

CFC Applicant Lesson: Belief and Lectio Divina

Focus	Francis, in his Rule of 1223, asked for a careful examination of person’s faith before they began their Franciscan journey. One of the steps in the application process is to describe your belief in God.
Reflection	<p>Francis sought to live the Gospel. He savored scripture to enrich his life. In his footsteps we approach the study of Scripture not only as an academic exercise but as a way of learning how to love God more deeply. Clearly Scripture gave form to the way Francis lived. In the practice of Franciscan Lectio Divina – a means of reading scripture and deeply contemplating its meanings and influence in our lives – we follow in the steps of Francis and Clare. The words of Scripture become an encounter with the Word of God. Lectio is a means of giving expression to our relationship with God. Scripture becomes a conversation between loving hearts.</p> <p>The first step is to be still. Relax and open your heart. Be prepared to listen. Every lesson begins with Scripture. Read it once. Let it sit within you. Read it again and look for what begins to resonate within you. Pray. Read it again. Begin to live your life with the Word. The practice of Lectio is much like brewing tea. Allow the Word to steep in you. And, of course, drink the cup: This way our lives become flavored and nourished by Scripture. Lectio leads us to prayer and action. People in love respond in love.</p>
Lectio	In Ephesians we hear: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift”. Ephesians 4:4-7
Prompts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are of given hope in our calling. 2. We are united in one faith. 1. God is above all, through all, in all <p>Let these prompts guide you in your Lectio activities. You will have your own questions and insights arise. Keep coming back to the Scripture and savor its richness and depth.</p>

Please respond to the following:

Prompt: Please describe your faith and how you give expression to it.

Your response may take a variety of formats such as art, music, poetry, storytelling, or the written word. Whatever form you choose should lead to a conversation with your formation group.

CFC Candidate Lesson 1: Community – United in Hearts, while separated by distance

Focus:	What does it mean to be a sibling?
Reflection:	<p>Francis in his Testament states, “When God gave me some brothers, there was no one to tell me what I should do: but the Most High himself made it clear to me that I must live the life of the Gospel.” Francis was not alone on his journey to live the Gospel as he had brothers and, eventually Clare and her sisters, to challenge and support him. Our community is at the bedrock of our vocation as Franciscans. You and I are both a gift to Francis and a gift to our siblings. Our siblings are gifts, given by God, to us. It is with reverence that we approach our communal relationships.</p> <p>We are members of a dispersed and virtual community. We do not see each other every day. We are scattered throughout the world. The great challenge of being a communal diaspora is to continue to build relationships with our siblings. What model of engagement do we have in our community? The least involved model would be a social organization where you pay your dues and go once a year to keep up your membership. The most active model involves some daily activity that keeps our siblings in our hearts and prayers. Ultimately the model we have is the living the Gospel, which is our Rule of Life. Clearly, we are to love one another as gifts from God. We are a diverse family. We may not always agree on some things, but we always agree to actively love one another.</p>
Lectio:	<p><i>1 John 4: 15-21 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.</i></p>
	<p>Lectio prompts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I live in the love of God. 1. Dispersed doesn't mean separated when we are joined in God's love.

Please respond to the following:

Prompt: What does it mean to belong to a spiritual family? Describe how living in the love of God looks like in a community.

Your response may take a variety of formats such as art, music, poetry, storytelling, or the written word. Whatever form you choose should lead to a conversation with your formation group.

Candidate: Lesson 2 Francis and Clare: The Franciscan Movement

<p>Focus</p>	<p>The candidate needs to reflect on the unique approach that Francis and Clare had in living a Gospel life.</p>
<p>Reflection</p>	<p>Francis had a very carefree and privileged youth. His father was wealthy and that provided Francis with money in hand for certainly plenty of wine and song. He was living to some a perfect life of a young bachelor: no work, no worries, and no responsibility. He dreamed of being a great knight and with his father's wealth was outfitted for battle. He did go to war and was imprisoned. This boy of the wealthy merchant class was tossed into a jail that smelled, was filthy, and stank of the pits and puckers of unwashed humanity. Stripped of all his fine clothing and the false dignity of privilege he grew heartsick. His life began to ring hollow. His dreams of knightly adventure shattered.</p> <p>Francis was released, came home, and knew his life to be hallow. All the knightly armor had only protected a spoiled husk of a boy. Francis took long walks in the countryside. He began to seek a deeper meaning for his life. It was in the ruins of the chapel of San Damiano, a place that mirrored the ruins of Francis's earthly dreams, that he heard a quiet whispering. He would later know that this moment was one of being in the presence of Jesus. It was this experience that showed Francis that God was in a relationship with him. From there his life unfolded in ways he could have never expected. In fact, what was once sweet, that hallow knightly dream, became bitter. Francis found a love in that chapel that would become his complete life. He was to be a knight of God, a troubadour of the Great King.</p> <p>Clare grew up in a noble family. She was the eldest daughter and her mother known for her piety. Clare was strong in character and faith. She had heard Francis preach in the streets and churches of Assisi and desired to live the Gospel. She left her wealthy home and sought out Francis on the evening of Palm Sunday, 1212. There she had her hair cut and was given a simple tunic and veil to wear. After being placed in a convent of Benedictine nuns, Clare, her sister Catarina (who took Agnes as a religious name) and other women moved to their own convent close to the church of San Damiano. Clare wrote a Rule of Life for her sisters. The first such rule written by a woman. The sisters, later to be known as the Poor Clares, lived simply in the enclosed convent. Clare found great joy in living the Gospel life. She died in 1253.</p>
<p>Lectio</p>	<p>Ezekiel 34:26-31 <i>I will make them and the region around my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. The trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase. They shall be secure on their soil; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and save them from the hands of those who enslaved them. They shall no more be plundering for the nations, nor shall the animals of the land devour them; they shall live in safety, and no one shall make them afraid. I will provide for them a splendid vegetation so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the insults of the nations. They shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, says the Lord God. You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture and I am your God, says the Lord God.</i></p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is it like to be God's sheep? 2. What is it like to be claimed by God? 3. How does having a relationship with God take away fear, hunger, and insult? 1. What comfort does this reading bring?

