

# Spiritual Formation in the Spirit of the Franciscan Tradition

Enhancing Your Academic Experience at  
FST with Community Building, Prayerful  
Reflection and Engaging with Franciscan  
Values



# Time to Grow in Body, Mind and Spirit

- Central to the Spiritual Formation Program is the belief that formation is a **lifelong process**. Participation in the program builds upon:
  - 1) The uniqueness of each person;
  - 2) encourages the integration of head and heart, and;
  - 3) explores patterns and rhythms of spiritual practice that support a person in ministry and in life.
- The process is **experiential and relational**, providing community support as participants explore spiritual growth for ministry. Reflection on Franciscan values and spirituality is core to the program's vision.





## Key Franciscan Concepts As Discerned by Franciscan Friars of the Santa Barbara Province in 2018.

- A New Face For God
- The Humanity of Christ
- The Gospel Way
- Brotherhood and Sisterhood
- Creation
- Minority
- Poverty
- Prayer
- Peace
- Joy
- Persistence
- Respect for the Church

# A New Face for God

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A **relational** rather than a distant God who needs to be appeased.

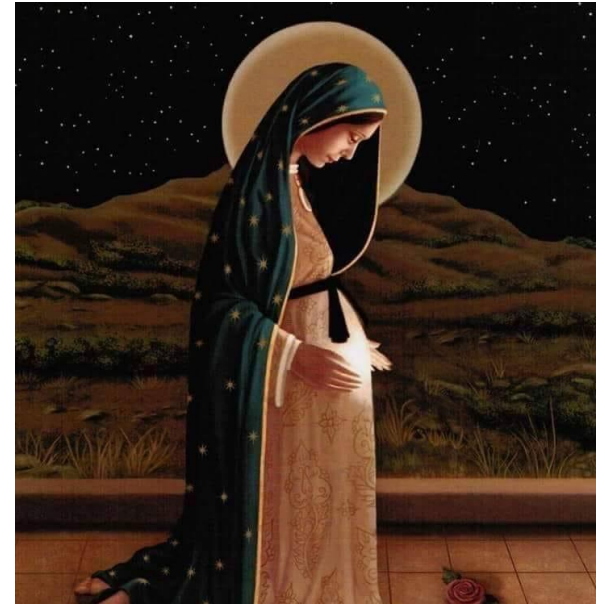
The Holy Trinity reveals the very nature of God – relational, reflecting a harmonious unity in diversity and inviting all of creation to **participate** with Him/Her in this gift of relationship.



# The Humanity of Christ

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- Jesus, though divine, became human (**Incarnation**).
- Jesus gave **himself** as food for spiritually starving people.
- Jesus died as a sacrifice through which people could be raised up from the darkness of collective and personal sin.
- Jesus' humanity reveals his desire to be a brother to us all and is the connecting link to the God of creation.



# The Gospel Way

- Falling in love with this God whose love radiates out into all of creation, Francis discovered that words of the Gospel became more alive for him.
- His response after hearing the Gospel about the Lord sending his disciples to preach (*Mt 10:9-10; Lk 9:2, Mk 6:12*): “This is what I want, this is what I seek, this is what I desire with all my heart” (*Francis of Assisi: The Saint* [New City Press: NY, NY, 1999], 201-202).





## Brotherhood and Sisterhood

- Francis and Clare considered all men and women, regardless of class, economic status, race or religion as brothers and sisters.
  - All were considered equal, cherished, worthy of affirmation, support and to be loved.



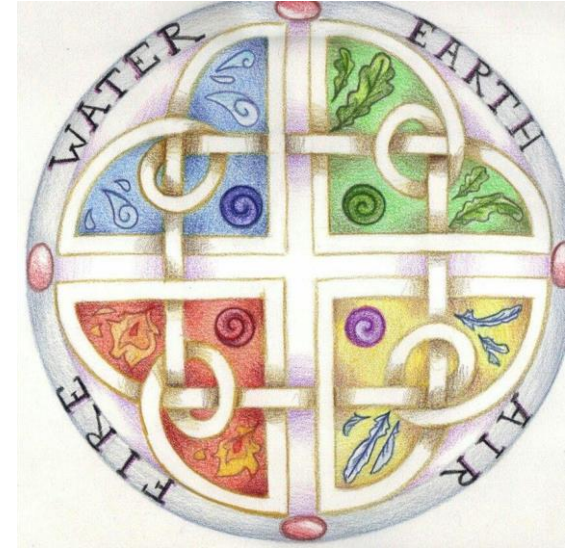
# Creation

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Francis saw the brotherhood of creation as a higher mystery.

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If Christ is brother and sister to us all and the firstborn of all creation, then the animals, the birds, the sun, moon, wind, fire, water and all of creation are our brothers and sisters.

