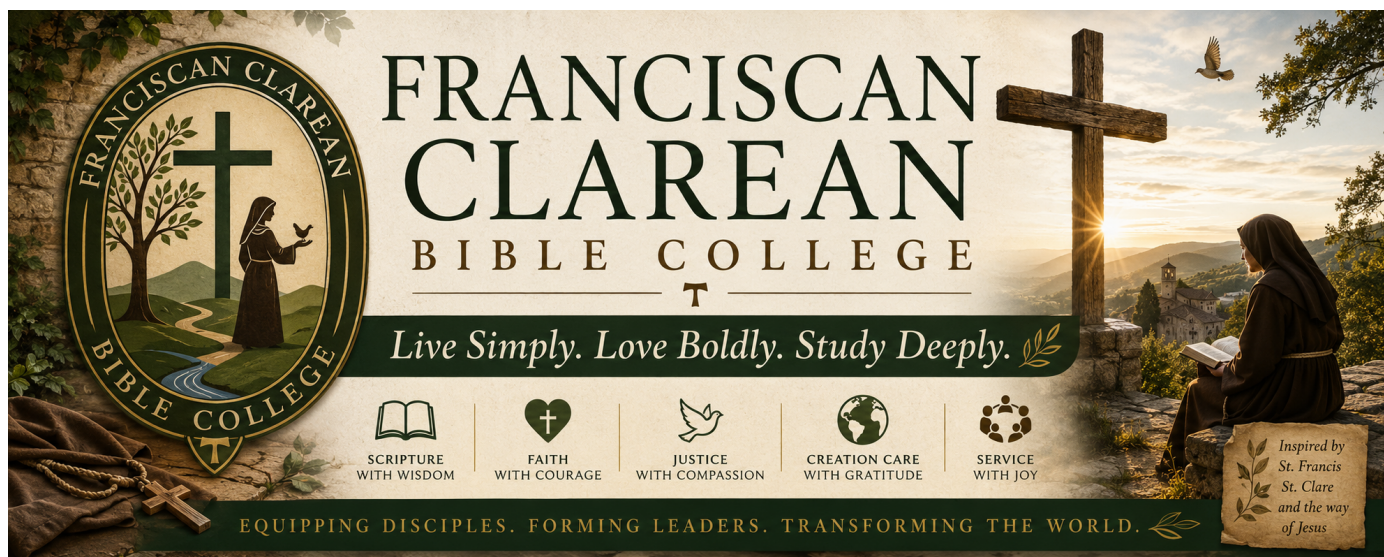




Franciscan Clarean Bible College

Academic Catalog 2026-2027 Edition

A ministry of the Order of Franciscan Clareans

Motto: Live Simply. Love Boldly. Study Deeply. Serve Faithfully.

This founding academic catalog describes the mission, programs, student expectations, and course offerings of Franciscan Clarean Bible College. The college is committed to progressive Christian scholarship, Franciscan spirituality, compassionate ministry, justice, peace, inclusion, and care for creation.

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Chapter 1: Welcome from the Founder

Grace and peace to you!

Welcome to the Franciscan Clarean Bible College, a ministry of the Order of Franciscan Clareans.

Whether you are a lifelong Christian, someone returning to faith after years away, a member of another denomination, or simply seeking to understand the teachings of Jesus more deeply, you are welcome here.

Our college was founded on a simple conviction: faith and scholarship belong together.

We believe loving God includes loving God with our minds. We encourage students to ask questions, engage Scripture thoughtfully, learn from history, wrestle with difficult theological issues, and discover how the teachings of Jesus continue to transform lives today.

As Franciscan Clareans, we seek to follow the example of St. Francis and St. Clare by living simply, loving generously, serving compassionately, and walking humbly with God. We are committed to caring for creation, standing with those on the margins, and building communities rooted in peace, justice, and hope.

Our curriculum draws from modern biblical scholarship, Christian tradition, and practical ministry. Students are equipped not only with knowledge but also with the spiritual formation and pastoral skills needed to serve their communities with wisdom, humility, and compassion.

This college is more than an educational institution. It is a community of learners, seekers, ministers, and disciples committed to embodying the love of Christ in the world.

I invite you to join us on this journey of learning, spiritual growth, and faithful service.

May God bless your studies and your ministry.

In peace and hope,
Sister Abigail Hester, OFC
Founder and President
Franciscan Clarean Bible College

Chapter 2: About the Franciscan Clarean Bible College

Our Story

The Franciscan Clarean Bible College was established as the educational ministry of the Order of Franciscan Clareans to provide accessible, academically rigorous, and spiritually transformative Christian education.

