

# Writing a Rule of Life as a Companion of the Society of Saint Francis

For Companions of the Society of Saint Francis (SSF), the **Rule of Life** is a personal and prayerful expression of their desire to follow Christ in the spirit of **St. Francis of Assisi**. Unlike the formal vows taken by friars and sisters in religious life, the Companion's Rule is flexible, tailored to each individual's vocation, circumstances, and spiritual journey. Yet it carries deep significance: it offers structure, focus, and accountability to the way one seeks to live out the Gospel.

Writing a Rule of Life is not about creating a rigid set of obligations. Instead, it is a **spiritual tool**, shaped by reflection and intention, that helps guide daily life toward greater simplicity, compassion, and Christ-centred living. For Companions, this Rule draws deeply from **Franciscan values**: prayer, humility, love of creation, care for others—especially the poor—and joy in the ordinary.

## Begin with Prayer and Discernment

The first step in writing a Rule of Life is to **pray**. Ask God to show you what truly matters in your life, what you are being called to let go of, and how you can grow in love. St. Francis did not start with grand plans; he simply responded to God's call with an open heart. Begin from that same place of openness. What helps you draw closer to Christ? What distractions pull you away?

## Reflect on the Franciscan Pillars

As you reflect, consider the key elements of **Franciscan spirituality**, and how they might take shape in your own life:

- **Prayer:** How will you commit to regular prayer? Will you use the Daily Office, silent prayer, Scripture reading, or contemplative practices?
- **Simplicity:** Are there ways you can live more simply—materially, emotionally, or spiritually?
- **Creation:** How might you deepen your relationship with the natural world, and live more sustainably?
- **Peace and Justice:** Where can you be a peacemaker or act with compassion in your community?

- **Community and Relationship:** How will you nurture relationships—with other Companions, in your parish, or in your daily life?

#### Write With Realism and Grace

Your Rule should be **realistic, sustainable, and life-giving**. Avoid overloading yourself with commitments. A good Rule is both **aspirational and gentle**—it should stretch you without overwhelming you. Remember, it's not a checklist of duties, but a guide to help you stay oriented toward Christ in the Franciscan way.

#### Keep It Personal and Practical

There's no single format required. Your Rule may be a few simple paragraphs, a list of intentions, or a prayerful letter to God. You might include:

- How often and when you will pray
- How you will live simply or give to others
- Commitments to community, service, or study
- A spiritual goal or theme for the year

#### Revisit and Revise

A Rule of Life is **a living document**. As your life changes, so too may your Rule. It is good to revisit it annually—perhaps on the Feast of St. Francis or the New Year—and ask whether it still reflects your deepest calling.