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Empowering You embrace the Natural World - The - Franciscan  
Soul of simplicity, integrity, compassion and acceptance

# Oblates Novices - Lay Monastics



## APPLICATION PACK

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## About Tau Community of Saint Francis

Firstly, may I on behalf of our Spiritual Guardians and all our members welcome you to our spiritual family as a probationer Novice of the TCOSF. We truly hope and pray that God's Spirit of Love will meet all your needs during your stay with us as a Friend. Remember, what we give out into the Universe, God sees into our hearts and rewards us with even greater abundance. Try it and see for yourself!

The Tau Community of Saint Francis is a Spiritual Monastic Community that is all inclusive, embracing the universal truth at the heart of all spiritual traditions. The Tau Community of Saint Francis, (TCOSF) celebrates the values of respect, reconciliation, forgiveness and fellowship. We honour and support peace-making and the awareness of our unity in Spirit. We believe that difference, when approached as a potential source of enrichment, need not be experienced as a threat. Old dichotomies of 'us' versus 'them' do not serve the healing of our world. Thus our focus is on removing, within ourselves, the obstacles to unity. ***The TCOSF believes there is One God, One Truth, and that many paths lead to the Source of All.***

The TCOSF whole-heartedly support all the many interfaith initiatives that encourage dialogue and understanding between religions. We look for even deeper dimensions of unity, where we can recognise every human being as a facet of the One Spirit, a reflection of something in ourselves. We see the interfaith concept as a powerful invitation not just to tolerance, but acceptance; not only to dialogue, but brother/sisterhood.

TCOSF are not creating a new religion, but filling a growing spiritual gap in modern society whereby individuals can live a spiritual life within their own faith community. The aims of the TCOSF is not

about coercing individuals to convert away from their faith, but to support people who wish to enquire more deeply in to their own spiritual tradition and their own soul. The TCOSF has a simple vision based on the teachings of Saint Francis inviting individuals to live in the world but not be a part of its dramas or negativism. We have established a 'virtual monastic community' inviting enlightened souls to dedicate their lives to God by living the spirit of the monastic life from their own home- their monastery without walls. Each member is invited to link up with the TCOSF either by Skype conferencing calls or in person, by attending our monthly support group retreat days here at the Monastery of Saint Francis in the South Lakes. Individuals have the choice to either choose to enter a more conservative monastic community or join the TCOSF interfaith spiritual community. **Thomas Merton argues that traditional monasticism is 500 years out of date as it has not come into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many of these monasteries focus more on the ancient rituals and rubrics rather than embrace interfaith spirituality.**

There is a 'spiritual hunger' within the heart and soul of every individual who seeks clarity, respect, freedom from religious oppression as well as personal intimacy with their God. The TCOSF supports individuals from all faiths and none who are interested in developing their spiritual life living outside monastery walls. Individuals can choose to join the TCOSF as a 'Friend,' or take their interest to a more spiritually advanced level and live the monastic life from their own home. Within the very heart of the TCOSF, we accept each individual as being a valued member of God's family. There are no rules that prevent anyone becoming a member on grounds of their religious beliefs, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.

The concept of monastic life may appear idealistic for some but in truth, it remains conservative at heart where individual monks and nuns live a rigid religious life based on an era that no longer resonates with modern man. Today's concept for an interfaith monastic community is based on mutual respect that will facilitate healing at every level so that bridges can be built within the religious faith communities by sharing wisdom, truth and love.

*'Having lived the monastic religious life as a nursing monk for many years, I became spiritually challenged by the lack of respect from within my faith community towards members of the other faith communities. I became disillusioned by 'man's inhumanity towards one's fellow man in the name of God- a God of real compassion and effortless love. My journey from Catholicism into the interfaith area really began when I knelt at the tomb of Saint Francis in April 2008 where I became aware that interfaith was very much God's agenda for my heart. Here I found my niche in ministry as a contemplative (Interfaith) Independent Christian Franciscan monk in service to all faiths and none. In prayer, my heart was guided to leave my comfort zone and walk in total abandonment and surrender to God's will. One of many gifts that God has shared with my heart is the joy of being part of the vision for the Tau Interfaith Monastic Spiritual Community of Saint Francis.*

