we think of acquiring the knowledge to better understand the realities in which we wish to commit ourselves. This is, for Franciscan life, the development of understanding the bases of our Christian faith, the Word of God, the life within the Church, the Creed inherited from our predecessors in faith. There is the knowledge of the life of Francis and of the spirituality he has passed on through his experience of God and his life in fraternity. We must also add the beautiful figures of men and women who have enriched this spirituality by bringing to it their particular colours, linked to the God's gifts placed in them. We could also add many of the elements linked to the actual life of the Church and the interest that give rise to all the great questions in the world today and to the dialogue of faith with contemporary cultures.

Formation also requires the apprenticeship of a manner of living the Gospel project under the inspiration of Francis and Clare. It is the place of permanent conversion of the heart in order always to live more faithfully with the faithful God.

It is also the discovery of new commitments, a manner of living and acting in personal life, in family and in society among common values that call for concrete actions, a way of doing.

All that seems grand and demanding if we think of doing it in one single action. Today, we must envisage all formation as a process that pledges an entire life. The formation is ongoing and permanent and that goes on for all the dimensions in life.

The initial formation, that is put forward to our brothers and sisters who are journeying in the secular Franciscan life, presents itself as a progressive admission in the experience of Gospel life in the Franciscan manner and in the secular condition. The objective is not to know everything but to develop a taste for knowledge in order to live better and to commit oneself.

A progressive admission signifies that little by little, with planned stages and with people who accompany us, we become familiar with this form of life, we experience it, we discover the joys and the challenges, we discern, by experience, God's call for us.

The program which is presented to you wants to be an instrument to further this admission in the experience. We can hope that it will give to those who will use it, the taste to always go further in the discovery of the beautiful project in the Secular Franciscan life that will bring on the desire to make a definite commitment to this form of life. It is a formation that presents itself as a beautiful and great adventure where the discoveries can help us to enter into oneself to discern God's calls and to be open to others in the common search for the Kingdom of God.

Happy journey

Henri Ethier, ofm