

Tertiaries serve our Lord by:

Prayer

Tertiaries are called to live in an attitude of prayer—of openness to God and to others. Prayer is of primary importance, and the Eucharist is the heart of our prayer.

Study

While Tertiaries give first place to the study of the scriptures, they also seek to widen their understanding of the Church's mission, and of their own calling.



Work

Tertiaries seek to discover what God wants them to do. In their daily work and in their free time they try to serve God and work for the good of others. They endeavour to reflect the love of Christ, and to show his joy and peace.

The Three Aims of the Order

To make our Lord known and loved everywhere

By word and example, prayer and sacrifice, Tertiaries witness to Christ in their lives and reflect God's glory.

To promote the spirit of love and harmony

By relating joyfully to people of different race, colour, creed, education, and opportunity, Tertiaries seek to break down the divisions in the world. They try to live in the spirit of the Franciscan prayer, *Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.*

To live simply

Acknowledging that everything belongs to God, Tertiaries use their gifts wisely, avoid unnecessary luxury, and develop the spirit of detachment.

The Third Order Society of St Francis



*Your Personal
Rule of Life
A guide to preparation*

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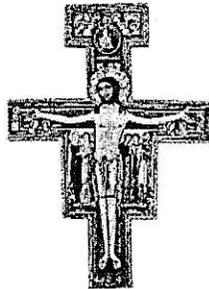
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The Third Order Society of St Francis

Early in his ministry Francis of Assisi recognised the need to include within his movement of reform and renewal people who lived the common life. The work of following Jesus in simplicity, love, and joy could not be restricted to the traditional religious life of the Friars and Sisters.

This was true in the twelfth century and it remains so today—it is the vocation of all Christians.

The Third Order consists of any people—men, women, married, single, ordained, lay—who, though following the ordinary professions of life, feel called to a lifelong dedication under a definite discipline and vows. Dedicating themselves to our Lord as *instruments of his peace* they seek to fulfil the special aims of the Third Order through the three ways of service.



What is the Personal Rule of Life?

Each member of the Third Order must have a spiritual director who normally has a spiritual director of their own, and who accepts *The Principles* as the basis for direction.

Your Personal Rule of Life should consider your personal gifts and qualities, as well as other duties and responsibilities you may have. It may be useful to think of it like a tomato stake, supporting a plant as it grows, rather than a strait-jacket that you must conform to.

Elements of the Personal Rule

Each Tertiary's Personal Rule of Life will normally include a clearly stated commitment to each of the following areas:

1. The Eucharist

Since the Rule of the Third Order regards the Eucharist as the heart of prayer, Tertiaries have a definite practice regarding participation in the Eucharist.

2. Penitence

Regular examination of your obedience to Christ is necessary. Your Personal Rule of Life is to allow for either sacramental confession or a personal discussion seeking counsel and advice.

3. Personal prayer

Set aside a definite time for prayer each day—to worship God, express your thankfulness, your sorrow for sin, and your concern for others.

4. Self-denial

This is the discipline of putting God first and saying, "No" to self. You need to consider where you should impose some self-discipline.

5. Retreat

Retreat or Quiet Day provides an opportunity to rest and grow physically, mentally, and spiritually. Each year plan to participate in an organised or private Retreat or one or more Quiet Days.

6. Study

All need to learn more about God and God's will. Your Personal Rule of Life is to make such provision for learning and reflection as your circumstances permit.

7. Simplicity

This is part of loving and sharing of the material and spiritual things of life. In relation to the amount of income over which you have control, your Personal Rule of Life is to allow for the expression of this open sharing (eg in hospitality, support of the three Orders, your parish, the wider Church, other needs).

8. Work



Service has always been an important part of the Franciscan journey and witness. Your work is the way in which you serve God and other people. Show how you take an active part in the life of the Church and the local community.

9. Obedience

Tertiaries are subject to the decisions of the Third Order Chapter. Each Tertiary is required to use daily the form of prayer known as the Community Obedience. Each Tertiary has a spiritual director whose duty is to give guidance in their Christian living. Personal contact with your spiritual director is made at least twice a year. Tertiaries also report regularly to the Order on the keeping of their Personal Rule of Life.