Please answer the following:

1. Please express a brief description of the relationship Francis and Clare had with God. Also answer how the story of Francis and Clare heightens your awareness of God in your life. Please add how you have felt moments of conversion – moments when you have been claimed by God.
2. Your response may take a variety of formats such as art, music, poetry, storytelling, or the written word. Whatever form you choose should lead to a conversation with your formation group.

Candidate: Lesson 3 The Radical Gospel

Focus	The Rule of the Gospel is very clear: we are to love God above all and love our neighbors as ourselves. There are no excuses.
Reflection	<p>To be a radical is to live close to the roots of an idea. There is a desire to have a pure interpretation and expression of their ideas. The idea begins to form and transform their lives. There seems to be little compromise in a radical way of living.</p> <p>Francis and Clare were radicals. Their total devotion to loving God was considered romantic by some, extreme by others, and dangerous to a few. What kept them from being a fanatic is that they didn't demand that others live as they did. They approached the Gospel of Jesus with the innocence, simplicity, and zest that was all encompassing in their lives. In truth, Francis and Clare were so deeply aware of God's love that they began to see little else. Everyone was a brother or sister. When they met people they saw God in their eyes. Every twig, rock, bird, wolf, and worm were signs of God's gift of creation. Francis and Clare were in love with God and that love expressed itself in a life lived loving.</p> <p>The radical Gospel is one that calls us to live at our very deepest core of our humanity. We believe that we are at our best when we are loving God, our kith and kin, all of creation. We approach this love with humility. We are everyone's little sister or brother. We have no position, power, or entitlement. Our lives are lived with only one intention: love. We are radical in that we know at our very roots are the presence of God's love. This radical path is a lifelong journey. Every moment is another opportunity to encounter and express God's love. Get to it! Now! No excuses!</p>
Lectio	<p>I John 4:11-16 <i>Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.</i></p> <p><i>No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do proclaim that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God lives in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they live in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.</i></p>
	<p>Lectio prompts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Love of God is expressed in love of neighbor 2. Where there is love, there is God 3. Where there is God, there is love

Please answer the following questions:

1. **Formation Journaling:** How radically do I believe that love is at our very roots of being. Love is our definition, our motivation, our goal: how am I loving God and my neighbor? Who is the hardest person or group of people for me to love?
2. Your response may take a variety of formats such as art, music, poetry, storytelling, or the written word. Whatever form you choose should lead to a conversation with your formation group.

Candidate: Lesson 4 Community and Discernment

Focus	The candidate needs to understand how being within the Anglican Communion will deepen the practice of faith in a church community and provide a means of discernment for their vocation.
Reflection	<p>Francis and Clare began a new way of living in community in contrast to monastic religious life which was mostly guided by the Benedictine Rule. Clare, though living in a monastery, wrote her own Rule of Life that applied the joint vision of her and Francis. Their desire was to follow the Gospel in its simplicity and radical nature. They weren't about pomp, or fancy clothes, or religious caste systems: they considered their spiritual siblings to be gifts from God and in that they provided both support and challenge to live the Gospel. Francis and Clare relied on their faith family to help them discern God's will in their lives.</p> <p>A radical living of the Gospel is a call to love as radically as possible. Community living gives expression to this radical love. Community, at its best, keeps our feet on the ground and our hearts connected. Community at its worst seems political, dysfunctional, and petty. Most communities are a combination of both.</p> <p>Think of a family reunion dinner. Everyone is welcome because of their relationship with one another. There will be a broad spectrum of manners, dress, conversation topics, feelings, accomplishments, and history. The point of unity is one of relationship, not uniformity. We don't all have to be the same in thought or idea, politics, concerns, or hopes. Amid the diversity we need to remember what unites us is God's love. Amid our unity we need to appreciate our differences. Our community enfleshes Gospel love.</p>

<p>Lectio</p>	<p>I John 4:11-21 <i>Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the Day of Judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.</i></p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do I do to build up my community? 2. What are my fears that I bring to my community? 3. How am I challenged by the statement: "Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen."

Please answer the following prompts:

1. **Formation Journaling:** The candidate having reflected on community will write a brief statement about what it means to be a member of a community as well as a member of a local parish. A description of supports and challenges that are present in these communities need to be included.
1. Your response may take a variety of formats such as art, music, poetry, storytelling, or the written word. Whatever form you choose should lead to a conversation with your formation group.