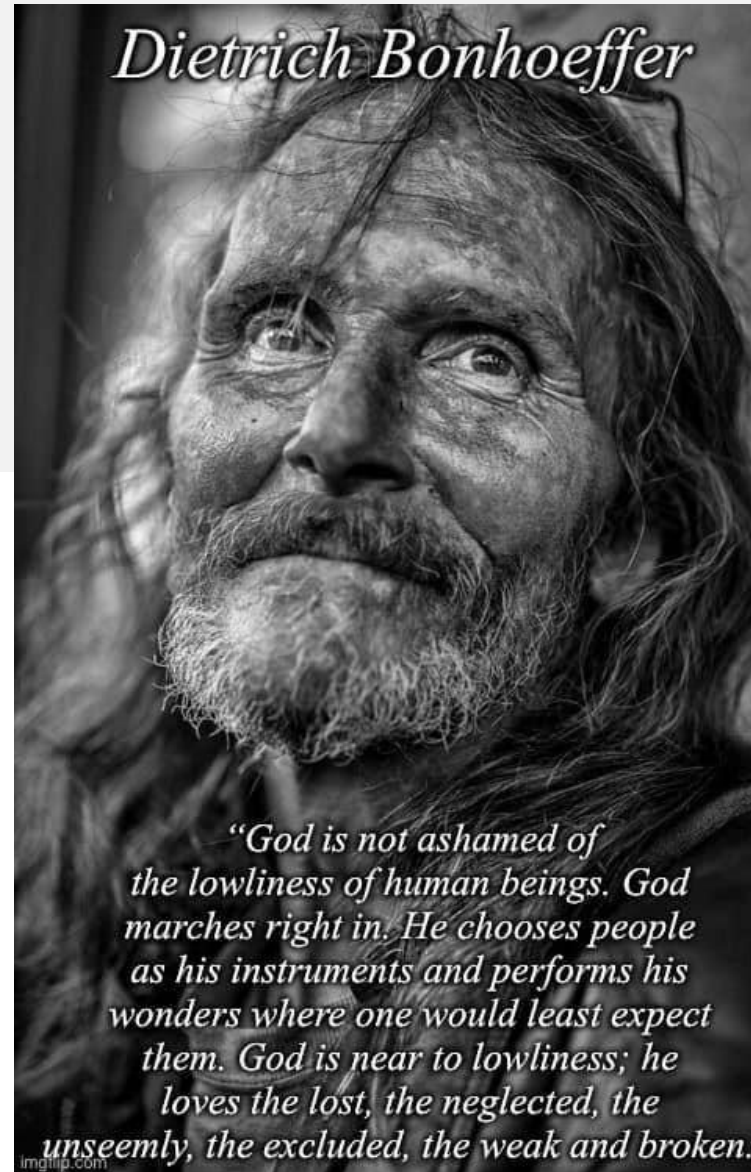






# Minority

- Choice to reject desire for power, prestige and status.
- Choice to serve, not be served.
- Choice to be available, to help, be connected, to share with, to suffer with and to rejoice.
- Choice to respond to violence with non-violence.
- Witnessing to and participating with a God who is “with us” (Is. 7:14),



# Poverty

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- Detachment from those things that get in the way of right relationship with God, one another and creation e.g. accumulation of material goods, amassing wealth, affluence and personal property, being more concerned with things than with people or creation
- Recognition that everything that we have is a gift from God, to be shared.
- Not a choice to be destitute but rather a willingness to share with others everything we have been gifted with including our very lives.





# Prayer



- Be present to God where even words are not necessary, to open oneself up to a state of deep listening and mutual giving and receiving.
- Experience all as prayer – work, in the public, in nature, grief, with brothers and sisters or alone – God is always present.

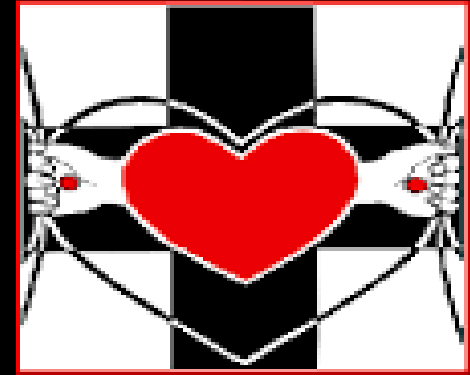


# Peace

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- Being a witness to and advocate for unity, not divisiveness.
- Holding the “tension of opposites” (St. Bonaventure), willing to suffer for the sake of peace.
- Not a feeling as much as an attitude or way of being.

## Holding the Tension: *The Power of Paradox*



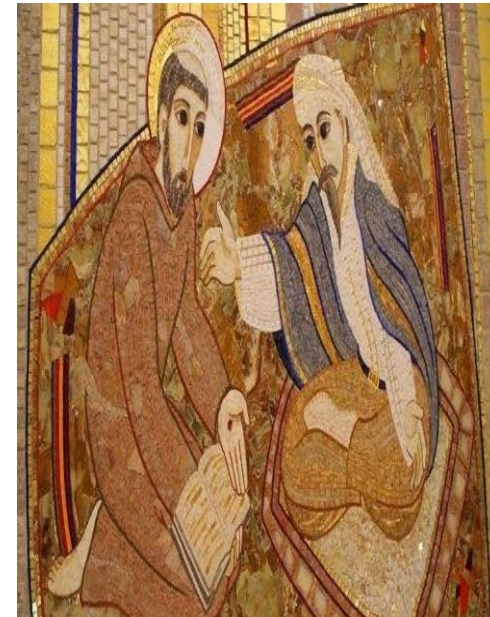
Richard Rohr, OFM *with* Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ



While you are  
proclaiming peace with  
your lips, be careful to  
have it even more fully  
in your heart.

