

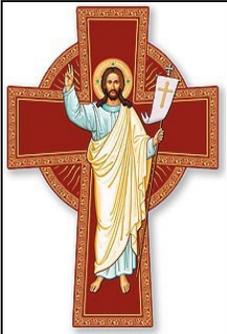
# Old Catholic Church of the Americas

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## What Does It Mean to be a Franciscan in Today's World? Part III: Catholicism's Best-kept Secret: Third Orders



### Being Franciscan—Part III

Are you a Catholic who feels attracted to a religious order, but are married? Do you want to stay in your home and at your job, but still follow a rule of life, like that of St. Benedict, for example? Do you want to share your pilgrim journey with other like-minded people? Have I got a deal for you: Third orders!

#### What are Third/Secular Orders?

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "Third Orders signify in general lay members of religious orders, i.e. men and women who do not necessarily live in community and yet can claim to wear the habit\* and participate in the good works of some great order. ... Any Catholic may join a Third Order, but may not at once belong to more than one, nor may he without grave cause leave one for another."

Here's the definition:

"Associations whose members share in the spirit of some religious institute while in secular life, lead an apostolic life, and strive for Christian perfection under the higher direction of the same institute are called third orders or some other appropriate name." (Can. 303)

#### Who Joins Third/Secular Orders?

Married or single Catholic women and men from all walks of life are able to join secular orders, as are diocesan priests and deacons. Like their religious

counterparts, seculars (also called "tertiaries") undergo a period of formation according to the processes established by their orders, after which they become professed members. Profession for seculars means they promise to live according to the rules of their orders; it does *not* consist of taking vows.

#### What Does "Secular" or "Third" Order Mean?

Unlike religious (monks, friars, nuns, sisters) who remove themselves from the world and live apart in convents or friaries, those in third orders stay where they're at in the world (homes, jobs, families, etc.); hence, the term "secular". For example, as Bernard of Bessa, Secretary of St. Bonaventure, said, "The intention of [Third Regular of Franciscans] is to live honorably in their residences and to busy themselves with pious actions and to flee from the vanities of the world."

You also see "third" used, a term which arose as an indicator of when the lay branch of the main order was established. For example, the Franciscan Order started with a group of men, whom St. Francis of Assisi organized into the Order of Friars Minor -- the *first order*. After a time, a *second order* for nuns -- the Poor Clares -- was established. Finally, a *third order* was established for the Religious and laity -- the THIRD Franciscan Order.

#### San Damiano Mission

Greetings Dearest Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

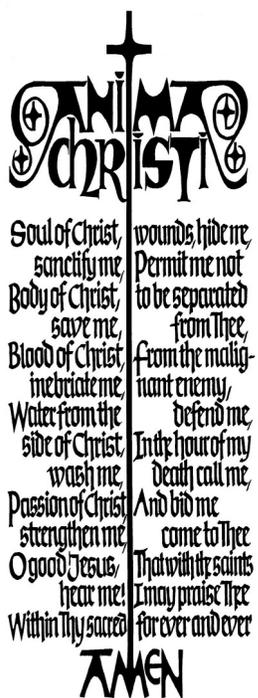
Peace be upon you all in Christ our Lord. I would like to formally introduce and welcome you to the order of the "Franciscan Friars & Sisters, Third Regular of St. Francis of Penance of the Blessed Virgin Mary." We are a new order officially created in 2013, an order of Franciscan Brothers and Sisters who have publicly professed vows to follow the rule of our founder and Holy Father St. Francis of Assisi and the constitutions of our order. We use our communal relationships to better explore the traditions and teachings of our founder as closely and stringently as possible in this very different and modern age.

Although we are an order within the Old Catholic Church, not a roman order, and do not follow the authority of the pope, we respect and learn from those religious who have gone before us and successfully done the holy work both St. Francis, St. Clare, and Christ himself would have us do. As such, we also choose to learn from the mistakes and failings of our religious brothers and sisters from the past. Many orders separate from the Roman church have taken a free-form approach to religious life and while that is helpful for some, our goal is to keep as closely as possible to the ideals of Francis, while taking a more pastoral approach than the Roman Church itself has chosen in its own interpreta-

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tion of Francis' teachings. We are an order that greets people where they are and seeks to help them grow through fraternal activity, study and communication while we explore living the Gospel and living the Rule of St. Francis. His words are as true today as they were in his own time.