Born from a desire to unite scholarship with compassionate discipleship, the college embraces the wisdom of the Christian tradition while engaging honestly with the questions and challenges of the modern world. We believe that faith is strengthened - not threatened - by thoughtful study, open dialogue, and a willingness to learn.

Inspired by the lives of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare of Assisi, our college forms students who seek to live simply, love boldly, pursue justice, and care for all creation.

Mission Statement

The Franciscan Clarean Bible College equips disciples, ministers, and spiritual leaders through Christ-centered education rooted in Franciscan spirituality, progressive Christian theology, modern biblical scholarship, and compassionate service.

Vision Statement

We envision a worldwide community of students who embody the way of Jesus through lives marked by humility, scholarship, justice, peace, inclusion, and joyful service. Our goal is to prepare leaders who help build communities where every person is welcomed, every question is respected, and every act of compassion reflects the love of Christ.

Our Educational Philosophy

At Franciscan Clarean Bible College, we believe that education is more than acquiring information - it is the formation of the whole person.

- Loving God with heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- Reading Scripture with both faith and critical inquiry.
- Integrating scholarship with spiritual practice.
- Serving communities with humility and compassion.
- Seeking justice, peace, and reconciliation.
- Caring for creation as a sacred responsibility.
- Growing through lifelong learning and discipleship.

Our Core Values

Christ-Centered: We strive to follow the teachings and example of Jesus in every aspect of life and ministry.

Franciscan Simplicity: We value humility, gratitude, generosity, and a simple way of life.

Academic Excellence: We encourage careful study, intellectual honesty, and engagement with biblical scholarship.

Compassionate Service: Knowledge finds its fullest expression when it is used to love and serve others.

Justice and Inclusion: We affirm the dignity of every person and seek to stand alongside those who are marginalized or oppressed.

Creation Care: Following the example of St. Francis, we recognize the earth as God's good creation and commit ourselves to its care.

Community: Learning flourishes within relationships of mutual encouragement, accountability, and hospitality.

Our Distinctive Identity

- Grounded in the life and teachings of Jesus.
- Inspired by the Franciscan tradition.
- Open to thoughtful theological dialogue.
- Informed by modern biblical scholarship.
- Dedicated to practical ministry.
- Welcoming to students from diverse Christian backgrounds who respect the college's mission and values.

Our Commitment

We seek to graduate students who are not only knowledgeable but also compassionate; not only well-read but also prayerful; not only prepared to teach but ready to serve.

We believe that faithful ministry begins with transformed hearts, informed minds, and hands ready to participate in God's work of healing, reconciliation, and hope.

Chapter 3: Admissions, Enrollment, and Student Expectations

Admissions Policy

The Franciscan Clarean Bible College welcomes students who desire to grow in their knowledge of Scripture, deepen their spiritual lives, and prepare for lives of ministry and service.

Admission is open to individuals from a variety of Christian traditions who are willing to engage respectfully with the college's mission, values, and educational approach. We also welcome sincere seekers who wish to study the Bible in an academic and spiritually enriching environment.

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. We believe every person bears the image of God and deserves dignity, respect, and the opportunity to learn.

Admissions Requirements

- Be at least 18 years of age, or have parental permission if younger.
- Complete an application for admission.
- Submit a personal statement describing their faith journey and reasons for applying.
- Agree to uphold the Student Covenant while enrolled.
- Demonstrate a willingness to participate respectfully in academic discussions.
- No prior ministry experience is required.

Enrollment Categories

- Certificate Students - pursuing a certificate in a specific area of study.
- Diploma Students - completing a structured program of study.
- Degree Students - if degree programs are offered in the future in accordance with applicable laws.
- Audit Students - participating in courses for personal enrichment without earning academic credit.

Academic Expectations

- Complete assigned readings and coursework.
- Participate respectfully in discussions.
- Meet assignment deadlines.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in all academic work.
- Cite sources appropriately.
- Engage thoughtfully with differing viewpoints.

Questions and respectful disagreement are encouraged as part of the learning process.

Student Covenant

As a student of Franciscan Clarean Bible College, I commit to:

- Seeking truth with humility.
- Treating every person with dignity and respect.
- Living with honesty and integrity.
- Pursuing peace and reconciliation.
- Serving others with compassion.
- Caring for creation.
- Growing spiritually through prayer, study, and service.
- Respecting the diversity of perspectives within the learning community.
- Representing the college honorably in my words and actions.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to Christian discipleship. Students are expected to submit their own work, properly acknowledge the ideas and writings of others, and refrain from plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty.