*The vision became a reality in 2006 when several therapists who were trained by me to work with Essenic Energy Medicine incorporating the energies of Sananda Jesus and the Divine Feminine. Today, we have over twelve members from different faiths living the monastic life in their own home-there monastery without walls. From within our forty or so membership, several have gone forward to train as interfaith ministers with the Interfaith Foundation (UK) and several more members from*

*Ireland, Gibraltar and the United Kingdom have expressed an interest in putting themselves forward for consideration as ordained ministers.*

*As members of the TCOSF, we believe that in the ocean of God's perfect love, there are many boats all travelling in the same direction. To be called is to be chosen and souls searching for personal intimacy with their God as brothers and sisters of our interfaith community is another positive example of the need for the integration of brothers and sisters representatives of other faith groups, sharing in the Mystery of that love. As the spiritual founder and director of the TCOSF, our heart's desire is so that people of any spiritual tradition and none could have a supportive holding environment in which to remove all that keeps us bound in separation, division and suffering; a place where we could join together and participate in liberating our souls from our own egoic tendencies, so the universal spiritual directives of love, compassion, understanding and wisdom could land in our actual human experience."*

## **Vision and Mission Statements**

### **About The Tau Community of Saint Francis**

At the very heart of our Interfaith Franciscan Spirituality there is an acceptance that the Creator is Our Holy Father-Mother God. Our spiritual path was inspired by the simplicity and humility of two extraordinary souls - Saint Francis and Saint Claire. Their personal search for God has inspired millions to take a leap of faith by honouring the Divine within.

Our Franciscan Path begins when we understand that God's love embraces each individual heart.

As a child of God, we accept the words of the 23rd Psalm: The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. And we accept, with the Apostle

John, that these words apply to all people: God is love, and he who abides in love

**The Tau Community of Saint Francis's mission:** Recognising, honouring and celebrating the essence of the Divine at the heart of the many pathways to Truth by sharing the following integrated spiritual ecologies:

- **SHARING SPIRITUALITY** - through our ongoing retreat and support group days Friends can embrace religious diversity without compromising one's spiritual values as they search for lasting peace and reconciliation of all Faiths to unite as 'One Spiritual Family' sharing God's love for all and to all.
- **POSITIVE ACTION** - unique concept of sharing God's Love through a common sensed approach of putting practical religious/spirituality into positive action for all who are seeking peace where mutual respect is essential for the integration of all faiths/beliefs.
- **VIRTUAL SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY** - (a monastery without walls) based on the core values of Franciscan Spirituality, where the Creator God is Love and by inviting all to come and share that love as brothers and sisters by embracing a 'spiritual way life,' from the comforts of their own home.
- **TRAINING AND EDUCATION**- We understand that our spiritual unfolding is an ongoing process, and dedicate ourselves to continually deepening our personal spiritual practice, that our service may be grounded in an authentic and evolving spiritual life.
- **HONOURING OUR SACRED CONTRACTS** -- As committed men and women who have embraced the monastic life within the TCOSF, we are encouraged to remember our unity, honouring our uniqueness as a child of God. We achieve this by aiming to keep our hearts and minds open to everyone, celebrating difference but not separation. We refuse to marginalise people on the basis of age, disability, state of health, race,

gender, nationality, religion, sexuality, economic status or any other distinction. We understand the importance of practising what we preach, and agree to uphold the ethical and practical principles of the spiritual path we follow. We recognise that all paths emphasise the importance of honesty, respecting self and others, non-stealing and non-harming. Knowing that truthfulness brings freedom, we aim to cultivate conscious and clean communication. We aim to speak and listen as truly as we can, being mindful that our words are kind, true and useful. Since we value purity of awareness, we support each other in exercising maturity over the ingestion of intoxicants or mind-altering substances.

