

“Simple, humble and pure”

OFS Monthly Formation

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Nicholas Roerich, St. Francis. 1932
Source: Wikipedia File: St. Francis.jpg

Saint Francis writes to all the faithful “we must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh. Rather we must be simple, humble and pure. We should never desire to be over others. Instead, we ought to be servants who are submissive to every human being for God’s sake. The spirit of the Lord will rest on all who live in this way and persevere in it to the end. He will permanently dwell in them. They will be the Father’s children who do his work. They are the spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Opuscula, edit. Quaracchi 1949, 87-94).

The General Constitutions of the OFS:

Chapter II, Title I, Form of Life, Article 15:4 – “They should love and practice, purity of heart, the source of true fraternity”.

When **Saint Agnes of Assisi** (Saint Clare’s sister by birth and also in religion) was sent to another community of sisters, away from St. Clare, she was grief stricken, yet there was one consolation. St. Agnes writes to St. Clare of her new convent community, “I find here more harmony than one would believe; no factions” (I. Omaechevarria. Ed. [Madrid 1970] 304 – 306).



St. Clare, her Mother Ortolana, and her sister St. Agnes of Assisi.
Source://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sankta_Klara,_Hortolana_och_Agnes_av_Assisi.jpg

The Holy Gospel - Matthew 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”.

Reflection St. Francis implies that there is a key to being spouses, brothers and mothers of our dear Lord, that is, to be simple, humble and pure. The reverse of this would be to lord it over one another or desire to possess any form of power, control, preference, or position, other than that of the power of the Holy Spirit? What exactly is it that causes factions? Perhaps Saint Paul provides an answer in his response to the quarrelling and dissensions in the Church of Corinth, “each one of you says, ‘I belong to Paul,’ or ‘I belong to Apollos,’ or ‘I belong to Cephas,’ or ‘I belong to Christ’. Is Christ divided?” (1 Cor. 1:12-13).

Evidently humility requires a relinquishing of any thirst for power, position, and glory, and to curb any envy. Simplicity calls for an uncomplicated approach to life, to appreciate the simplest of joys in a life conformed to God. Purity exists in a heart motivated by selfless love (to see as God sees), without any thought for personal gain. In summary there is only one desire of the heart, that God alone be glorified. The following line from the Canticum presents an image of such purity and humility reflected in nature.

The Canticum of the Creatures “Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure”.



Jose Manuel Suarez Source: Wikimedia Commons File:Water drop 001.jpg

Closing Prayer Dearest Lord, we pray for the grace to be pure of mind, body, heart, and soul, in all our interactions with your creatures. Amen.