Our order is made up of people from varied backgrounds and nationalities, young and old, professionals and retired, straight and gay. As we follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, we do not turn others away or condemn them but instead seek to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are one in the bond of God our creator, St.

Francis our founder and in their infinite love for us. Our celebration of the communal Meal, the Eucharist, feeds our souls as we explore more deeply the vision our creator has for us. Our patron is The Blessed Virgin Mary calls us all to innocence and hope. She and Christ are the models of humility we should all strive to follow in our daily lives particularly as Franciscans. As Franciscans we are not to seek to be or view ourselves as better or above one another and instead are to be faithful and humble servants for the ushering in of Christ' church. St. Francis loved the Holy Blessed Mother and Infant, he brought the first nativities into our sanctuaries, and even in this we follow his example. If you feel

called to follow the example of St. Francis of Assisi as you seek to follow more closely Christ our Lord we encourage you to contact us concerning our Franciscan Formation and becoming a TOR Friars or Sister. We are in the midst of planning our Order, and still have time to include those interested in joining. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.  
PAX ET BONUM,

Friar Anthony M. Mikusak, TOR  
Province of the Mother of Mercy.

Contact: [domina.missio@gmail.com](mailto:domina.missio@gmail.com)

### **Just an Observation —by Sister Ann Roe, OSB**

A coworker who is planning to retire soon has been walking through our maze of cubicles with the happiest grin ever. He has took classes and studied, and then began raising... bees. At every opportunity he regales us with descriptions of the hives, and all the care and attention the hives require. Some people would squirm at the very thought of approaching hundreds of the stinging insects, but he makes it sound like so much fun. A friend of his found him a bee tree—just out in the woods. They waited until nightfall, pulled the dead tree up, loaded it in the truck, and my coworker had free bees.

Now, I thought I knew about bees, and have seen grocery store shelves lined with jars and bears of honey. But today, when the proud beekeeper brought in jars of the honey he had harvested from bees he had cared for, the golden raw honey, with the taste of summer and flowers in it opened my eyes to a miracle.

I asked him, "How many bees, how many hours did it take to fill this jar?" He said that in its entire life, one bee will produce a twelfth of a teaspoon, and that bees live 30 to 40 days, depending on the weather.

Wow, did that change my view of the honey I have spread on many a biscuit and piece of toast. I saw this jar of honey as a thing of wonder, the product of so much work...

I know that bees operate on instinct and don't think about what they are doing, building the hive, gathering the tiny drops of nectar, protecting the queen. But I couldn't help thinking that perhaps there was something to be learned here. Well, obviously, Our Beloved Father has filled our world with so many good things that we, in our busy lives, don't see, hear, taste or smell.

During Mass we have praise reports and prayer requests. We pray for comfort and God's embrace for loved ones who face illness, sometimes catastrophic events. I can't speak for anyone else, but sometimes the tragedy is overwhelming.

I wonder, How can my prayers even begin to help?

Then I saw the beauty of it. I may only be able to contribute my twelfth of a teaspoon, but look what happens. Unlike the bees, we act not by instinct, but by faith. Guided by Our Father,

together in prayer we can all bring our little twelfths of a teaspoon to God, Who gathers us in to His golden light and the sweetness of His love.

He is so awesome!



## What it Took—by Rev. Mother Rachael Christian

When I was a young girl, I picked up my mother's table Bible, you know, the big ones that no one dared touch...and read the account of Jesus' birth. I remember thinking, "wow, how incredible...wait...How could a young girl give birth if she didn't know a man in that way?" so I read on. Then I asked myself, "who is the Holy Spirit that was going to "come over" Mary and how was that supposed to make her pregnant? Then I read on. My questions didn't get answered, so I finished the account and when I closed the Book, I said aloud, "I want Mary to be my Mother." Something inside of me, just KNEW that what I had read was the Truth. And truth and trust were two things I had little acceptance of, or, of any basis for, living in a world of divorced parents who had remarried to different people. My questions never did get answered. Not for a long time.