- **Serving the spiritual needs of the community and society**
- **Co-creating partnerships with organisations committed to spiritual awareness and application.**

### **Our Ministry**

As members of the Tau Community of Saint Francis, we aim to be of service to people of all faiths or none. Our help is sought most often by:

Those who are seeking spiritual connection and expression, yet feel uncomfortable with conventional religion (shown by surveys to be a majority of the UK population)

People from different religious backgrounds who wish to honour more than one faith tradition. Individuals who have expressed a desire to embrace a spiritual pathway that incorporates living the life of a committed monk but who are reluctant to enter a conventional monastery where they know that to achieve this, they will have to leave their home, family and friends behind. The Tau Spiritual community will provide practical support that will enable them to live in their home- their monastery without walls.

Those who seek closer intimacy with their God and are willing to enter our proposed mixed sex monastery where all faith traditions are honoured and respected will be invited to join pending the acquisition of a small holding in due course.

Those struggling with issues they find difficult to raise within their faith (for example, questioning of sexuality).

We are not creating a new religion, but filling a growing spiritual gap in modern society. It's not our aim to convert anyone away from their faith, but to support people who wish to enquire more deeply into their own spiritual tradition and their own soul.

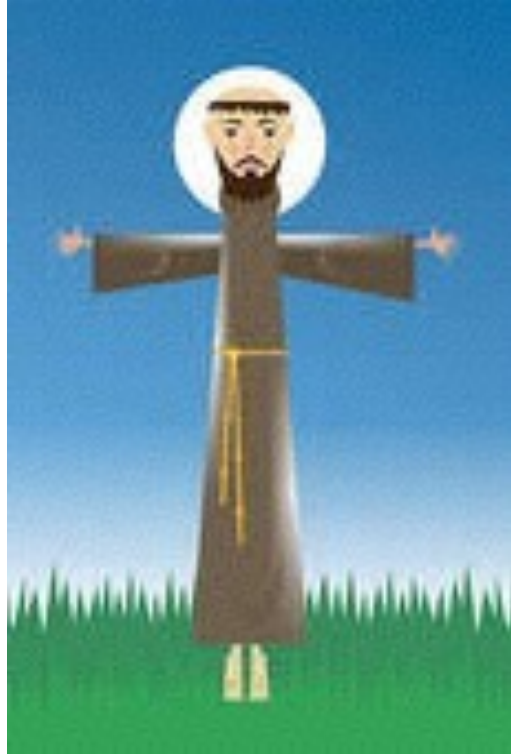
Membership within the Tau Community offers each person the opportunity to become a Friend, Spiritual Affiliate and lay monastic following their heart and dedicating their life to God as contemplative monastic's. Within our membership there are ordained ministers from the Interfaith Foundation (UK). They are involved in spreading the word about the benefits of the conducting weddings, funerals and blessing ceremonies. Some have started their own centres, worship communities and spiritual education programmes. Others tend more towards offering spiritual counselling - privately, or in hospitals, hospices, colleges and schools. Some have taken their calling - whether expressed in explicit 'spiritual' terms or not - into business training, into peace-making projects, and into the whole passage of family and community life, including parenting. Many have brought increased inspiration to their work as artists, writers and musicians. And for some, the result of the training has simply been a more authentic expression of who they are, and a deeper sharing of their spirituality with others in their everyday lives. In the Interfaith Foundation, we hold that the qualities we bring to our service are more important than its form of expression.

There is a core group within the Tau Community who have expressed a desire to share their spirituality, creativity and religious beliefs within a more permanent residential monastic setting. To that end, we are now relying totally upon God to direct this vision by providing a suitable small holding in a semi rural setting where our committed members can live out their calling as contemplative monastic's in a same sex spiritual community. **AKA: The Field of Dreams.**

The vision entails that the monastic centre be an eco friendly and sustainable venture where the community will become involved in the following:

- **Horticulture:** create a market garden growing a wide range of home grown produce to support the resident community and also sell to the local community. Training courses in permaculture, horticulture to basic levels.
- **Animal Welfare:** establish an animal sanctuary for sick and abandoned animals in addition to having as pets: hens, goats, sheep, cattle, donkeys, Shetland ponies and pigs.
- **Specialist Interests:** Ecology and raising awareness about climate change, sustainability, bee keeping, hen husbandry, religious calligraphy, iconic art and crafts (pottery): in house printing and book publishing.
- **Special Courses** in Holistic Energy Medicine; Spiritual/Soul Development.
- **Eco-Spirituality Retreats:** The Natural World and the Franciscan Soul
- **Spiritual counselling,** counselling supervision, pastoral support with soul or life coaching.
- **Residential guided retreats,** short term respite, self catering holidays and guided retreats.
- **Individual Hermitages:** provide several self contained hermitages for guests seeking privacy.
- **Nurture** positive working relations within the Interfaith Forum providing support to all.

