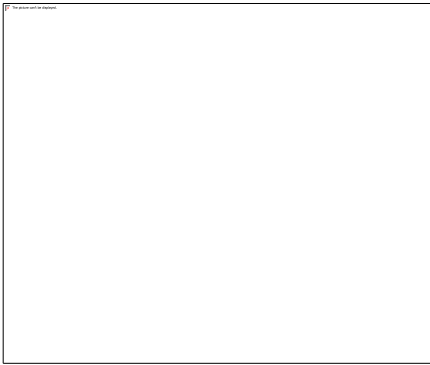


## INFORMATION PACK

This Information Pack contains all the information you will need about the Community and how to join. Any questions please email Br Jonathan Bennett-Hughes at [stfrancis@unitedtempleofthespirit.org](mailto:stfrancis@unitedtempleofthespirit.org)

**Br Jonathan Bennett-Hughes**

Brother Superior for the Community



**The Community of Saint Francis**

Flat 7 Cecil House,  
23 Issac Blake Place,  
Rochester,  
Kent  
ME2 2WF

**Tel:** 07398 592 439

**e-mail:** [stfrancisuk@unitedtempleofthespirit.org](mailto:stfrancisuk@unitedtempleofthespirit.org)

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: THE COMMUNITY AND MEMBERSHIP

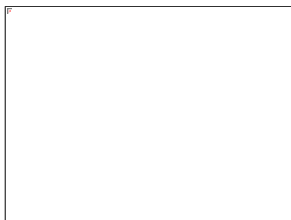
Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Community of Saint Francis.

Please find enclosed a leaflet that explains the role and meaning of being a member. If you feel called to take the next step, kindly complete the form located at the bottom of the leaflet and return it to me at the address provided.

Upon receiving your completed form, I will send you additional information along with an admission card.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

With every blessing and prayer,



Pax et Bonum

**Br Jonathan T Bennett-Hughes CSF**

Brother Superior for the Community

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Community members are Christians who feel called to be closely connected with the Community of Saint Francis through **prayer, friendship**, and by **seeking to live the Gospel** in the spirit and example of Saint Francis.

Community members are invited to develop a personal **Rule of Life** – a prayerful guide shaped by simplicity, service, and devotion. This Rule should be regularly reviewed and adapted as needed, fostering growth in the love and knowledge of Christ and encouraging others toward that same love.

### What Is Expected of a Community member?

A member undertakes to observe certain obligations and is encouraged to develop a personal **Rule of Life** inspired by the guiding principles outlined below.

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### Obligations of a Member

1. To pray regularly for the Community of Saint Francis and to support its mission and ministry through acts of generosity.
  2. To strive for simplicity in daily living, avoiding waste and unnecessary excess.
  3. To offer assistance to those in need.
  4. To seek opportunities to lead others to the knowledge and life of Christ.
- 

### Guiding Principles for the Rule of Life

1. To pray to God each morning and evening.
2. To read a passage from Holy Scripture daily.
3. To hold the Eucharist as the central act of Christian worship, committing to a rule of regular communion.
4. To make use of sacramental confession when guided by conscience.
5. To set aside a portion of one's income, according to a thoughtful and systematic plan, in support of those in need and the work of the Church.
6. To be ready to offer service to others within one's daily life and work.
7. To deepen one's understanding of God and the Christian faith through spiritual reading, retreats, and conferences as opportunities arise.
8. To review one's Rule of Life annually, ideally around the Feast of Saint Francis (October 4th).

# Who Are the Community members of the Community of Saint Francis?

## The Community of Saint Francis

The Community of Saint Francis (CSF) is an Old Catholic religious community of men and women whose Rule of Life follows the example of Saint Francis of Assisi. Francis lived a life of radical poverty, devoted to Jesus Christ – the incarnate Son of God—and to the service of all creation.

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## A Community Member Is One Who Accompanies

A *Community member* is someone who walks alongside. Community members of the Community are individuals who, through their Christian journey, have encountered the Sisters or Brothers of the Community and feel drawn to accompany them in spirit and purpose. While they do not live in community or follow a religious vocation themselves, Community members offer their prayerful and practical support to those who do.

