

FORMATION CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 2024  
STEVE SHIELDS OFS

(NOT QUITE PERFECT) JOY

## OFS RULE - ARTICLE 13

“As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

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.”

# LIFE OF ST FRANCIS - BY JULIAN OF SPEYER

\* "Now one day at Mass, he heard those things which Christ in the Gospel spoke to his disciples who were sent out to preach: *that they should not possess gold nor silver, nor carry a wallet along the way or a purse, or a walking stick or bread, nor have shoes or two tunics.* And later, from a priest, he understood these instructions more fully and was soon filled with **indescribable joy**. "This," he said, "is what I seek. This is what I desire with all my heart." And so, after committing to memory everything he had heard he joyfully applied himself to carrying out these commands and removed his extra clothing without delay. From this moment on he never used a walking stick, shoes, purse, or wallet. Accordingly, he made a very cheap and plain tunic, and throwing the belt away, tied the tunic with a cord."

- \* Life of St Francis by Julian of Speyer

## RITE OF PROFESSION

“Before this fraternity and the other members of the People of God gathered here, I ask you to express your will.

Do you wish to embrace the gospel way of life by following the example and words of St Francis of Assisi, which are at the heart of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order?”

“Yes, this is what I want.”

# JOY

- St Francis experienced “indescribable joy” when he finally understood how he was called to live his life. After years of searching, he knew he had found his home. Once he recognized what he was supposed to do, he ran towards it as fast as he could. There was no turning back. Nothing else mattered.
- The words of St Francis are recalled in our profession when we say “This is what I want”. This moment of joy reflects the same joy Francis felt 800 years ago. We have finally found our home.
- As we mature in our Franciscan vocation, our lives and interactions provide many challenges that change our experience of joy, but each day, we have another opportunity to say “This is what I want”.

## QUESTIONS:

- How has your perception of joy changed since your Profession?
- How do you share joy with others?