

THE THIRD ORDER OFFICE

INTRODUCTION

Officiant How blessed are those who know their need of God.

All The Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

O God make speed to save us
O Lord make haste to help us

Lead your people to freedom O God
And banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

OPENING COLLECT

A Collect appropriate to the time of day may be said.

CONFESSION

Officiant Jesus says, repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is close at hand. Let us turn away from our in and turn to Christ confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Most merciful God,
Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ
we confess that we have sinned
in thought word and deed
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy forgive what we have been
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be
that we may do justly, love mercy,
and walk humbly with You, Our God**

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by His Holy Spirit
and raise us to new life in Christ Our Lord. **Amen**

Antiphon:

**Far be it for me to glory
except in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom the world is crucified to me
and I to the world. (In Eastertide, Alleluia, Alleluia)**

THE CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES

Most High, all powerful, good Lord,
to you be praise, glory, honour and all blessing.

Only to you, Most High, do they belong.
and no one is worthy to call upon your name.

May you be praised, My Lord, with all your creatures,
especially brother sun, through whom you lighten the day for us.

He is beautiful and radiant with great splendour.
He signifies you, O Most High.

Be praised, my Lord, for sister moon and the stars,
clear and precious and lovely they are formed in heaven.

Be praised, my Lord, for brother wind
and by air and clouds, clear skies and all weathers,
by which you give sustenance to your creatures.

Be praised, my Lord, for sister water,
who is very useful and humble and precious and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, for brother fire,
by whom the night is illumined for us,
he is beautiful and cheerful, full of power and strength.

Be praised my Lord for sister, our mother earth,
who sustains and governs us
and produces divers fruits and coloured flowers and grass.

Be praised, my Lord, by all who forgive for love of you
and who bear weakness and tribulation.

Blessed are those who bear them in peace;
for you most high they will be crowned

Be praised, my Lord, for our sister, the death of the body,
from which no one living is able to flee.
Woe to those who are dying in mortal sin.

Blessed are those who are found doing your most holy will,
for the second death will do them no harm

Praise and bless my Lord and give him thanks
and serve him with great humility.

Or

Most High, omnipotent, good Lord,
to you be ceaseless praise outpoured,
and blessing without measure,
from you alone all creatures came;
no one is worthy you to name.

My Lord be praised by Brother Sun,
who through the skies his course does run,

and shines in brilliant splendour;
with brightness he does fill the day,
and signifies our boundless sway.

My Lord be praised by Sister Moon,
and all the stars that with her soon
will point the glitt'ring heavens.
Let wind and air and cloud and calm,
and weathers all repeat the psalm.

By Sister Water then be blessed
most humble, useful, precious, chaste,
be praised by Brother Fire;
cheerful is he, robust and bright,
and strong to lighten all the night.

By Mother Earth my Lord be praised;
governed by you, she has upraised
what for our life is needful.
Sustained by you through every hour,
she brings forth fruit and herb and flower.

My Lord be praised by those who prove
in free forgivingness their love,
nor shrink from tribulation.
Happy, who peaceably endure;
with you Lord their reward is sure.

By Death, our Sister, praised be
from whom no one alive can flee,
woe to the unprepared!
But blessed be those who do your will
and follow your commandments still.

Most High, omnipotent, good Lord
to you be ceaseless praise outpoured
and blessing without measure.
Let every creature thankful be
and serve in great humility.

Antiphon:

**Far be it for me to glory
except in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom the world is crucified to me
and I to the world. (In Eastertide, *Alleluia Alleluia*)**

COMMUNITY OBEDIENCE

Community Obedience should take place at this point, as follows:

**We adore you most holy Lord, Jesus Christ,
here and in all your Churches throughout the world
and we bless you,
because by your Holy Cross
you have redeemed the world**

This is followed by the reading for the day, from the Principles

Intercessions may be offered from the Third Order Intercession lists and for other causes as is appropriate.

**O God, we give you thanks
for the Third Order of the Society of St Francis.
Grant, we pray, that being knit together
in community and prayer,
we your servants may glorify your holy name
after the example of St Francis,
and win others to your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SILENCE *A period of quiet reflection should follow.*

RESPONSES

Officiant The Lord is my light and my salvation,
the Lord is the strength of my life.