---

## A Community Member Is One Who Prays

Community members are invited to deepen their spiritual lives through regular prayer, particularly for the Community and its work throughout the world. Prayer is the cornerstone of their fellowship with the Sisters and Brothers and provides vital spiritual strength to the Community.

Community members receive their own newsletter, published twice a year, free of charge.

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## A Community Member Is One Who Serves

Community members are encouraged to live out their faith through acts of service, especially towards those in need. Some offer direct support to a specific ministry or project connected to one of the Community. This support is warmly welcomed.

In some regions, Community members meet for fellowship, prayer, and mutual encouragement. While attendance at such gatherings is optional, they offer valuable opportunities for shared reflection and support in living out the Community members commitment.

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## A Community Member Is One Who Seeks

Community members are urged to continually grow in their knowledge and love of God. This includes regular reading of Scripture, participation in study or retreats, and reflection upon their spiritual journey.

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## Living as a Companion

### *Obligations*

1. To pray regularly for the Community of St. Francis and support its life and work through alms giving.
2. To aim at simplicity of life, avoiding all waste and extravagance.
3. To help those in need.
4. To strive to bring others to the knowledge and life of Christ.

### *Guiding Principles*

1. To pray to God every morning and evening.
2. To read some verses of the Bible each day.
3. To regard the Eucharist as the central act of Christian worship and to have a rule of regular communion.
4. To use sacramental confession when conscience requires.
5. To devote some portion of one's money, on a systematic and thought-out plan, for the help of the needy and the work of God's Church.
6. To be ready to undertake some service for others in the sphere of one's life and work.
7. To deepen one's knowledge of God and one's faith through religious reading retreats and conferences as opportunity allows.
8. To review one's Rule of Life on or about the feast of St. Francis (October 4<sup>th</sup>) each year.

# 1. Prayer at the start of the Day

## 1.1. First words each day – said upon waking:

*Blessed are You, Almighty God, for You have restored my soul within me.*

## 1.2. Morning Offering – said when getting up:

*Vitam gratam agam. Ad maiorem gloriam Dei!*

*("I will live with joy. For the greater glory of God!")*

## 1.3. Morning Prayer

### Option 1 – Morning Prayer in Primitive Form (using five-decade rosary beads)

**Sign of the Cross and Invitatory – holding the cross in the hand:**

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. +Amen.*

*O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.*

Psalm 51:15

*O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us.*

**At the first large bead:**

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;*

*As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.*

**The Lord's Prayer** for each Order of the Franciscan Family – **at each of the next three beads:**

*Our Father who are in heaven (...)*

*For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

**At the second large bead:**

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;*

*As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.*

**Prayer for the Community of St Francis – at the centre medal or bead:**

*Almighty God, You have so ordered our life*

*that we are dependent on one another.*

*Bless the Community of St Francis,*

*and all our Brothers and Sisters who serve You.*

*Lord, make us an instrument of Your peace;*

*Where there is hatred, let us sow love;*

*Where there is injury, pardon;*

*Where there is discord, harmony;*

*Where there is error, truth;*

*Where there is doubt, faith;*

*Where there is despair, hope;*

*Where there is darkness, light;*

*And where there is sadness, joy.*

*Grant that we may not so much seek*

*To be consoled as to console;*

*To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

**The Lord's Prayer – at each of the next ten beads:**

*Our Father who are in heaven (...)  
For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

**At the large bead:**

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.*

**The Lord's Prayer – at each of the next ten beads:**

*Our Father who are in heaven (...)  
For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

**Conclusion:**

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all  
evermore, Amen.*

**Option 2 – Morning Prayer from the Psalms of David**

**Sign of the Cross:**

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. +Amen.*

**Invitatory:**

*O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.  
O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us.*

Psalm 51:15

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.*

**Psalms of David as appointed in the Book of Common Prayer for Morning Prayer.**

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.*

**The Lord's Prayer:**

*Our Father who are in heaven (...)  
For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

