

The Profession of a Tertiary

The solemn profession of a Tertiary normally takes place at the Eucharist at an Area Meeting.

It may be found suitable to attach it to a Franciscan Saints Day, (see Calendar) but it is not essential. St Franciside itself is best left clear for the annual Renewal of Profession by all professed Tertiaries.

The Officiant will be the Area Minister, or in his/her absence, the Area Formation Guardian, or a member of the Area Team.

At the Eucharist when a Tertiary is to be professed, all that would normally come between the end of the Gospel and the Eucharistic Prayer is replaced by the order below. There is no additional credal material, intercession, or prayer of penitence.

The Rite of Profession has been devised around the Canticle from Philippians 2:5 - 11, the Song of Christ's Glory. By kneeling or lying prostrate, where this is appropriate, the Tertiary experiences something of the Divine humility. It is only in the strength of the cross, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we can be raised in him to the glory of the Father. The cross is given to the candidates as they kneel; it is in the strength of this that they are raised to make their Profession.

The Profession is accepted with the invitation to offer the Rule of Life. The candidates themselves place these on the altar, and the action is sealed with an extended form of the Peace. Local circumstances will dictate whether the whole company can move to stand round the altar, following the newly-professed Tertiaries from the place of their profession in the body of the church, or whether that will only be a representative number. But nothing should be allowed to detract from the movement of the candidates kneeling or prostrated with arms extended to say the Cross Prayers, and then being raised in the strength of the cross to make their Profession.

The solemn Profession is made during the celebration of the Eucharist. After the Gospel, the Officiant may give a homily, or else speak briefly in these or similar words:

Officiant: My brothers and sisters, Franciscans seek always to be conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, after the example of St Francis. Living in the world, members of the Third Order seek, like him, to make humility, love and joy the pre-eminent notes of their lives. We set before ourselves the three aims of the Society: to spread the knowledge and love of Christ, to promote the way of love and unity with all creation, and to live joyfully a life of simplicity and humble service.

As our Lord Jesus Christ humbled himself to share our human life, so may we leave self behind, that with him, we may be raised by the glory of God the Father.

Or: My brothers and sisters, as baptised Christians, we have given our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ, and are members of his Body. We must always seek to reflect his image in a community of Christians who live after the example of St Francis, the poor man of Assisi. Let our life in the spirit of Francis' holy poverty make our Blessed Lord known and loved everywhere, and promote the ways of love and unity. Let us continue to serve the Lord by prayer, study and active work for his Kingdom, and so observe our Rule of Life that we like Francis can be free to manifest humility, love and joy in the Lord.

My brothers and sisters, be ready to endure hardship. Let us recall how our Saviour has said to us that if we would serve him, then we must follow him; that

if we want to be his followers, we must deny self, take up our cross every day and follow him. Let us therefore pray to the Lord that we may have grace to persevere in our chosen way.

SILENCE

In this spirit, will those who wish to be professed and have been elected by the Order please come forward.

Each candidate is presented individually to the Officiant by his/her Novice Guardian, who says:

I present to you and to our sisters and brothers N . . . , who wishes to make his/her life profession.

After the Novice Guardian has presented the candidates:

Officiant: Do you accept the Principles as the vision of community for the Third Order of the Society of St Francis?

Tertiary: I do.

The candidates may kneel, or prostrate themselves, with outstretched arms. There follows a silence, during which all present pray for those to be professed.

Officiant: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people,

All: and kindle in them the fire of your love.

The candidates now join in the Cross Prayers, which their Novice Guardian prays with them.

Officiant: You have sealed, Lord God, your servant Francis

All: with the sign of redemption.

Candidates and Novice Guardians

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: **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 of 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.**

Then the candidates, kneeling upright, are each invested with the cross.

Officiant: Take this cross in token that you, N . . . , are crucified with Christ, yet live by faith in the Son of God, who loved you and gave himself for the life of the world. Wear it as the sign that you are a professed member of the Third Order.