When my dad passed away and I had forgotten my first plea toward God. But I did remember, that it wasn't my **first** one. My first was when I lived with my mom and all I wanted was peace and love. And through a rainy day, the clouds parted and on my bed, where I had lain down to cry myself to sleep, a soft wash of gold broke through the clouds and onto my bed. I felt loved for the first time in a long time. It was then, that I believed in God for me. I tried to tell everyone about it, but I got funny looks and cynical remarks so I kept quiet. That is why I had forgotten about it all.

When mom was in the hospital I remember looking at her from the window and saying, "you don't have to die. Just ask God and He will heal you." But she was tired and wanted to go home. As bad as it hurt, I understood. But it made me angry at God for a long time.

Then I met Bishop Jim. When I was a very young child, I had dreamt of a man who would lead me home to God. That man stood before me. He challenged and challenges my heart and

my thoughts and makes me grow. And we fought like parents and kids do. But there never was another adult in my life who showed me love, like he has shown me God's love.

What did it take to do that? His desire to see me be who God sees. Talk about battles! By the time I met Bishop Jim, I had not a whit of faith, nor love, nor hope left in me. I was dead. Maybe not physically but spiritually and emotionally, and mentally, I was dead.

Then Bishop Jim gave me my First Communion. No words, no preparation. Just walked up to the pew I was sitting on, I looked up. And he gave me Jesus. No words, just love.

That's all it took. I started a new journey. When he baptized me, with Joseph beside him and my godmother, beside me, I was a wreck inside, ready to run at the slightest breeze. I didn't understand fully the power of the Holy Spirit coming into me, but I did have peace. Did. The only way I lost that peace? Letting myself listen to other people, letting myself be a "Cain" and not taking care of other people, or doing it for gain (approval), and when that 'gain' didn't come, I was miserable, and made everyone around me miserable.

Then I decided it was time to pull from my closet the hope that I had tucked away. I was going to be a Nun. And that took courage I never knew I had. But it's the greatest grace of life I have ever received. How? God is with me, in me, and does for me, what I cannot do. Some people have told me, its not possible or realistic to be a Nun in these days. I believe you are what you believe in your heart you can be or become. Some days are not diamonds, some days are pure gold. What it takes for me, is my attitude. When I get up, take the dogs out and see the morning, whatever it is, I am reminded of that sun pouring through the window and all I can say is, thank you, what a beautiful day!

And going inside I look at all I have and think, wow, how can it be that little as I have, I am rich? Because I wanted Mary to be my Mother, and she never lets Jesus forget that this child, who fights kicking and screaming all His desires for me, is like the son who does not want to do what his father says, but does it anyway, and so receives the blessing.

All it took was genuine love, one man following God, inspired by his partner and his God to change his life and my life was restored. How much more can I do, to repay such love? What did it take for you to find God in your way, with your life?



*If you wish to have an article or news item included in **OCCOA Newsletter**, please contact Bishop Jim Morgan or Mr. Minott Gaillard. This is just an attempt to share with each other and give us a chance to "promote" each other when someone does something good that we'd like to copy—or tries something that doesn't work—and we won't try that—bottom line, we'd just like to open communication channels—share **lessons learned**—share our blessings. Minott is at [wmg937@aol.com](mailto:wmg937@aol.com). Please submit articles no later than the 15th of the month.*

## Saint John Vianney Seminary—Where we are being led

Reading an article the other day I discovered an article on a woman who graduated from her classes in theology. She has no intention of being in a functional church ministry, and had no plan on going into any form of pastoral duties. In the article she used this quote: "I see what I'm doing as a form of ministry, particularly with parents whose children are dying. I approach the situations more with my spiritual eyes open. This isn't just a medical event taking place." ~Aletha Allen. 36

See, Aletha is a doctor and she took the classes so that she could grow in areas to better understand people and become a better leader, and she isn't the only one the younger generation seems to be taking a different course of action when graduating from these seminaries. They are taking what they learned and putting it into their jobs and helping the community that is around them using their job as a form of ministry. Why can't we do both?