**Prayer for the Community of St Francis:**

*Almighty God, You have so ordered our life that we are dependent on one another.  
Bless the Community of St Francis, and all our Brothers and Sisters who serve You.*

*Lord, make us an instrument of Your peace;  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;*

*Where there is discord, harmony;  
Where there is error, truth;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, joy.*

*Grant that we may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

**Conclusion:**

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all  
evermore, Amen.*

**Option 3 – Morning Prayer using a chosen Daily Prayer Book**

**Sign of the Cross:**

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. +Amen.*

**Invitatory:**

*O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.  
O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us.*

Psalm 51:15

**Morning Prayer as laid out in the chosen Daily Prayer Book.**

**Immediately after the Lord's Prayer, say the**

**Prayer for the Community of St Francis:**

*Almighty God, You have so ordered our life that we are dependent on one another.  
Bless the Community of St Francis, and all our Brothers and Sisters who serve You.*

*Lord, make us an instrument of Your peace;  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is discord, harmony;  
Where there is error, truth;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, joy.*

*Grant that we may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love.*



*For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

**Conclusion as laid out in the chosen Daily Prayer Book.**

## Option 4 – If circumstances do not allow for Morning Prayer

### Day Offering

*Almighty God, bless the Community of St Francis, and all our Brothers and Sisters who serve You.*

*Help me, as I go through the course of this day:*

- *To appreciate the world around me;*
- *To be open to those who love me;*
- *To respond to those who need me;*
- *And to forgive those who hurt me.*

*Help me to act that Your Kingdom may come:*

- *Granting me the strength to change the things I can;*
- *Patience to accept the things I cannot change;*
- *And the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.*

## 2. Midday Prayer

### 2.1. Prayer at Noon

#### Option 1 – Prayer at Noon in Primitive Form (using five-decade rosary beads)

*Sign of the Cross*

*and Invitatory:*

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. +Amen.*

*O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.*

Psalm 51:15

*O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us.*

**Continuing from the morning – At the large bead:**

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;*

*As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.*

*The Lord's Prayer*

**at each of the next five beads:**

*Our Father who are in heaven (...)*

*For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

*SSF Community Obedience:*

- **Cross Prayer**

*Almighty God,  
When the world was growing cold,  
To the inflaming of our hearts by the fire of Your love,  
You raised up blessed Francis,  
Bearing in his body the marks of the Passion of Your Son.*

*Mercifully grant to us, Your people,  
True penitence and grace to bear the Cross  
For love of Him who is alive and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit:  
Now and forever. Amen.*

- **Reading for the day from the "Principles" (see 4.3.)**

- **Silence** – a moment of quiet reflection

- **Intercessions**

**from the Intercession Lists and for other causes as appropriate**

**Intercession for the Community of St Francis**

*O God, we give You thanks for the Community of St Francis.  
Grant, we pray, that being knit together in community and prayer,  
We as Your servants may glorify Your holy name after the example of St Francis,  
And win others to Your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

- **Silence** – a period of quiet reflection

- **The Lord's Prayer** – **at each of the next five beads:**

*Our Father who are in heaven (...)*

*For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

- **Conclusion:**

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all  
evermore, Amen.*

## Option 2 – Prayer at Noon from the SSF Third Order Office

*As laid out in the SSF Third Order Manual.*

## Option 3 – Prayer at Noon using a chosen Daily Prayer Book

*The reading for the day from the "Principles" follows after the Lord's Prayer.*

*After this reading, intercessions may be offered from the Intercession Lists.*

## 2.2. Prayers at or around 12:00 o'clock

### 2.2.1. Angelus

*The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary, and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.*

*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.*

*Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Your word.*

*My soul magnifies the Lord (...)*

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*

*My soul magnifies the Lord (...)*

*Almighty God, help us to be faithful in Your service.*

*That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

*O Lord, pour Your grace into our hearts; that as we have known the incarnation of Christ Your Son by the message of an angel, we may by His Cross and Passion be brought unto the glory of His resurrection. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