**All The Lord is my light and my salvation,
the Lord is the strength of my life.**

Officiant The light shines in the darkness
and the darkness has not overcome it.

All The Lord is the strength of my life.

Officiant Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

**All The Lord is my light and my salvation,
the Lord is the strength of my life.**

CANTICLE: THE PRAISES OF GOD

Another appropriate Canticle or Psalm may be used

You are holy, Lord, the only God
And your deeds are wonderful

**You are strong. You are great
You are the most high, You are almighty.**

You holy Father are king of heaven and earth
You are three in One, Lord God, all good

**You are good, all good, supremely good
Lord God, living and true.**

You are love, you are wisdom
You are humility. You are endurance.

**You are rest. You are peace.
You are joy and gladness.**

You are justice and moderation
You are all our riches and you suffice for us.

**You are beauty. You are gentleness
You are our protector. You are our guardian and defender.**

You are courage. You are our haven and our hope
You are our faith. You are our great consolation.

**You are our eternal life, great and wonderful Lord
God almighty, merciful Saviour. Amen.**

SILENCE

A period of Silence may follow at this point

THE CROSS PRAYERS

Having in mind St Francis' devotion to the Passion of Christ,
and looking upon the figure of the crucified, (*ith arms outstretched*) let us
pray to the Lord.

You have sealed, Lord God, your servant Francis
With the sign of redemption

1 **Almighty God
when the world was growing cold,
to the inflaming of our hearts by the fire of your love
you raised up blessed Francis
bearing in his body the marks of the Passion of your Son
mercifully grant to us your people, true penitence
and grace to bear the cross for love of Him
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit
one God now and for ever. Amen.**

Or 2 **Almighty God
when the world was growing cold,
you raised up blessed Francis
bearing in his body the marks of the Passion of your Son.
Inflame our hearts by the fire of your love**

**and mercifully grant to us your people, true penitence
and grace to bear the cross for love of Him
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit
one God now and for ever. Amen.**

Or 3 **Most High and Glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of our hearts
and give us a true faith,
a certain hope
and a perfect love.
Give us a sense of the Divine
and knowledge of yourself,
so that we may do everything
in fulfilment of your holy will
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The Admission and Renewal of Novices takes place here,
when they are not taking place during the Eucharist..*

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

**Our Father in heaven
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread
and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever Amen.**

COLLECT

Officiant God our Father,
you always delight to reveal yourself
to the childlike and lowly of heart;
grant that following the example
of our blessed father Francis
we may count the wisdom of this world as foolishness
and know only Jesus Christ,
and him crucified,
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**May the power of your love, O Lord,
fiery and sweet as honey,
wean our hearts from all that is under heaven,**

**that we may die for the love of your love,
you who were so good as to die
for love of our love. Amen.**

**May God kindle in us the fire of his love,
bless us, preserve us from all evil
and bring us to everlasting life.**

Officiant Let us bless the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

The Blessing for Brother Leo

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you
and give you his peace.

My brothers and sisters, the Lord bless you. **Amen.**

COMMUNITY OBEDIENCE

In all provinces of the Third Order this offering of prayer should be made daily, either on its own or in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer.

**We adore you, most holy, Lord Jesus Christ,
here and in all your Churches throughout the world,
and we bless you, because by your holy Cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

The daily readings from the Principles occur here.

*Intercessions may be offered from the Third Order Intercession List
or the Address List.*

**O God, we give you thanks
for the Third Order of the Society of St Francis.
Grant, we pray, that being knit together
in community and prayer,
we your servants may glorify your holy name
after the example of St Francis, and win others to your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The offering of prayer may continue with either Morning or Evening Prayer or conclude
with either of the following:*

**May our Blessed Lady pray for us;
May St Francis pray for us;
May St Clare pray for us;
May all the Saints of the Third Order pray for us;
May the holy angels watch over us and befriend us;
May our Lord Jesus give us his blessing and his peace. Amen.**

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us evermore. Amen.**

COLLECTS

*The following Collects do not form part of the Community Obedience, but have been
given to us by Africa Province, which uses them before the final blessing:*

SUNDAY

Almighty God,
your love led Francis and Clare
to establish our three Orders:
draw us into your love
that we may grow in love towards all those we know,
for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who gives himself in love to all. Amen.