Violations may result in disciplinary action, including revision of assignments, probation, suspension, or dismissal.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to foster an atmosphere of kindness, hospitality, and mutual respect.

The college does not tolerate harassment, discrimination, bullying, intimidation, threats, violence, dishonest or unethical behavior, or disruptive conduct that interferes with learning.

Our goal is restoration whenever possible, guided by compassion, accountability, and grace.

Accessibility

The Franciscan Clarean Bible College is committed to making theological education accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided whenever possible to support meaningful participation in coursework and community life.

Graduation Expectations

- A solid understanding of Scripture.
- The ability to interpret biblical texts responsibly.
- A growing spiritual life.

- A commitment to compassionate ministry.
- Skills for leadership and service.
- A heart for justice, peace, and reconciliation.
- A lifelong commitment to learning and faithful discipleship.

Chapter 4: Academic Programs and Degrees

The Franciscan Clarean Bible College offers programs designed to nurture both the mind and the spirit. Our curriculum combines biblical scholarship, Franciscan spirituality, theological reflection, and practical ministry, preparing students to serve faithfully in their churches, neighborhoods, and the wider world.

Certificate Programs

Certificate programs are intended for students seeking focused training in a particular area of ministry. Most certificates may be completed in six months to one year through part-time study.

Certificate in Franciscan Clarean Ministry

An introduction to the theology, spirituality, history, and mission of the Order of Franciscan Clareans.

Certificate in Biblical Studies

A survey of the Old and New Testaments, biblical interpretation, and the historical context of Scripture.

Certificate in Progressive Christian Theology

An exploration of contemporary theological thought, historical-critical biblical scholarship, and Christian ethics.

Certificate in Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care

Training in compassionate listening, spiritual care, crisis response, trauma-informed ministry, and community outreach.

Certificate in Preaching and Teaching

Preparation for preaching, Bible teaching, small-group leadership, and effective Christian communication.

Certificate in Creation Care and Franciscan Ecology

A study of Christian environmental stewardship, sustainable living, and Franciscan care for creation.

Diploma Programs

Diploma in Christian Ministry: Students study Biblical Studies, Theology, Spiritual Formation, Pastoral Care, Worship, Evangelism, Ethics, and Leadership.

Diploma in Biblical Studies: Students focus on Old Testament, New Testament, Biblical Interpretation, Historical Jesus, Paul and Early Christianity, and Church History.

Future Degree Programs

As the college develops and in accordance with applicable educational laws and accreditation requirements, the following programs may be introduced: Associate of Biblical Studies, Bachelor of Christian Ministry, Bachelor of Theology, and Master of Practical Theology.

Until then, certificates and diplomas will remain the primary academic awards.

Academic Credit System

One academic credit generally represents approximately 15 hours of direct instruction plus independent reading, assignments, and study.

Programs may include lectures, reading assignments, reflection papers, Scripture studies, research projects, ministry practicums, online discussions, final examinations, and ministry projects.

Required Core Curriculum

Biblical Studies: Introduction to the Bible; Old Testament Survey I; Old Testament Survey II; New Testament Survey I; New Testament Survey II; Biblical Interpretation.

Theology: Introduction to Christian Theology; Franciscan Clarean Theology; Christology; Christian Ethics.

History: Church History I; Church History II; History of the Franciscan Movement.

Spiritual Formation: Prayer and Contemplation; Rule of Life; Christian Spiritual Disciplines.

Ministry: Pastoral Care; Introduction to Chaplaincy; Preaching and Teaching; Leadership in Ministry.

Ministry Practicum

Students pursuing ministry credentials complete a supervised practicum that may include community service, worship leadership, teaching or preaching, pastoral visitation, reflection journals, and ministry evaluation. The practicum helps students integrate classroom learning with real-world ministry experience.

Capstone Project

Before graduation, diploma students complete a capstone project demonstrating the integration of biblical knowledge, theology, spirituality, and ministry practice. Projects may include a research paper, sermon series, Bible study curriculum, ministry proposal, community outreach initiative, or spiritual formation resource.

Lifelong Learning

Graduation is not the end of discipleship but the beginning of a lifelong journey. Franciscan Clarean Bible College encourages graduates to continue studying Scripture, serving others, caring for creation, and growing in wisdom, compassion, and faith throughout their lives.

Chapter 5: Course Catalog

The Franciscan Clarean Bible College organizes its curriculum into academic departments. Each course is assigned a course code and may be taken individually or as part of a certificate or diploma program.