### 2.2.2. Grace at Meals

*Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed. +Amen.*

*Let us give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good. His mercy endures forever. +Amen.*

### 2.2.3. Prayer for the Departed

*Let us also remember our Brothers and Sisters in the Community of St Francis, who have gone before us. Heavenly Father, we entrust them to Your loving care, confident in Your promise of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## 3. Prayer at the end of the Day

### 3.1. Evening Prayer:

#### Option 1 – Evening Prayer in Primitive Form (using five-decade rosary beads)

***Sign of the Cross***

and Invitatory:

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. +Amen.*

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.  
O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Psalm 51:15

Continuing from noon –

At the large bead:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

at each of the next ten beads:

Our Father who are in heaven (...)  
For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

At the large bead:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer – at each of the next ten beads:

Our Father who are in heaven (...)  
For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Conclusion:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore, Amen.

## Option 2 – Evening Prayer from the Psalms of David

**Sign of the Cross:**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. +Amen.

**Invitatory:**

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.  
O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Psalm 51:15

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.

**The Psalms of David as appointed in the Book of Common Prayer for Evening Prayer.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer:**

Our Father who are in heaven (...)  
For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Prayer for the Community of St Francis:**

Almighty God, You have so ordered our life that we are dependent on one another.  
Bless the Community of St Francis, and all our Brothers and Sisters who serve You.

*Lord, make us an instrument of Your peace;  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is discord, harmony;  
Where there is error, truth;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, joy.*

*Grant that we may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

**Conclusion:**

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all  
evermore, Amen.*

**Option 3 – Evening Prayer using a chosen Daily Prayer Book**

**Sign of the Cross:**

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. +Amen.*

**Invitatory:**

*O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.  
O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us.*

Psalm 51:15

**Evening Prayer as laid out in the chosen Daily Prayer Book.**

**Immediately after the Lord's Prayer, say the**

**Prayer for the Community of St Francis:**

*Almighty God, You have so ordered our life that we are dependent on one another.  
Bless the Community of St Francis, and all our Brothers and Sisters who serve You.*

*Lord, make us an instrument of Your peace;  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is discord, harmony;  
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Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, joy.*

*Grant that we may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

**Conclusion as laid out in the chosen Daily Prayer Book.**

## Option 4 – If circumstances do not allow for Evening Prayer

Say Day Offering adapted for the night.

### 3.2. Compline – *said shortly before going to bed*

Revisit the Daily Compass (see 4.4.) for an informal self-examination at the end of the day.

#### Option 1 – Compline in Standard Form (derived from five-decade rosary beads)

##### **Sign of the Cross and Invitatory:**

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. +Amen.*

*O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.*

Psalm 51:15

*O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us.*

##### **Prayer for the Community of St Francis – at the centre medal or bead:**

*Almighty God, You have so ordered our life*

*that we are dependent on one another.*

*Bless the Community of St Francis,*

*and all our Brothers and Sisters who serve You.*

*Lord, make us an instrument of Your peace;*

*Where there is hatred, let us sow love;*

*Where there is injury, pardon;*

*Where there is discord, harmony;*

*Where there is error, truth;*

*Where there is doubt, faith;*

*Where there is despair, hope;*

*Where there is darkness, light;*

*And where there is sadness, joy.*

*Grant that we may not so much seek*

*To be consoled as to console;*

*To be understood as to understand;*

*To be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive;*

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;*

*And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;*

*As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.*

– at the large bead

**The Lord's Prayer**, said for the First Orders of the Franciscan Family

*Our Father who are in (...) the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

– at the small bead

**The Lord's Prayer**, said for the Second Orders of the Franciscan Family

*Our Father who are in (...) the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

– at the next bead

**The Lord's Prayer**, said for the Third Orders of the Franciscan Family

*Our Father who are in (...) the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

