



Our Rule and the Joy of the Gospel—a take-away for sharing with your fraternities

<p>The Joys that we, as Secular Franciscans find in Evangelii Gaudium—the Joy of the Gospel</p> <p>Are there other joys that can be added?</p>	<p>The Joy of Faith The Joy of Prayer The Joy of Conversion The Joy of Relationship The Joy of Fraternity The Joy of Detachment The Joy of Service Perfect Joy The Joy of Salvation</p> 
 <p>We are challenged to live up to our Rule and thereby to live up to the Gospel.</p>	<p>Our challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meditating on Scripture • Living the message of the Gospel • Prayer and contemplation • Seeking justice and peace—outreach to the poor • Thriving in Community-Fraternity • Striving for personal daily conversion
<h3>Lining up our Rule with Evangelii Gaudium</h3>	
<p>Rule Article 4:</p> <p><i>“The rule and life of the Secular Franciscan is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.</i></p> <p><i>Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel.”</i></p>	<p>“The best incentive for sharing the Gospel comes from contemplating it with love, lingering over its pages and reading it with the heart.” 5:264</p> <p>“The study of the sacred Scriptures must be a door opened to every believer. It is essential that the revealed word radically enrich our catechesis and all our efforts to pass on the faith.” 3:175</p> <p>“The best incentive for sharing the Gospel comes from contemplating it with love, lingering over its pages and reading it with the heart.” 5:264</p> <p>“The study of the sacred Scriptures must be a door opened to every believer. It is essential that the revealed word radically enrich our catechesis and all our efforts to pass on the faith.” 3:175</p> <p>“There is one particular way of listening to what the Lord wishes to tell us in his word and of letting ourselves be transformed by the Spirit. It is what we call Lectio Divina.” 152</p>



“Reading the Scriptures also makes it clear that the Gospel is not merely about our personal relationship with God. Nor should our loving response to God be seen simply as an accumulation of small personal gestures to individuals in need, a kind of ‘charity à la carte,’ or a series of acts aimed solely at easing our conscience.”

4:180

“The Gospel is about the kingdom of God (cf. Lk 4: 43); it is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity. Both Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society.” 4:180

Rule Article 5:

“Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity.”



...we must have sincere trust in our fellow pilgrims, putting aside all suspicion or mistrust, Trusting others is an art and peace is an art. 244

“If we are to share our lives with others and generously give of ourselves, we also have to realize that every person is worthy of our giving.” 5:274

“God’s word teaches that our brothers and sisters are the prolongation of the incarnation for each of us: What these passages make clear is the absolute priority of ‘going forth from ourselves toward our brothers and sisters’” 4:179

This inseparable bond between our acceptance of the message of salvation and genuine fraternal love appears in several scriptural texts which we would do well to meditate upon, in order to appreciate all their consequences. 179.

- ***“As you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me”*** (Mt 25: 40).


The way we treat others has a transcendent dimension:


- ***“The measure you give will be the measure you get”*** (Mt 7: 2).

It corresponds to the mercy which God has shown us:

- ***“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you... For the measure you give will be the measure you get back”*** (Lk 6: 36-38).

We incarnate the duty of hearing the cry of the poor when we are deeply moved by the suffering of others. 193

<p>Rule Article 6:</p> <p><i>“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.”</i></p>	<p>The kerygma (refers to the initial and essential proclamation of the gospel message) has a clear social content: at the very heart of the Gospel is life in community and engagement with others. 177</p> <p>"By preaching Jesus Christ, who is himself peace (cf. Eph 2: 14), the new evangelization calls on every baptized person to be a peacemaker and a credible witness to a reconciled life." 4: 239</p> <p>“Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God’s presence.” 5:259</p>
<p>Rule Article 7:</p> <p><i>“...motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls conversion. Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.”</i></p>	<p>“How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy.” 1:3</p> <p>“Now is the time to say to Jesus: ‘Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you . I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace.” 1:3</p>
<p>Rule Article 8:</p> <p><i>“So let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do. Let them participate in the sacramental life of the church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.”</i></p> 	<p>"Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervor dies out." 5:262</p> <p>"Spirit-filled evangelizers are evangelizers who pray and work." Chapter 5: 262</p> <p>"Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God’s presence." 5:259</p>

<p>Rule Article 11:</p> <p><i>“Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs.</i></p> <p><i>Thus, in the spirit of the Beatitudes, and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of the Father, they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.”</i></p> 	<p>“I (also) think of the real joy shown by others who, even amid pressing professional obligations, were able to preserve, in detachment and simplicity, a heart full of faith.” 1:7</p> <p>“Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor.” 1:2</p> <p>Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid. 187</p> <p>We incarnate the duty of hearing the cry of the poor when we are deeply moved by the suffering of others. 193</p>
<p>Rule Articles 13 & 14:</p> <p><i>“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</i></p> <p><i>Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively.”</i></p>	<p>“We are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together in fidelity to the Gospel. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community!” 2:92</p> <p>“Let everyone admire how you care for one another, and how you encourage and accompany one another: ‘By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another’” (Jn 13: 35). 2: 99</p> <p>“It is a fraternal love capable of seeing the sacred grandeur of our neighbor, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the nuisances of life in common by clinging to the love of God, of opening the heart to divine love and seeking the happiness of others just as their heavenly Father does.” 2:92</p>
<p>Rule Article 15:</p> <p><i>“Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.”</i></p>	<p>“Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society.” 4:187</p> <p>“The dignity of the human person and the common good rank higher than the comfort of those who refuse to renounce their privileges. When these values are threatened, a prophetic voice must be raised.” 4:218</p> <p>“An authentic faith—which is never comfortable or completely personal— always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it.” 4:183</p>

**Questions for sharing here and with
your fraternities.**



- **Who are we according to our Rule?**
- **What are the challenges that we have been given by our Rule and by The Joy of the Gospel?**
- **What opened your heart today?**
- **What will we take back to our fraternities?**

Please discuss in your groups and perhaps share a thought or two with us.