

GENERAL CONSTITUTIONS**Title II****ACTIVE PRESENCE IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD****Article 17**

1. *Rule Paragraph 6** Called to work together in building up the Church as the sacrament of salvation for all and, through their baptism and profession, made "witnesses and instruments of her mission," Secular Franciscans proclaim Christ by their life and words. Their preferred apostolate is personal witness¹ in the environment in which they live and service for building up the Kingdom of God within the situations of this world.
2. The preparation of the brothers and sisters for spreading the Gospel message "in the ordinary circumstances of the world"² and for collaborating in the catechesis within the ecclesial communities should be promoted in the fraternities.
3. Those who are called to carry out the mission of catechists, presiders of ecclesial communities, or other ministries, as well as the sacred ministers, should make the love of Francis for the Word of God their own, as well as his faith in those who announce it, and the great fervor with which he received the mission of preaching penance from the Pope.
4. Participation in the service of sanctification, which the Church exercises through the liturgy, prayer, and works of penance and charity, is put into practice by the brothers and sisters above all in their own family, then in the fraternity and, finally, through their active presence in the local Church and in society.

For a Just and Fraternal Society**Article 18**

1. Secular Franciscans are called to make their own contribution, inspired by the person and message of Saint Francis of Assisi, towards a civilization in which the dignity of the human person, shared responsibility, and love may be living realities.³
2. *Rule Paragraph 13** They should deepen the true foundations of universal kinship and create a spirit of welcome and an atmosphere of fraternity everywhere. They should firmly commit themselves to oppose every form of exploitation, discrimination, and exclusion and against every attitude of indifference in relation to others.
3. *Rule Paragraph 13** They should work together with movements which promote the building of fraternity among peoples: they should be committed to "create worthy conditions of life" for all and to work for the freedom of all people.
4. Following the example of Francis, patron of ecologists, they should actively put forward initiatives that care for creation and should work with others in efforts that both put a stop to polluting and degrading nature and also establish circumstances of living and environment which would not be a threat to the human person.

***Rule Article 6**

They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.

Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialog of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.

¹ See *Rule 1221, 17,3; Legend of the Three Companions 36; Second Letter to All the Faithful 53.*

² *Lumen Gentium 35.*

³ See *Gaudium et Spes 31 ff.*

*Rule Article 13

As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.

The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul
Francis of Assisi - The Founder Page 259

Chapter XV

THE DISCERNMENT OF SAINT FRANCIS

²² One night while all were sleeping, one of his flock cried out: "Brothers! I'm dying! I'm dying of hunger!" At once that extraordinary shepherd got up, and hurried to treat the sick lamb with the right medicine. He ordered them to set the table, although filled with everyday fare. Since there was no wine—as often happened—they made do with water. Francis started eating first. Then, he invited the rest of the brothers to do the same, for charity's sake, so their brother would not be embarrassed.

Once they had taken their food in the fear of the Lord, so that nothing would be lacking in this act of charity, the father wove for his sons a long parable about the virtue of discernment. He ordered them to season with salt every sacrifice to God. [Lv 2:13](#) With concern he reminded them that in offering service to God each one should consider his own strength. [Jn 16:12](#)

He insisted that it was just as much a sin to deprive the body without discernment of what it really needed as, prompted by gluttony, to offer it too much. And he added: "Dear brothers, realize that, what I just did by eating was not my own choice, but an exception, demanded by fraternal charity. Let the charity, not the food, be an example for you, for the latter feeds the belly while the former feeds the spirit."

The Minor Legend of St. Francis – Sixth Lesson
Francis of Assisi – The Founder Vol II Pg 696-7
Sixth Lesson

Through the love of the most sublime poverty, the man of God prospered and grew rich in holy simplicity. Although he certainly possessed nothing of his own in this world, he seemed to possess all good things in the very Author of this world. With the steady gaze of a dove, that is, the simple application and pure consideration of the mind, he referred all things to the supreme Artisan and recognized, loved, and praised their Maker in all things. It came to pass, by a heavenly gift of kindness, that he possessed all things in God and God in all things. **In consideration of the primal origin of all things, he would call all creatures, however insignificant, by the names of brother and sister** since they come forth with him from the one source. **He embraced** those, however, **more tenderly and passionately, who portray by a natural likeness the gracious gentleness of Christ and exemplify it in the Scriptures.** It came to pass by a supernatural influx of **power** that the **nature of brute animals** was moved in some gracious **manner** toward him. Even inanimate things obeyed his command, as if this same holy *man*, so *simple and upright*, had already returned to the state of *innocence*. [Jb 2:3](#)

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION Hosea 14:1-9

¹Samaria has become guilty, for she has rebelled against her God. They shall fall by the sword, their infants shall be dashed to pieces, their pregnant women shall be ripped open.

Sincere Conversion and New Life

²Return, Israel, to the LORD, your God; you have stumbled because of your iniquity.

³Take with you words, and return to the LORD;

Say to him, "Forgive all iniquity, and take what is good.

Let us offer the fruit of our lips.

⁴Assyria will not save us,
nor will we mount horses;
We will never again say, 'Our god,'
to the work of our hands;
for in you the orphan finds compassion."

⁵I will heal their apostasy,
I will love them freely;
for my anger is turned away from them.

⁶I will be like the dew for Israel:
he will blossom like the lily;
He will strike root like the Lebanon
cedar,

⁷and his shoots will go forth.

His splendor will be like the olive tree
and his fragrance like Lebanon cedar.

⁸Again they will live in his shade;
they will raise grain,
They will blossom like the vine,
and his renown will be like the wine of
Lebanon.

⁹Ephraim! What more have I to do with
idols?

I have humbled him, but I will take note
of him. I am like a verdant cypress tree.
From me fruit will be found for you!