– at the next bead



*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.*

*– at the large bead*

**Conclusion** *– holding the cross in the hand:*

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all  
evermore, Amen.*

## Option 2 – Compline in Alternative Form, using a chosen Daily Prayer Book

**Sign of the Cross:**

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. +Amen.*

**Invitatory:**

*O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.*

Psalm 51:15

*O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us.*

*Compline as laid out in the chosen Daily Prayer Book.*

## Option 3 – If circumstances do not allow for Compline

*Say the Lord's Prayer.*

### 3.3. Last words each night

*Lord, into Your hands I commend my spirit. Grant me a restful night, and mercifully preserve my soul to everlasting  
life. Amen.*

*The Benedicte or Canticle of the Creatures may be said.*

## 4. For Reflection

### 4.1. Benedicte – A Song of Creation

The Song of the Three 35-65

*Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord: sing His praise and exalt Him for ever.*

*Bless the Lord, you heavens: sing His praise and exalt Him for ever.*

*Bless the Lord, you angels of the Lord: bless the Lord, all you His hosts; bless the Lord, you waters above the heavens: sing His praise and exalt Him for ever.*

*Bless the Lord, sun and moon: bless the Lord, you stars of heaven; bless the Lord, all rain and dew: sing His praise and exalt Him for ever.*

*Bless the Lord, all winds that blow: bless the Lord, you fire and heat; bless the Lord, scorching wind and bitter cold: sing His praise and exalt Him for ever.*

*Bless the Lord, dews and falling snows: bless the Lord, you nights and days; bless the Lord, light and darkness: sing His praise and exalt Him for ever.*

*Bless the Lord, frost and cold: bless the Lord, you ice and snow; bless the Lord, lightnings and clouds: sing His praise and exalt Him for ever.*

*O let the earth bless the Lord: bless the Lord, you mountains and hills; bless the Lord, all that grows in the ground: sing His praise and exalt Him for ever.*

*Bless the Lord, you springs: bless the Lord, you seas and rivers; bless the Lord, you whales and all that swim in the waters: sing His praise and exalt Him for ever.*

*Bless the Lord, all birds of the air: bless the Lord, you beasts and cattle; bless the Lord, all people on earth: sing His praise and exalt Him for ever.*

*O people of God bless the Lord: bless the Lord, you priests of the Lord; bless the Lord, you servants of the Lord: sing His praise and exalt Him for ever.*

*Bless the Lord, all you of upright spirit: bless the Lord, you that are holy and humble in heart; bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: sing their praise and exalt them for ever.*

### 4.2. The Canticle of the Creatures

St. Francis of Assisi

*Most High, all powerful, good Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory, the honour, and all blessing.*

*To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no man is worthy to mention Your name.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you give light through him.*

*And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendour! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven you formed them clear and precious and*

*beautiful.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather through which you give sustenance to Your creatures.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth, who sustains us and governs us and who produces varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation.*

*Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no living man can escape.*

*Woe to those who die in mortal sin.*

*Blessed are those who will find Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.*

*Praise and bless my Lord, and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility.*

## 4.3. The Rule of the SSF Third Order

### The Principles for daily reading

#### *Day 1 – The Object*

Jesus said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to You, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.’

John 12.24-26

#### *Day 2 – The Object (continued)*

In the example of His own sacrifice, Jesus reveals the secret of bearing fruit. In surrendering Himself to death, He becomes the source of new life. Lifted from the earth on the Cross, He draws all people to Himself. Clinging to life causes life to decay; the life that is freely given is eternal.

#### *Day 3 – The Object (continued)*

Jesus calls those who would serve Him to follow His example and choose for themselves the same path of renunciation and sacrifice. To those who hear and obey, He promises union with God. The object of the Community of St Francis is to build a community of those who accept Christ as their Lord and Master, and are dedicated to Him in body and spirit. They surrender their lives to Him and to the service of His people. The Third Order of the Community of St Francis consists of those who, while following the ordinary professions of life, feel called to dedicate their lives under a definite discipline and vows. They may be female or male, married or single, ordained or lay.