MONDAY

Heavenly Father,
you are always pleased to show yourself
to those who are childlike and humble in spirit:
help us to follow the example of our blessed father Francis,
to look upon the wisdom of this world as foolishness,
and set our minds only on Christ Jesus and him crucified;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all glory for ever. Amen.

TUESDAY

O God,
you resist the proud and give grace to the humble:
help us not to think proudly,
but to serve you with humility that pleases you,
so we may walk in the steps of your servant Francis
and receive the gift of your grace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

Merciful God,
you have made your church rich
through the poverty of blessed Francis:
help us like him, not to trust in earthly things,
but to seek your heavenly gifts
through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

THURSDAY

Lord,
without you our labour is wasted,
but with you all who are weak can find strength:
pour your Spirit on the Society of St Francis;
give your labourers a pure intention,
patient faith,
sufficient success on earth,
and joy of serving you in heaven,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FRIDAY

Lord Jesus,
in your servant Francis
you displayed the wonderful power of the cross:
help us always to follow you in the way of the cross,
and give us strength to resist all temptation,
and to you, Lord, with the Father and the Holy Spirit
be all glory for ever. Amen.

SATURDAY

O God,
by the life of blessed Francis
you moved your people to a love of simple things:

may we, after his example,
hold lightly to the things of this world
and store up for ourselves treasure in heaven
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Rule of the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis

(I) THE PRINCIPLES (FOR DAILY READING)

The basis of that which follows is the Rule of the Christa Seva Sangha at Poona. Its successor, the Christa Prema Seva Sangha, had as its English branch the Brotherhood of the Love of Christ, St. Ives, Huntingdonshire, and the latter, when it joined the Brotherhood of Saint Francis of Assisi, and so formed the Society of Saint Francis, transmitted the original Rule. This version was revised in August 2005. Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.

Day One — The Object

Jesus said, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.'

John 12.24-26

Day Two — The Object (continued)

In the example of his own sacrifice, Jesus reveals the secret of bearing fruit. In surrendering himself to death, he becomes the source of new life. Lifted from the earth on the cross, he draws all people to himself. Clinging to life causes life to decay; the life that is freely given is eternal.

Day Three — The Object (continued)

Jesus calls those who would serve him to follow his example and choose for themselves the same path of renunciation and sacrifice. To those who hear and obey, he promises union with God. The object of the Society of Saint Francis is to build a community of those who accept Christ as their Lord and Master, and are dedicated to him in body and spirit. They surrender their lives to him and to the service of his people. The Third Order of the Society consists of those who, while following the ordinary professions of life, feel called to dedicate their lives under a definite discipline and vows. They may be female or male, married or single, ordained or lay.

Day Four — The Object (continued)

When Saint Francis encouraged the formation of The Third Order he recognised that many are called to serve God in the spirit of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience in everyday life (rather than in a literal acceptance of these principles as in the vows of the Brothers and Sisters of the First and Second Orders). The Rule of The Third Order is intended to enable the duties and conditions of daily living to be carried out in this spirit.

Day Five — The First Aim of the Order

To make our Lord known and loved everywhere.

The Order is founded on the conviction that Jesus Christ is the perfect revelation of God; that true life has been made available to us through his Incarnation and Ministry; by his Cross and Resurrection; and by the sending of his Holy Spirit. Our Order believes that it is the commission of the church to make the gospel known to all, and therefore accepts the duty of bringing others to know Christ, and of praying and working for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Day Six — The First Aim (continued)

The primary aim for us as Tertiaries is therefore to make Christ known. This shapes our lives and attitudes to reflect the obedience of those whom our Lord chose to be with him and sent out as his witnesses. Like them, by word and example, we bear witness to Christ in our own immediate environment and pray and work for the fulfilment of his command to make disciples of all nations.