Saint John Vianney is a wonderful Seminary still small we are a group of Seminary students and are working towards transitioning into being deacons and priests, so far the individuals that are present are all seeking to deepen and further their learning and relationship with God and becoming more involved in a Congregational Ministry, helping to build the Parish that we currently have and bringing more people to God.

After reading about Aletha Allen it brought back a question to thought. "What about those that are in a place at the moment where they can't become involved that way?" In the perfect world and with everyone having the perfect stability financially I believe that a higher percentage of people would choose to become a part of Parish, in reality the higher percentage is going against that route, instead using

it in their work places.

Here at Saint John Vianney it would be great if we could grasp the reality of both and combining them. Allowing people to not only take what they learned and utilize it in their work places yet also allowing them to play a part in ministries in the Parish. That would be the way to go to be able to intertwine and be able to do both, and to do it in a truly honoring way towards God.

Seminary should be able to lead a person into a deeper level of studying and here we do just that. We take the studies that we have been doing and have in depth conversations about what we have learned and give each other different ideas about what we can study further. We give each other ideas on how we can grow as leaders in our church setting and not only that also in our job settings.

This is just the starting point thinking about it all of this can prepare a person to become focused also in other areas and become more invested in their learning in other educational studies. Also, that learning is a lifelong goal it never ends. It is something that is a process that will never end as long as a person seeks to continue to do so.

As a Seminary we strive to keep the teachings and the view that this is God's church, this is God's group of people men and women, bisexual, gay, straight, transgendered it doesn't matter where we belong in the main view of things. God after all is the one calling us. Calling us to come forth and be more Christ like not only in our job places however also in The Church, which is His.

We are certificate based right now, which to some this might seem odd or unusual maybe even scary. Sure,

education is a great thing and an amazing goal. It keeps us learning and growing in life. However, we have to remain focused on the main goal which is God himself. We don't need a degree to show that we are going in that direction to learn and complete this Goal, though the long range term is to have the Seminary fully credited.

We need to keep this in thought as we go through this life. It is about God, not about us not about bringing ourselves into the spotlight, it's about bringing Him and His teachings into the spotlight. Getting people to know His Word. When we make it about us it is a personal thing it becomes unclear what we believe and what we are trying to teach to the others about God.

This is about building ones relationship with God and doing it on a deep level. When people come into Saint John Vianney interested in taking a part of the teachings or just to see what it is that takes place this is what we hope they see. A group of individuals who are growing in their relationship with God, and growing in their learning of The Church both history and present and future, Leadership, The Mass and learning it in a level that some don't even have a grasp of, Symbolisms, etc.

The Church needs us and it needs more individuals to be involved in its growth and it's up keeping. God needs more people to come forth and be a part of the praise teams, greeters, listeners, needs more people who care about those that are out on the street, people to realize that there is more that goes on then just the sermons, that there is a calling in everyone's life there is nothing to small in God's eyes they are all seen as a great thing.

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He wants us to discover that calling. Everything that takes place during worship is seen as giving to the Lord and it is all in His name, at least it should be. This should be the same outside of our Church. We don't stop being The Church when we walk out the doors on the Weekdays, Saturdays or Sundays. Though, we are all guilty of it at times.

We also have been learning about improving our abilities and growing in our positions as leaders, though we might not all see ourselves as that. It is actually something that we are seen as through the Parish and we need to build ourselves up on that. It helps us learn to be able to bring more people into the doors so that we can teach them about God and that He is Love. In the end we would like to invite everyone who is interested to come join us on one of our Saturday's, es-

pecially if you believe that it is something you are being called to do or that you are just wanting to learn more to bring yourself closer to God. In the future we hope to be able to reach past the walls of Utah and be able to teach and share things with those outside of the state lines. Essentially to grow and to spread the teachings of God and to show how Almighty and Loving God really is.

Deacon Darren Hayes