#### *Day 4 – The Object (continued)*

When St Francis encouraged the formation of the Third Order, he recognised that many are called to serve God in the spirit of poverty, chastity, and obedience in everyday life (rather than in a literal acceptance of these principles as in the vows of the Brothers and Sisters of the First and Second

Orders). The Rule of the Third Order is intended to enable the duties and conditions of daily living to be carried out in this spirit.

*Day 5 – The First Aim of the Order: To make our Lord known and loved everywhere.*

The Community of St Francis is founded on the conviction that Jesus Christ is the perfect revelation of God; that true life has been made available to us through His incarnation and ministry; by His Cross and resurrection; and by the sending of His Holy Spirit. Members of the Third Order believe that it is the commission of the church to make the gospel known to all, and we therefore accept our duty of bringing others to know Christ, and of praying and working for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

*Day 6 – The First Aim (continued)*

The primary aim for us as Members of the Third Order is therefore to make Christ known. This shapes our lives and attitudes to reflect the obedience of those whom our Lord chose to be with Him and sent out as His witnesses. Like them, by word and example, we bear witness to Christ in our own immediate environment and pray and work for the fulfilment of His command to make disciples of all nations.

*Day 7 – The Second Aim: To spread the spirit of love and harmony.*

The Community of St Francis sets out, in the name of Christ, to break down barriers between people and to seek equality for all. We accept as our second aim the spreading of a spirit of love and harmony among all people. We are pledged to fight against the ignorance, pride, and prejudice that breed injustice or partiality of any kind.

*Day 8 – The Second Aim (continued)*

Members of the Third Order fight against all injustice in the name of Christ, in whom there can be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for in Him all are one. Our chief object is to reflect that openness to all which was characteristic of Jesus. This can only be achieved in a spirit of chastity, which sees others as belonging to God and not as a means of self-fulfilment.

*Day 9 – The Second Aim (continued)*

As Members of the Third Order, we are prepared not only to speak out for social justice and international peace, but to put these principles into practice in our own lives, cheerfully facing any scorn or persecution to which this may lead.

*Day 10 – The Third Aim: To live simply.*

The first Christians surrendered completely to our Lord and recklessly gave all that they had, offering the world a new vision of a Community in which a fresh attitude was taken towards material possessions. This vision was renewed by St Francis when he chose Lady Poverty as his bride, desiring that all barriers set up by privilege based on wealth should be overcome by love. This is the inspiration for the third aim of the Community, to live simply.

*Day 11 – The Third Aim (continued)*

Although we possess property and earn money to support ourselves and our families, we show ourselves true followers of Christ and of St Francis by our readiness to live simply and to share with others. We recognise that some of our members may be called to a literal following of St Francis in a life of extreme simplicity. All of us, however, accept that we avoid luxury and waste, and regard our possessions as being held in trust for God.

*Day 12 – The Third Aim (continued)*

Personal spending is limited to what is necessary for our health and well-being and that of our dependants. We aim to stay free from all attachment to wealth, keeping ourselves constantly aware of the poverty in the world and its claim on us. We are concerned more for the generosity that gives all, rather than for the value of poverty in itself. In this way we reflect in spirit the acceptance of Jesus' challenge to sell all, give to the poor, and follow Him.

### *Day 13 – The Three Ways of Service*

Members of the Third Order desire to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, whom we serve in the three ways of **Prayer**, **Study** and **Work**. In the life of the Community of St Francis as a whole these three ways must each find full and balanced expression, but it is not to be expected that all members devote themselves equally to each of them. Each individual's service will vary according to his or her abilities and circumstances, yet each individual member's Personal Rule of Life must include each of the three ways.

### *Day 14 – The First Way of Service: Prayer.*

Members of the Third Order seek to live in an atmosphere of praise and prayer. We aim to be constantly aware of God's presence, so that we may indeed pray without ceasing. Our ever-deepening devotion to the indwelling Christ is a source of strength and joy. It is Christ's love that inspires us to service, and strengthens us for sacrifice.

### *Day 15 – The First Way of Service (continued)*

The heart of our prayer is the Eucharist, in which we share with other Christians the renewal of our union with our Lord and Saviour in His sacrifice, remembering His death and receiving His spiritual food.

