

# FAQs About TSSF



## ***About The Third Order:***

### ***Who is in the Society of St. Francis? How is it organized?***

The three expressions within the Franciscan vocation, the First, Second and Third Orders, embody a loving trinity of co-equality and mutuality. Within the Anglican Communion, the First Order consists of the Brothers of the Society of St. Francis (SSF) and the Sisters of the Community of St. Francis (CSF); the Second Order comprises the Sisters of the Community of St. Clare (CSCI); the Third Order is the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order (TSSF). The First and Second Orders live together in community, while the Third Order comprises men and women in the ordinary walks of life who live in a community “in dispersion.”

We are held together by our Rule. Three things (The Principles which we are to pray daily, The Constitution, and the Form of Profession and Renewal) are held by Franciscans across the world. These are the basis of our community life and expression of our life as Franciscans.

We are organized into 5 Provinces: the Americas, Europe, (England, Finland, Norway), Africa, Asia-Pacific (Australia and Hong Kong), and the Pacific Province (New Zealand, Polynesia, and Micronesia – mostly the Solomons). The three functional instruments of unity are the Interprovincial Chapter (IPTOC), the Minister General, and the meetings of the Ministers Provincial. The Minister General is the functional head and servant of the Order based on Constitution. He or she acts as convener for ministers meetings and all interprovincial life. The Ministers Provincial meeting is the executive body. IPTOC coordinates activities, ratifies ministers and constitutional changes after ratification by all the other provinces.

### ***Is TSSF only for Episcopalians/Anglicans?***

Not necessarily. Persons not in communion with the See of Canterbury who may desire to enter formation in the Third Order should contact the Formation Director.

### ***How is TSSF governed?***

The Chapter is the legislative body of the Order, and the ultimate authority in all that concerns its policy and work in this Province. It is entrusted with the responsibility of preserving the spirit of the Order as set forth in the Principles, in the life and work of the Province. The Chapter shall consist of the Minister Provincial, the Chaplain, the Formation

Director, the Secretary, the Bursar, and the Fellowship Coordinator, ex officio; the representative elected by the Brazil Regional Chapter; and 7 elected brothers and sisters of the Order.

### **Who represents me in TSSF?**

All professed tertiaries may have a voice in Chapter by contacting Chapter members.

### ***How many countries are in TSSF? How many members?***

Because TSSF is worldwide, the number of countries can shift from time to time, but at last count there were 41 countries involved.

### ***Is the Province of the Americas the largest Province?***

That honor belongs to the European Province.

### ***What is a Bishop Protector?***

The Bishop Protector serves as a consultant to TSSF and a liaison between TSSF and The Episcopal Church USA. The Bishop Protector shall serve for an initial term of six years and may serve for additional three-year terms.

### **What are the IPTOC, JPIC, and JCFU?**

**IPTOC** (InterProvincial Third Order Chapter). It consists of representatives from each of the Provincial Chapters and meets every six years.

**JPIC** (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation). Our JPIC team supports a wide number Social Justice ministries within the Episcopal Church. The Third Order Rule clearly asks all of us to make a commitment to “fight against all injustice in the name of Christ.” Moreover, the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments gives a mandate for serving others. Micah 6:8 sums up God’s word through all the prophets “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus himself lays out the judgement ahead for those who profess to do God’s work and turn their backs on the needs of the poor. And in our Baptismal Vows, we promise to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.”

**JCFU** (Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity). Established in 2004, the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity exists to be an instrument of peacemaking, healing, and reconciliation

among the various followers of Christ in the Way of Saints Francis and Clare – regardless of denominational affiliation. It is committed to modeling and encouraging communication, mutual respect, affirmation, and cooperation among its members and the Franciscan Orders they represent, to witness to the shared life-transforming spirituality they experience as they follow Jesus in the Way of Saints Francis and Clare.

***Can I be in another Order besides TSSF?***

Since there are many different Orders with many different requirements, this question necessitates a referral to our Provincial Chaplain.

***Where do I express any concerns about anything within the Third Order?***

If you're professed, you can contact any Chapter member or TSSF officer (their names can be found in the front of your current Directory). If you're in Formation, please speak with your Counselor.

***Does TSSF have a Safe Community Policy?***

Yes. It can be found on the [TSSF website](#) in the Governance section of the Resources for Tertiaries page.

**The Daily Office:**

***What prayer books are approved for use in Morning/Evening Prayer?***

The TSSF is an international Franciscan Order of the Anglican/Episcopal Church. Any Authorized Anglican/Episcopal Prayer book published in the world may be used for our Daily Office. That also includes any published Franciscan prayer book used by our SSF brothers and CSF sisters.

***Is there a prescribed sequence within Morning Prayer/Evening Prayer and the Community Obedience?*** *There is not. Here are three examples of how Tertiaries do the Daily Office:*

**Tracey Carroll:**

*If I am out and about, working late, whatever, I use the Daily Obedience and prayer list calendar that Rick Simpson created (you can find it in the Downloads for Your Phone section on the Resources for Tertiaries page of the [TSSF website](#).) It's downloaded on my Google calendar so I always have it with me. (I would rather use the hard copy paper versions, but it's not always possible).*

*Sometimes, I say the Community Obedience with Intercessions from our Directory as a separate time of prayer. Most of the time, I do the Community Obedience and intercessions before I say one of the offices.*