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St. Francis of Assisi



# Joy

- Always see the good, God's presence, in everything.
- Announce the good news with joy with one's entire being.
- Francis did not avoid sacrifice and pain, but nonetheless exuded inner happiness.



Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love.

*Mother Teresa*

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I am committed to cultivating loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others and relieve others of their suffering.

*— Thich Nhat Hanh —*

AZ QUOTES

# Persistence

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- Continue to listen, be present and follow your heart despite disappointments, rejection, abandonment and any other obstacles.
- Everything comes to us as a teacher. Accept each with gratitude.

## THE GUEST HOUSE

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This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still, treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.

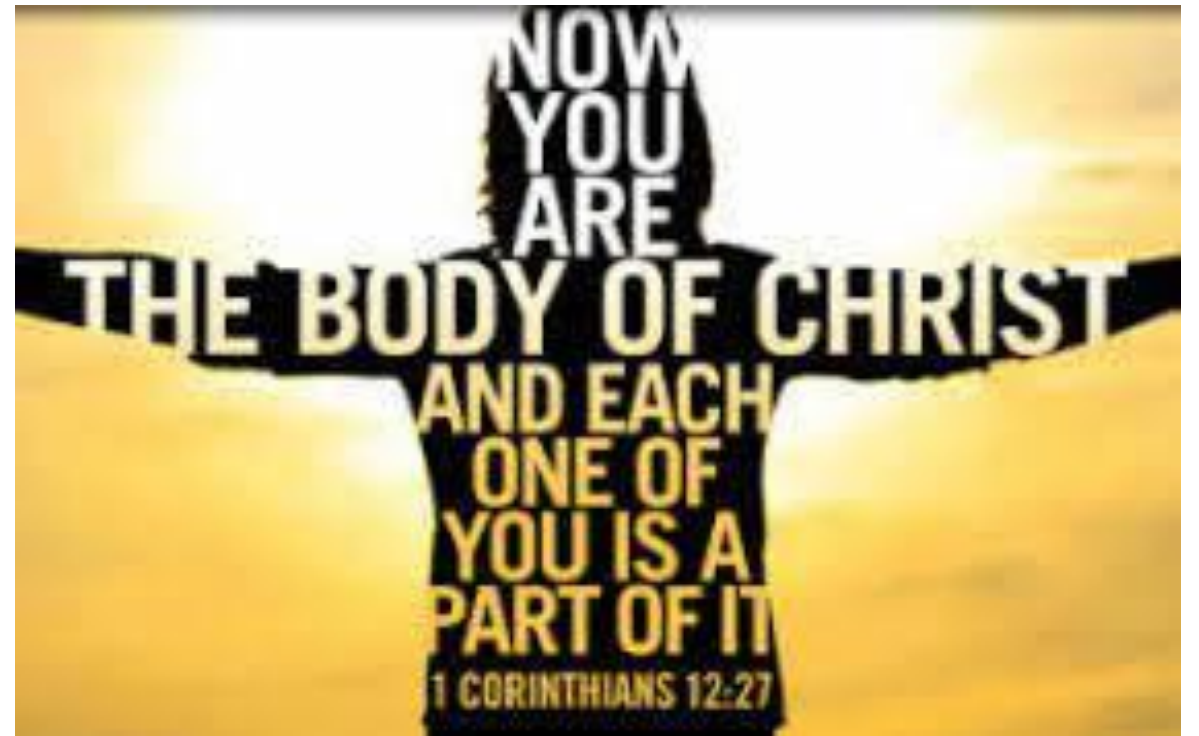
The dark thought, the shame, the malice.  
meet them at the door laughing and  
invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.

Rumi

## Respect for the Church

- Despite its human and institutional limitations and problems, Franciscans believe the love of Christ still animates the Church, still calls us and empowers us to live Christ's way, all together, with special attention to the poor.



# Times to Gather in Prayer and Reflection

- The Spiritual Formation program provides experiences of communal prayer and Eucharist as well as retreats, spiritual direction, and opportunities for small group reflection and spiritual renewal. Attention to personal growth coupled with awareness of social and environmental justice supports an integrated approach to spiritual formation at FST.





## A Franciscan Blessing

*May God bless you with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that you may seek truth boldly and love deep within your heart.*

*May God bless you with holy anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may tirelessly work for justice, freedom, and peace among all people.*

*May God bless you with the gift of tears to shed with those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, or the loss of all that they cherish, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy.*

*May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you really CAN make a difference in this world, so that you are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.*

*And the blessing of God the Supreme Majesty and our Creator, Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word who is our brother and Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, our Advocate and Guide, be with you and remain with you, this day and forevermore.*

*Amen.*