Day Seven — The Second Aim

To spread the spirit of love and harmony.

The Order sets out, in the name of Christ, to break down barriers between people and to seek equality for all. We accept as our second aim the spreading of a spirit of love and harmony among all people. We are pledged to fight against the ignorance, pride, and prejudice that breed injustice or partiality of any kind.

Day Eight — The Second Aim (continued)

Members of The Third Order fight against all injustice in the name of Christ, in whom there can be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for in him all are one. Our chief object is to reflect that openness to all which was characteristic of Jesus. This can only be achieved in a spirit of chastity, which sees others as belonging to God and not as a means of self-fulfilment.

Day Nine — The Second Aim (continued)

As Tertiaries, we are prepared not only to speak out for social justice and international peace, but to put these principles into practice in our own lives, cheerfully facing any scorn or persecution to which this may lead.

Day Ten — The Third Aim

To live simply.

The first Christians surrendered completely to our Lord and recklessly gave all that they had, offering the world a new vision of a society in which a fresh attitude was taken towards material possessions. This vision was renewed by Saint Francis when he chose Lady Poverty as his bride, desiring that all barriers set up by privilege based on wealth should be overcome by love. This is the inspiration for the third aim of the Society, to live simply.

Day Eleven — The Third Aim (continued)

Although we possess property and earn money to support ourselves and our families, we show ourselves true followers of Christ and of Saint Francis by our readiness to live simply and to share with others. We recognise that some of our members may be called to a literal following of Saint Francis in a life of extreme simplicity. All of us, however, accept that we avoid luxury and waste, and regard our possessions as being held in trust for God.

Day Twelve — The Third Aim (continued)

Personal spending is limited to what is necessary for our health and well-being and that of our dependants. We aim to stay free from all attachment to wealth, keeping ourselves constantly aware of the poverty in the world and its claim on us. We are concerned more for the generosity that gives all, rather than for the value of poverty in itself. In this way we reflect in spirit the acceptance of Jesus' challenge to sell all, give to the poor, and follow him.

Day Thirteen — The Three Ways of Service

Tertiaries desire to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, whom we serve in the three ways of Prayer, Study, and Work. In the life of the Order as a whole these three ways must each find full and balanced expression, but it is not to be expected that all members devote themselves equally to each of them. Each individual's service will vary according to his or her abilities and circumstances, yet each individual member's Personal Rule of Life must include each of the three ways.

Day Fourteen — The First Way of Service

Prayer

Tertiaries seek to live in an atmosphere of praise and prayer. We aim to be constantly aware of God's presence, so that we may indeed pray without ceasing. Our ever-deepening devotion to the indwelling Christ is a source of strength and joy. It is Christ's love that inspires us to service, and strengthens us for sacrifice.

Day Fifteen — The First Way of Service (continued)

The heart of our prayer is the Eucharist, in which we share with other Christians the renewal of our union with our Lord and Saviour in his sacrifice, remembering his death and receiving his spiritual food.

Day Sixteen — The First Way of Service (continued)

Tertiaries recognise the power of intercessory prayer for furthering the purposes of God's kingdom, and therefore seek a deepening fellowship with God in personal devotion, and constantly intercede for the needs of his church and his world. Those of us who have much time at our disposal give prayer a large part in our daily lives. Those of us with less time must not fail to see the importance of prayer and to guard the time we have allotted to it from interruption. Lastly, we are encouraged to avail ourselves of

the sacrament of Reconciliation, through which the burden of past sin and failure is lifted and peace and hope restored.

Day Seventeen — The Second Way of Service ***Study***

'This is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.'

John 17.3

True knowledge is knowledge of God. Tertiaries therefore give priority to devotional study of scripture as one of the chief means of attaining that knowledge of God that leads to eternal life.

Day Eighteen — The Second Way of Service (continued)

As well as the devotional study of Scripture, we all recognise our Christian responsibility to pursue other branches of study, both sacred and secular. In particular some of us accept the duty of contributing, through research and writing, to a better understanding of the church's mission in the world: the application of Christian principles to the use and distribution of wealth; questions concerning justice and peace; and of all other questions concerning the life of faith.