*For the Office I prefer using the contemporary office book and marking everything with ribbons ... it's easy .... but, because I have a kid who destroys books, I often use "[St. Bede's Breviary](#)" It has lots of options including adding Marian prayers. There is also a choice for "bare bones prayer book office" which is quite handy. You can set it up for Rite I or II. You can also create a quick link/ widget on your phone to take you directly to the Office for the current date.*

**Bill Graham:**

*I do both Morning and Evening Prayer daily and during Lent, I add a third Office (either Noonday, or Compline). On most days, I read Morning Prayer, then do the Community Obedience, and then various devotional reading (e.g. Forward) and intercessions.*

*About three days a week, I do a 5:30 a.m. spinning class at my YMCA. My typical prayer routing on those days is to do 15 minutes of centering prayer first, followed by Morning Prayer. I usually use the online version from the Mission St. Clare website. When the Commemoration for a given day is very long, I sometimes don't get the to rest of my prayers until after my spinning class. Occasionally, I don't do the centering prayer first, and then I almost always get through the intercessions along with Morning Prayer. [There are also those days when I forget to set the alarm and don't do any of my morning prayers until after I exercise.]. I almost never miss either Morning Prayer or the Community Obedience, even when my routines are not possible, such as when traveling or doing Diocesan youth overnights. The part most often skipped for me is the centering prayer and then the intercessions.*

*The advice I've been giving people in Formation is that the most important thing is developing a routine that one misses when it's not kept. When pressed for time, Morning and Evening Prayer can be shortened to five or ten minutes. It can also be 25 or 30 minutes when including music and lots of the optional collects. The most important parts of the Community Obedience are the daily paragraph of the Principle and the Intercession List in the Directory. I usually look at the picture and mentally note the place of residence, but just reading the name can be done when under time pressure.*

**Ken Norian:**

*With respect to format, I'm pretty eclectic. For the first couple decades of praying the Daily Office I used the BCP. For a couple of years after that I used the CSF Office Book. For the past several years I split it up between the CSF Office Book and the Daily Office SSF. But .... I also use the Daily Office SSF with the rubrics from the [UK Common Worship Daily Prayer](#). (Use the "contemporary" side. Because of time zone differences, the Office for the day before and the day after is presented.) The two have borrowed back and forth from each other over the years. Common Worship gives flexibility to make the Office and long or as short as desired. The Offices in the various books were really meant to be read in a group, so, with the Common Worship rubrics, the office can be distilled down to:*

*An opening prayer, canticle or hymn*

*Psalm*

*Scripture reading*

*Gospel Canticle*

*Collect*

*Lords Prayer*

*Intercession*

*For folks who get hung up on reading the Office word for word as though they are in a community setting, this lends itself to a more personal, relaxed, meditative experience. And.... since it's an Office Book of a province of the Anglican Communion, it's "official." Sometimes, just to mix it up, I use the New Zealand Prayer Book, which is also pretty minimalist in its approach to the Office.*

## **Reconciliation, Spiritual Direction and Chaplaincy:**

### ***Sacramental Confession: How, Who, and Why?***

This practice is a way to deepen our relationship with our loving and forgiving God. It should be clearly understood that the confessions in the Eucharist or Daily Office, which are designed for group use, serve a different purpose than the sacrament of reconciliation, which is designed for individual use. Nor is confession “to the church” and/or through a priest something new. Rather, it is an ancient practice stemming from the New Testament and the early church.

The objective of the sacrament of reconciliation is simply a way of accepting and acknowledging ourselves as sinners and yet beloved. It requires us to articulate clearly what we have already sensed about ourselves, as well as reminding us of a loving God’s wiping out our misses by forgiveness.

Finding a confessor can be problematic, especially in some areas of this Third Order Province. If your spiritual director doesn’t hear confessions and a local priest isn’t available or appropriate, ask the Third Order Area Chaplains (listed in the front of the Directory) for help, or members of the local Fellowship. The Episcopal Church BCP allows for a deacon or lay person to serve as confessor. Instead of pronouncing absolution, a deacon or lay person offers assurance of God’s forgiveness and love. No matter who the confessor, s/he is fully bound to confessional confidentiality.

### ***How do I find a Spiritual Director?***

For a director, choose someone you can meet with in person, and who can be objective about you. Choose someone whose suggestions you will seriously consider when they conflict with your own. Remember there are many thoughtful and devout lay men and women who can and do serve as spiritual directors; they do not have to be clergy. Your director needs to know what you are trying to do and what spiritual tools you bring to the task. He or she also needs to know your life situation, the demands made on you, and your responsibilities.

Your church may have a list of Spiritual Directors. If you live near a religious community, they too will often provide Spiritual Directors. You may also ask your Fellowship or Area Chaplain for suggestions.

### ***How do I find out who my Area Chaplain is?***

The easiest way is to open your newest Third Order Directory, go to the Area Chaplains listings in the front of the Directory, and look for the Chaplain assigned to your state, country, or language (Spanish).

## **After You're Professed:**

### ***Once professed, what are my reporting requirements?***

Professed brothers and sisters normally report at least once each year (with the option of reporting more often if they wish) on the observance of the Franciscan way of life and their own Rule of Life. The newly professed normally report four times during the first two years and then review the frequency of reporting with their Area Chaplains.

### ***How do I get involved now that I'm professed?***

We encourage you to discuss your options with your Fellowship Convener or contact any Chapter member.

### ***Can I wear a brown habit?***

The profession cross is our only habit.

### ***Why isn't our profession cross a Tau?***

Although many Franciscans around the world do wear a Tau, our Third Order profession cross was especially designed for us by a tertiary in New Zealand and has been in use since 1976.