### *Day 16 – The First Way of Service (continued)*

Members of the Third Order recognise the power of intercessory prayer for furthering the purposes of God's Kingdom, and therefore seek a deepening fellowship with God in personal devotion, and constantly intercede for the needs of His church and His world. Those of us who have much time at our disposal give prayer a large part in our daily lives. Those of us with less time must not fail to see the importance of prayer and to guard the time we have allotted to it from interruption. Lastly, we are encouraged to avail ourselves of the sacrament of Reconciliation, through which the burden of past sin and failure is lifted and peace and hope restored.

### *Day 17 – The Second Way of Service: Study.*

'This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.'  
John 17.3

True knowledge is knowledge of God. Members of the Third Order therefore give priority to devotional study of scripture as one of the chief means of attaining that knowledge of God that leads to eternal life.

### *Day 18 – The Second Way of Service (continued)*

As well as the devotional study of Scripture, we recognise our Christian responsibility to pursue other branches of study, both sacred and secular. In particular some of us accept the duty of contributing, through research and writing, to a better understanding of the church's mission in the world: the application of Christian principles to the use and distribution of wealth; questions concerning justice and peace; and of all other questions concerning the life of faith.

### *Day 19 – The Third Way of Service: Work.*

Jesus took on Himself the form of a servant. He came not to be served, but to serve. He went about doing good: healing the sick, preaching good news to the poor, and binding up the broken-hearted.

### *Day 20 – The Third Way of Service (continued)*

Members of the Third Order endeavour to serve others in active work. We try to find expression for each of the Three Aims of the Order in our lives, and whenever possible actively help others who are engaged in similar work. The chief form of service that we have to offer is to reflect the love of Christ, who, in His beauty and power, is the inspiration and joy of our lives.

### *Day 21 – The Three Notes of the Order*

**Humility**, **Love** and **Joy** are the three notes that mark the lives of members of the Third Order s. When these characteristics are evident throughout the Order, its work will be fruitful. Without them all that it attempts will be in vain.

### *Day 22 – The First Note: Humility.*

We always keep before us the example of Christ, who emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and who, on the last night of His life, humbly washed His disciples' feet. We likewise seek to serve one another with humility.

### *Day 23 – The First Note (continued)*

Humility confesses that we have nothing that we have not received and admits the fact of our insufficiency and our dependence upon God. It is the basis of all Christian virtues. St Bernard of Clairvaux said, 'No spiritual house can stand for a moment except on the foundation of humility'. It is the first condition of a joyful life within any community.

*Day 24 – The First Note (continued)*

The faults that we see in others are the subject of prayer rather than of criticism. We take care to cast out the beam from our own eye before offering to remove the speck from another's. We are ready to accept the lowest place when asked, and to volunteer to take it. Nevertheless, when asked to undertake work of which we feel unworthy or incapable, we do not shrink from it on the grounds of humility, but confidently attempt it through the power that is made perfect in weakness.

*Day 25 – The Second Note: Love.*

Jesus said, 'A new commandment I give to You, that You love one another; as I have loved You, that You also love one another. By this all will know that You are My disciples, if You have love for one another.'

John 13.34-35

Love is the distinguishing feature of all true disciples of Christ who wish to dedicate themselves to Him as His servants.

*Day 26 – The Second Note (continued)*

Love is the distinguishing feature of all true disciples of Christ who wish to dedicate themselves to Him as His servants. Therefore, we seek to love all those to whom we are bound by ties of family or friendship. Our love for them increases, as our love for Christ grows deeper. We have a special love and affection for members of the Third Order, praying for each other individually and seeking to grow in that love. We are on our guard against anything that might injure this love, and we seek reconciliation with those from whom we are estranged. We seek the same love for those with whom we have little natural affinity, for this kind of love is not a welling-up of emotion, but is a bond founded in our common union with Christ.

*Day 27 – The Second Note (continued)*

The Third Order is a community whose members, though varied in race, education, and character, are bound into a living whole through the love we share in Christ. This unity of all who believe in Him will become, as our Lord intended, a witness to the world of His divine mission.

