

The Spirituality of Companions of the Society of Saint Francis

The spirituality of the Companions of the Society of Saint Francis is deeply rooted in the life and teachings of Saint Francis of Assisi, shaped by a desire to follow Christ in the spirit of humility, simplicity, and love. While Companions are not members of a religious order in the formal sense, they share a meaningful spiritual bond with the First Order brothers and sisters of the Society of Saint Francis (SSF), supporting their life and mission through prayer, presence, and often practical assistance. This connection fosters a unique form of Franciscan spirituality that is accessible, adaptable, and grounded in everyday life.

At the heart of the Companion's spirituality is a commitment to **live the Gospel after the example of Saint Francis**. Companions are drawn to Francis's radical trust in God, his deep love for all creation, and his passionate embrace of poverty—not for its own sake, but as a way of imitating Christ's humility. This spiritual path emphasizes being rather than doing, focusing on cultivating an inner disposition of peace, gratitude, and compassion. It is not about achieving spiritual perfection but about walking gently with Christ and others in daily life.

One of the key characteristics of Companion spirituality is its **flexibility**. Each Companion is encouraged to develop a personal Rule of Life—an intentional rhythm of prayer, service, and simplicity that reflects their own circumstances. There are no rigid structures or required vows. Instead, Companions are invited to grow spiritually through small, faithful practices: regular prayer, participation in the sacraments, acts of kindness, environmental

care, and engagement in justice and peace. This openness makes Franciscan spirituality accessible to people from many walks of life and Christian backgrounds.

Companions also emphasize **relationships** as a central element of their spiritual life. Saint Francis saw every creature as brother or sister, and his life was marked by deep empathy, community, and reconciliation. Similarly, Companions seek to nurture relationships marked by humility, listening, and mutual respect. They often maintain personal friendships with members of the SSF and find joy in accompanying the community through shared prayer, retreats, and hospitality. In this way, Companions live out a spirituality of presence—being present to others, to God, and to the needs of the world.

Simplicity is another key value in the Companion's spiritual path. While this doesn't necessarily mean material poverty, it does involve a spirit of detachment from the clutter of consumerism, ego, and distraction. Companions are encouraged to cultivate contentment, stewardship, and generosity, striving to live lightly on the earth and in harmony with creation.

In sum, the spirituality of the Companions of the Society of Saint Francis is a gentle, grounded way of following Christ, shaped by the life of Saint Francis and rooted in relationship, simplicity, and prayer. It is a path of accompaniment, offering spiritual support to the Franciscan community while seeking to embody Franciscan values in one's own life, with grace and humility.