Day Nineteen — The Third Way of Service ***Work***

Jesus took on himself the form of a servant. He came not to be served, but to serve. He went about doing good: healing the sick, preaching good news to the poor, and binding up the broken hearted.

Day Twenty — The Third Way of Service (continued)

Tertiaries endeavour to serve others in active work. We try to find expression for each of the three aims of the Order in our lives, and whenever possible actively help others who are engaged in similar work. The chief form of service that we have to offer is to reflect the love of Christ, who, in his beauty and power, is the inspiration and joy of our lives.

Day Twenty One — The Three Notes of the Order

Humility, love, and joy are the three notes that mark the lives of Tertiaries. When these characteristics are evident throughout the Order, its work will be fruitful. Without them all that it attempts will be in vain.

Day Twenty Two — The First Note ***Humility***

We always keep before us the example of Christ, who emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and who, on the last night of his life, humbly washed his disciples' feet. We likewise seek to serve one another with humility.

Day Twenty Three — The First Note (continued)

Humility confesses that we have nothing that we have not received and admits the fact of our insufficiency and our dependence upon God. It is the basis of all Christian virtues. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux said, 'No spiritual house can stand for a moment except on the foundation of humility'. It is the first condition of a joyful life within any community.

Day Twenty Four — The First Note (continued)

The faults that we see in others are the subject of prayer rather than of criticism. We take care to cast out the beam from our own eye before offering to remove the speck from another's. We are ready to accept the lowest place when asked, and to volunteer to take it. Nevertheless, when asked to undertake work of which we feel unworthy or incapable, we do not shrink from it on the grounds of humility, but confidently attempt it through the power that is made perfect in weakness.

Day Twenty Five — The Second Note

Love

Jesus said, 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

John 13.34-35

Love is the distinguishing feature of all true disciples of Christ who wish to dedicate themselves to him as his servants.

Day Twenty Six — The Second Note (continued)

Therefore, we seek to love all those to whom we are bound by ties of family or friendship. Our love for them increases, as our love for Christ grows deeper. We have a special love and affection for members of the Third Order, praying for each other individually and seeking to grow in that love. We are on our guard against anything that might injure this love, and we seek reconciliation with those from whom we are estranged. We seek the same love for those with whom we have little natural affinity, for this kind of love is not a welling-up of emotion, but is a bond founded in our common union with Christ.

Day Twenty Seven — The Second Note (continued)

The Third Order is a Christian community whose members, though varied in race, education, and character, are bound into a living whole through the love we share in Christ. This unity of all who believe in him will become, as our Lord intended, a witness to the world of his divine mission. In our relationships with those outside the Order, we show the same Christ-like love, and gladly give of ourselves, remembering that love is measured by sacrifice.

Day Twenty Eight — The Third Note

Joy

Tertiaries, rejoicing in the Lord always, show in our lives the grace and beauty of divine joy. We remember that we follow the Son of Man, who came eating and drinking, who loved the birds and the flowers, who blessed little children, who was a friend to tax collectors and sinners and who sat at the tables of both the rich and the poor. We delight in fun and laughter, rejoicing in God's world, its beauty and its living creatures, calling nothing common or unclean. We mix freely with all people, ready to bind up the broken-hearted and to bring joy into the lives of others. We carry within us an inner peace and happiness, which others may perceive, even if they do not know its source.

Day Twenty Nine – The Third Note (continued)

This joy is a divine gift, coming from union with God in Christ. It is still there even in times of darkness and difficulty, giving cheerful courage in the face of disappointment, and an inward serenity and confidence through sickness and suffering. Those who possess it can rejoice in weakness, insults, hardships, and persecutions for Christ's sake; for when we are weak, then we are strong.

Day Thirty — The Three Notes

The humility, love, and joy, which mark the lives of Tertiaries, are all God-given graces. They can never be obtained by human effort. They are gifts of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of Christ is to work miracles through people who are willing to be emptied of self and to surrender to him. We then become channels of grace through whom his mighty work is done.

Revised 2005

Agreed at IPTOC and ratified by all Provinces