The Song of Christ's Glory is now said or sung:

**Jesus Christ was in the form of God:
but he did not cling to equality with God.
He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant:
and was born in the likeness of men;
Being found in human form, he humbled himself:
and became obedient unto death,
even death on a cross.
Therefore God has highly exalted him:
and bestowed on him the name above
every name,
That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow:
in heaven and on earth and under the earth;
And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord:
to the glory of God the Father.**

After the Canticle, the candidates are raised to their feet to make their Vow of Profession:

Tertiary I, N. . . ., give myself to our Lord Jesus Christ, to serve him for the rest of my life in company with my brothers and sisters in the Third Order of the Society of St Francis, seeking to spread the knowledge and love of Christ, to promote the spirit of love and harmony as the family of God and to live joyfully a life of simplicity and humble service after the example of St Francis.

Officiant: On behalf of the Third Order, I accept your profession and welcome you warmly.
I invite you to offer your Rule of Life.

Tertiary: I, N, undertake by God's grace to keep for one year my Rule of Life which I now place on the altar.

The Tertiary places his/her Rule of Life on the altar.

Officiant: N, may the Lord accept your offering and give you grace to persevere with joy. Amen.

**All: God our Father, giver of all good things,
defend by your protection *these your servants* who *have made their*
profession;
keep *them* in body and soul, and give *them* grace to persevere in *their*
holy resolutions,
and enjoy the fellowship of all your saints in glory everlasting.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord we give all honour, glory and
thanksgiving to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for
evermore. Amen.**

Officiant: Christ is our peace. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Tertiary: Far be it from me to glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love undying.

Officiant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: And also with you.

Officiant: Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

The newly professed Tertiaries are particularly welcomed in the Peace.

After the Peace has been exchanged, the Eucharist continues with the Offertory.

The Renewal of Pledge by Professed Tertiaries

It is strongly recommended that the Renewal of Pledge by Professed Tertiaries should take place corporately during the Eucharist at an Area meeting on or near the Feast of St Francis (4th October). It is also encouraged that Areas should try so to arrange Professions and Renewals of Pledge that they do not occur on the same day.

The officiant will be the Area Minister or in his/her absence the Area Formation Guardian or a member of the Area Team.

Those unable to renew in person at an Area Meeting should make their own renewals elsewhere in the presence of members of their Local Group or the Area Team, and this should be reported by the Area Formation Guardian when others make their renewals.

After the Gospel, or homily, all sit and the Officiant says:

My brothers and sisters, Franciscans seek always to be conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, after the example of St Francis. Living in the world, members of the Third Order seek, like him, to make humility, love and joy the pre-eminent notes of their lives. We set before ourselves the three aims of the Society: to spread the knowledge and love of Christ, to promote the way of love and unity with all creation, and to live joyfully a life of simplicity and humble service.

As our Lord Jesus Christ humbled himself to share our human life, so may we leave self behind, that with him, we may be raised by the glory of God the Father.

SILENCE

Officiant: In this spirit, I call on those who are professed and wish to renew their pledge to come forward.

Those renewing their pledge move to stand around the Officiant. All not renewing remain seated.

Officiant: Professed members of the Third Order are called to a lifelong commitment to God and to one another. They are to care for all that God has created and as instruments of peace to have a special concern for the poor. In renewing our pledge we undertake to give a central place in our lives to the Eucharist, and in a spirit of penitence and simplicity, to persevere joyfully in prayer, study and work for God's kingdom.

Officiant: I have been crucified with Christ.

All: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

Officiant: The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God,

All: who lives in me and gave himself up for me.

Officiant: I count everything as loss,

All: because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Officiant: For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things,

All: that I may gain Christ and be found in him.

Officiant: My brothers and sisters, giving thanks to God for his goodness, and asking his forgiveness of your failures, will you follow Christ in the fellowship of St Francis, be open to the Holy Spirit, and dedicate yourselves anew to the joyful discipline of our Profession?

All: I will, the Lord being my helper.

The following is said by each individually, or each individual having said his/her name, the remainder is said all together.

I, N. . . ., renew my pledge to serve our Lord Jesus Christ in the Third Order of the Society of St Francis, according to the Principles of the Order, for the rest of my life; seeking to spread the knowledge and love of Christ, to promote the spirit of love and harmony as the family of God and to live a life of simplicity and humble service after the example of St Francis. I undertake, by God's grace, to keep for one year my Personal Rule of Life (which I now place on the altar).