The above list may well change subject to available skills within the residential monastic community.



THE TAU COMMUNITY OF SAINT FRANCIS

## WHO CAN BE A LAY MONASTIC - A MEMBER OF THE TAU COMMUNITY?

You can. All you have to do is say "yes" to God's invitation to serve Him through your friendship and support of the wider community within the Tau Community OF Saint Francis. Your religious education or spiritual affiliation doesn't matter. Nor does anything you've done in your past life. All that matters is your willingness to serve as a Lay Monastic and Friend and be there for your brothers and sisters who have covenanted their lives to God as members of the online contemplative community.

The individual who is guided to join the Tau Community of Saint Francis as a Lay Monastic enters a period of study to prepare them for their spiritual pathway to God.

### ALLEGIANCE PRAYER

*Dear Holy Father Mother God in Heaven, I pledge my allegiance to You this new day. I give You my life, my work and my heart as a Lay Monastic of the Tau Community of St. Francis. I am willing to use whatever gifts that you have given freely to me for the TCOSF. In turn, give me the grace of obeying your every direction to the fullest extent. Enable me to remain in my heart and make time for you this new day. I thank you for your continued love and for my spiritual abundance this day.*

### MORNING OFFERING

(Remember the words: ACTS: Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving and Service).

*Holy Father Mother God, I ask for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God, together with the support from Mother Mary; Mary Magdalene; Saint's Francis and Claire; the Lord Jesus, the Prophets Abraham, Isaac, Enoch, Mohammed and all the Ascended Master together with the support from the Archangels, Michael, Uriel, Gabriel, Raphael, Metatron and all the Archangels; all Healing Angels and Guides; my Guardian Angel and all the Nature Spirits who work for the Divine Light to now assist, cleanse me of all negative thought patterns, impurities and strengthen me, my loved*

*ones and all those who helped me reclaim my life to be a Lay Monastic of the Tau Community of St. Francis.*

*I now invite, invoke and ask that I, as a Lay Monastic of the TCOSF, be blessed by You, Holy Father Mother God and prepared as a channel of Divine Healing Love for all who now seek my help today. I ask that you use my gifts, skills and prayers for all who need my help within the TCOSF. I ask that you continue to bless my life and commitment to you today.*

***As a child of God, I thank you for your love and blessings upon my life today as a Friend of the Tau Community of Saint Francis.***

In addition to the daily Morning Offering, our Brothers and Sisters (Monastics) agree to join each other in prayer from either the comforts of their own sacred space or from within the Monastery of Saint Francis. Each monastic recites the Lectia Divina, or the Divine Office of Lauds (08.30am); Vespers (5.30pm) and Compline (9.00pm) each and every day of their commitment to God. You are invited to join them by using the simplified version as detailed in the 'Light Worker's Way.'

### **WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?**

1. ***Lead by example.***
2. ***Sow seeds.***-Many lay apostles enjoy introducing their friends, relatives and strangers to the Volumes. Talk about the effect they have had on your life. The Spirit of God says all you have to do is open the door a crack and He will do the rest.
3. ***Be a pillar of calm and strength.*** One of the many rewards of the Volumes is the amount of calm and strength that pours into your soul as you read over the pages. When you take these messages to heart, your priorities change. Things that used to stress you out no longer do. A contagious air of calm begins to emanate from you to those about you. In times of trouble, be the oasis of peace that draws others to Jesus.
4. ***Choose your own level of involvement.*** Your Friendship may be a strictly limited, because of work related pressures. On the other hand, you may want to become involved in a more public way, working at the parish level, with TCOSF itself, or with groups you organise or join, sharing your talents and services where God determines He needs them most. One of the beautiful

parts of this mission is that God's Spirit is calling you to serve, in most cases, exactly where He has placed you.