In our relationships with those outside the Order, we show the same Christ-like love, and gladly give of ourselves, remembering that love is measured by sacrifice.

*Day 28 – The Third Note: Joy.*

Members of the Third Order, rejoicing in the Lord always, show in their lives the grace and beauty of divine joy. We remember that we follow the Son of Man, who came eating and drinking, who loved the birds and the flowers, who blessed little children, who was a friend to tax collectors and sinners and who sat at the tables of both the rich and the poor. We delight in fun and laughter, rejoicing in God's world, its beauty and its living creatures, calling nothing common or unclean. We mix freely with all people, ready to bind up the broken-hearted and to bring joy into the lives of others. We carry within us an inner peace and happiness, which others may perceive, even if they do not know its source.

*Day 29 – The Third Note (continued)*

We carry within us an inner peace and happiness, which others may perceive, even if they do not know its source. This joy is a divine gift, coming from union with God in Christ. It is still there even in times of darkness and difficulty, giving cheerful courage in the face of disappointment, and an inward serenity and confidence through sickness and suffering. Those who possess it can rejoice in weakness, insults, hardships, and persecutions for Christ's sake; for when we are weak, then we are strong.

2 Cor 12:9-10

### *Day 30 – The Three Notes*

The Humility, Love and Joy, which mark the lives of members of the Third Order, are all God-given graces. They can never be obtained by human effort. They are gifts of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of Christ is to work miracles through people who are willing to be emptied of self and to surrender to Him. We then become channels of grace through whom His mighty work is done.



## 4.4. A Daily Compass

Throughout your day...

- Be a sign of joy and love to others — LOVE WIDELY.
- Practice the spirit of the Beatitudes — FOLLOW STEADILY.
- Help the blind and forgive those with hardened hearts — IMPROVE PATIENTLY.
  
- Practice mercy and avoid judgement — THINK FAIRLY.
- Devote yourself to prayer frequently — PRAY CONSTANTLY.
- Let your work and rest be inspired by Scripture — DRINK AT THE SOURCE.
  
- Work in the world for the Kingdom of God — BUILD COURAGEOUSLY.
- Practice self-control and self-denial — ADAPT BRAVELY.
- Keep inner silence in all things — SERVE QUIETLY.
  
- Practice simplicity of life — WITNESS HUMBLY.
- Look for ways of relying on God — TRUST FIRMLY.
- Look for ways to encounter Christ — SEEK VIGILANTLY.

## 4.5. Seven Small Steps

The SSS should be explored and lived out under the particular banner of Franciscan spirituality, taking into account the four Obligations and six Guiding Principles of the Community members. Each step can be practiced daily or assigned one to a day of the week.

1. Scripture
2. Supplication
3. Silence
4. Study
5. Service
6. Sharing
7. Stewardship

## How to Become a Companion

If, after prayerful reflection, you feel called to become a Member of the Community of Saint Francis:

1. Complete the form below and return it to the Secretary for the Community, along with a **Second Class large letter stamp**.
2. Upon receipt, you will receive:
  - An admission card
3. Additional helpful information  
Your admission may be conducted by a Sister, Brother, or your parish priest. A lapel badge may be worn during this service and is available for purchase either through the officiant or by contacting the Secretary.
4. After your admission, the officiant should complete the admission card and return it to the Secretary.
5. Once the completed card is received, you will receive a Welcome Letter, and if you haven't already, you may request a lapel badge.
6. If you are not currently subscribed to *Franciscan*, please send the completed subscription form to the address indicated on it.

## Contact Information

Secretary for the Community  
The Community of Saint Francis  
Flat 7 Cecil House,  
23 Issac Blake Place,  
Rochester,  
Kent  
ME2 2WF

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## Application to Become a Companion

I wish to be admitted as a Companion of the Community of Saint Francis.

Name:

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Address:

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Postcode:

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Telephone:

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Email:

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I hope to be admitted by:

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Address of officiant:

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