The Tertiary places his/her Rule of Life on the altar.

Officiant: N. . . ., may the Lord accept your offering and give you grace to persevere with joy.

Officiant: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people,

All: and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Then all who have renewed say together:

**Almighty God,
forgive what we have been,
bless what we are,
and order what we shall be,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Those who have renewed their pledge return to their places.

The Eucharist now continues with the Intercessions, which should contain specific prayer for all who have renewed their pledge; or, when a Profession has taken place, the Eucharist continues with the Offertory.

The Admission of Novices

The Candidate for Novicing will already be a Postulant.

Where a Postulant is to be admitted as a Novice and no Profession or Renewal is to take place within the Eucharist, the admission of Novices follows the reading of the Gospel. When there is a Profession it is strongly recommended that the admission of the Novice takes place following the Cross Prayers at the Third Order Office on the same day. This arrangement will give greater emphasis to both events.

If however it is considered necessary to admit a Novice at a Eucharist when a Profession is also to take place, the admission follows the reading of the Epistle and the introductory paragraphs below are not repeated at beginning of the rite of Profession.

The Officiant will be the Area Minister, or in his/her absence, the Area Formation Guardian or another member of the Area Team.

Following the Gospel, or the Cross Prayers, all sit and the Officiant says:

My brothers and sisters, Franciscans seek always to be conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, after the example of St Francis. Living in the world, members of the Third Order seek, like him, to make humility, love and joy the pre-eminent notes of their lives. We set before ourselves the three aims of the Society: to spread the knowledge and love of Christ, to promote the way of love and unity with all creation, and to live joyfully a life of simplicity and humble service.

As our Lord Jesus Christ humbled himself to share our human life, so may we leave self behind, that with him, we may be raised by the glory of God the Father.

SILENCE

In this spirit, will those who wish to be admitted as Novices and have been accepted by the Order now come forward?

Each person to be admitted as a Novice should be presented to the Officiant by his/her Novice Guardian, or the Local Group Convenor, with these words.

I present to you, and to our brothers and sisters N..... who wishes to become a Novice.

The Postulant then declares his/her intention.

I, N..... wish to be admitted as a Novice of the Third Order, furthering the aims of the Order and living in accordance with the Principles and Rule.

I, N..... dedicate myself to the service of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and I undertake by God's grace to keep for one year my Rule of Life.

The Officiant receives the Rule of Life, and taking the Postulant's hand, says

I admit you, N..... as a Novice of the Third Order of the Society of St Francis. May the Lord accept your offering and give you grace to persevere with joy.

The Officiant then places the Rule of Life on the altar.

The Renewal of Pledge by Novices

The rubrics relating to the time and place for Renewals, are the same as those for the Admission of Novices. For those unable to be present, see the appropriate rubric at the head of The Renewal of Pledge by Professed Tertiaries.

Following the Gospel or the Cross Prayers all sit and the Officiant says

My brothers and sisters, Franciscans seek always to be conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, after the example of St Francis. Living in the world, members of the Third Order seek, like him, to make humility, love and joy the pre-eminent notes of their lives. We set before ourselves the three aims of the Society: to spread the knowledge and love of Christ, to promote the way of love and unity with all creation, and to live joyfully a life of simplicity and humble service.

As our Lord Jesus Christ humbled himself to share our human life, so may we leave self behind, that with him we may be raised by the glory of God the Father.

SILENCE

In this spirit will those who wish to renew their pledge as Novices please come forward?

Those renewing their pledge move to stand around the Officiant. All not renewing remain seated.

Officiant: Do you renew your pledge as a Novice of the Third Order?

Novice(s): I do, the Lord being my helper.

Then each one says

I, N..... renew my pledge to serve Our Lord Jesus Christ as a Novice of the Third Order of the Society of St Francis and I undertake by God's grace to keep for one year my Rule of Life.

The Officiant, receiving the Rule(s) of Life, says

May the Lord accept your offering and give you grace to persevere with joy.

The Officiant then places the Rule(s) of Life upon the altar.

Then all who have renewed their pledge say together:

**Almighty God,
forgive what we have been, bless what we are,
and order what we shall be, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.**