## **Member Benefits**

**Benefits of membership in the Tau Community of Saint Francis include:**

- Quarterly In-House Newsletter.
- Remembered in the daily prayers by Brother Sean and Sister Eleanor all the members of our interreligious monastic community.

**These benefits are enjoyed by *all members* of the Tau Community of Saint Francis.**

## **Affirmation of Principles**

All members of the Tau Community of Saint Francis must affirm the following principles of our organisation:

### **We, the Tau Community, Affirm**

- the spiritual essence of being and the magnificence of God's creation;
- the ongoing revelation of truth and wisdom through numerous individuals, institutions, works of art and literature, and systems
- the inherent worth and dignity of every person regardless of race, creed, gender, economic condition or other distinctions; and our shared responsibility as members of the interdependent web of existence.

### **We the Members of the Tau Community of Saint Francis**

- renounce hatred, religious prejudice and violence;
- support unprejudiced, empathetic dialogue leading to intelligent, humane, environmentally sound solutions to conflicts and problems in our world;
- and together reach toward a vision of closer interreligious dialogue in harmony, peace and prosperity for all.
-

Each new Novice/Oblate is empowered during their training to make a firm commitment to continue with their spiritual development by:

1. To regularly keep in touch/contact with their mentor.
2. To nurture their spiritual practices by attending Morning and or Evening Prayers on our Facebook Daily prayer channel whenever this is convenient to their work/family commitment.
3. To nurture friendships within the Tau Family.

**THE SPIRITUAL GUARDIANS AND ALL THE MEMBERS WITHIN THE TAU COMMUNITY OF SAINT FRANCIS HAVE ADOPTED THE UN'S CHARTER OF COMPASSION**



## **Membership Agreement of the Tau Community of Saint Francis (TCOSF)**

**Please carefully read the following, as this is an agreement between you and the TCOSF if you become a member:**

My intention to join the Tau Community of Saint Francis is not based on a desire to proselytise for any religion.

I understand that if I advocate illegal activities in the TCOSF, the Spiritual Guardians of the TCOSF may be asked or required to provide my personal information to government agencies and/or law enforcement officials.

Before casting a vote on any matter in the TCOSF, I promise to enter a prayerful, meditative, or conscientious and attentive state of mind and speak aloud these words: *Aware of the responsibility invested in me as a member of the Tau Community of Saint Francis, I seek the highest Wisdom of God to guide my decision and the decision of the TCOSF.* I will then vote according to the promptings of my innermost conscience. (Members are free to interpret the recitation as an appeal for divine or heavenly wisdom or as an inner search for wisdom of the human heart and mind, or both, according to their own individual beliefs. Its purpose is to focus oneself on the importance of deciding one's vote in a profound spirit rather than based on personal biases or other superficial considerations unworthy of the TCOSF.

**I agree to update or confirm my contact information at least once every year.**

I understand that membership in the TCOSF is a privilege, not an entitlement, and that if membership is granted to me by this interfaith/interreligious organisation I must uphold its principles and fulfil its requirements. I understand that I may be removed from membership at any time if I fail to do so.

**I affirm and certify that all information provided in my application to join the Tau Community of Saint Francis is accurate.**

**Shalom - Peace -Namaste - OmShanti - Pax et Bonum -  
Deus Amoris Est -Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo-Beannacht /Blessing-  
Ad Maiorem Dei Gloria**

**+ Brother Sean**

(Rev) Brother Sean TCOSF

Founder and Abbott of the Tau Community of Interfaith Franciscans

Brother Sean's Links:

Why not come and join us 09.00 AM-05.00PM (UK time) on our daily Prayer Channel:

FACEBOOK <https://www.facebook.com/celticfranciscanmonk>

**Brother Sean's Youtube channel**

<https://www.youtube.com/user/brotherseanbradley/videos>

**Br' Sean's Monastery of Saint Francis (UK)**

<http://monasteryofsaintfrancis.simplesite.com/>

<https://franclaraabbeyusa.yolasite.com/>

THE TAU COMMUNITY OF SAINT FRANCIS