Department of Biblical Studies (BIB)

BIB 101 - Introduction to the Bible

An overview of the formation of the Bible, its historical context, literary genres, major themes, and approaches to interpretation.

BIB 102 - Old Testament Survey I

Study of the Pentateuch and the Historical Books, exploring Israel's origins, covenant, and national story.

BIB 103 - Old Testament Survey II

Study of the Wisdom Literature and the Prophets, with attention to justice, hope, and faithfulness.

BIB 201 - New Testament Survey I

Introduction to the Gospels and the historical Jesus, with emphasis on the social and political world of first-century Judea.

BIB 202 - New Testament Survey II

Study of Acts, the Pauline letters, the General Epistles, and Revelation.

BIB 203 - Biblical Interpretation

Methods of interpreting Scripture, including literary, historical, cultural, liberationist, feminist, queer, and Franciscan Clarean approaches.

BIB 301 - The Historical Jesus

An examination of the life and teachings of Jesus using historical and literary methods.

BIB 302 - Paul and Early Christianity

Study of the Apostle Paul, the earliest Christian communities, and the development of Christian theology.

BIB 401 - Advanced Biblical Studies

Independent research in a selected biblical topic under faculty supervision.

Department of Theology (THE)

THE 101 - Introduction to Christian Theology

An introduction to the major doctrines and beliefs of Christianity throughout history.

THE 102 - Franciscan Clarean Theology

A study of the theological vision, spirituality, and mission of the Order of Franciscan Clareans.

THE 201 - Christology

Who is Jesus? An exploration of the historical Jesus, the Christ of faith, and the meaning of discipleship.

THE 202 - Doctrine of God

An examination of classical and contemporary understandings of God, including process theology, panentheism, and post-theistic perspectives.

THE 301 - Progressive Christian Theology

An exploration of modern theological movements that emphasize justice, inclusion, and thoughtful engagement with Scripture.

THE 302 - Liberation and Queer Theology

A study of liberation theology, feminist theology, womanist theology, and queer theology in conversation with Christian tradition.

Department of Ministry (MIN)

MIN 101 - Foundations of Christian Ministry

Biblical and practical foundations for serving the Church and the wider community.

MIN 102 - Pastoral Care

Principles of compassionate listening, spiritual support, and pastoral presence.

MIN 201 - Chaplaincy Ministry

Preparation for serving in hospitals, shelters, correctional facilities, disaster response, and community settings.

MIN 202 - Preaching and Teaching

Methods for preparing sermons, Bible studies, and educational programs.

MIN 301 - Leadership in Ministry

Servant leadership, organizational development, and healthy ministry practices.

MIN 401 - Ministry Practicum

A supervised ministry experience integrating classroom learning with practical service.

Department of Spiritual Formation (SPF)

SPF 101 - Prayer and Contemplation

Introduction to Christian prayer traditions and contemplative practice.

SPF 102 - Rule of Life

Developing a sustainable rhythm of prayer, work, study, rest, and service.

SPF 201 - Franciscan Spirituality

The lives and teachings of St. Francis and St. Clare and their relevance today.

SPF 301 - Spiritual Direction

Principles of accompanying others in their spiritual journeys.

Department of Justice and Creation Care (JCC)

JCC 101 - Justice in the Biblical Tradition

Biblical foundations for justice, mercy, and reconciliation.

JCC 201 - Creation Care

A Franciscan approach to environmental stewardship and ecological responsibility.

JCC 202 - Peace and Nonviolence

The Christian call to peacemaking, reconciliation, and active nonviolence.

Department of Church History (HIS)

HIS 101 - Early Church History

From the apostolic era through the early ecumenical councils.

HIS 201 - Medieval and Reformation History

The development of Christianity through the Middle Ages and the Reformation.

HIS 301 - Modern Christianity

Christianity from the Enlightenment to the present, including global and progressive movements.

Graduation Requirements and Continuing Formation

To earn a diploma, students must successfully complete all required coursework, maintain satisfactory academic progress, complete the required ministry practicum, submit a capstone project, and demonstrate Christian character and ethical conduct consistent with the mission of the Franciscan Clarean Bible College.

Graduates are encouraged to continue in lifelong learning through ongoing Bible study, spiritual formation, service, continuing education, mentoring, and participation in the wider life of the Order of Franciscan Clareans.

Founding Statement

The Franciscan Clarean Bible College is a founding educational initiative of the Order of Franciscan Clareans. This catalog is intended to provide a clear, organized, and faithful foundation for future students, ministers, faculty, and supporters. It may be revised as programs expand, policies develop, and the college grows in service to God and neighbor.

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