

Franciscan Journey chapter 13 notes

Encounters with Jesus

Rule Article 5

Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of Saint Francis, who often said, "I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except his most holy body and blood," should be the inspiration and pattern of their eucharistic life.

Commentary

As the process develops, then the Secular Franciscan seeks out the living and active person of Christ in all spheres of life: liturgical activity (especially the Eucharist), Scripture, Church, and one another (5). Since the sacrificial union with Christ is the most intense and comprehensive experience of his real presence, the celebration becomes the key encounter, as patterned by Francis himself.

Christ in Ourselves and in Others

- Love grows through love. Love is "divine" because it comes from God and unites us to God. (*Deus Caritas Est*)
- In order to encounter the living and active person of Christ we need to be intimate with Jesus.
- It is difficult to see the person of Christ in others without awareness of his presence in us. Our awareness may not be perfect but it must be growing.
- Article #5 of the Rule invites us to encounter Christ:
 - in our brothers and sisters;
 - in Sacred Scripture;
 - in the Church;
 - in liturgical activity.

... in our brothers and sisters

- Difficult task to discover "how" to recognize Christ in everyone.
- As Francis grew intimate with Jesus and the Father and the Holy Spirit he came more readily to an acceptance of others.
- It may be that seeing Christ in others begins by our awareness of Christ in us.
- Francis put on the mind of Christ. Nothing and no one could diminish Francis' ability to recognize his beloved Jesus in robbers and sinful friars and men and women who were dominated by desires contrary to God's love.
- He reached out with God's love, which dwelt within his own heart, to touch the unknown yearning in the heart of the other.
- Our hearts must change from suspicion to welcoming, from hostility to hospitality.
- Our task is to respond to the Holy Spirit who, in these cases, inspires us to show the kind of hospitality needed by this "other" who stands before us.

- The motivation for hospitality is not in order to change people. It offers a space where change can take place but it is not aggressively pursuing conversion in the other.

... in Sacred Scripture

- In Scripture God speaks to us. We respond by implementing biblical teaching in our lives.
- Senses of Scripture (taken from *Understanding the Scriptures*, Scott Hahn et al):
 - **literal sense:** The meaning of Scripture based upon the meaning of words in the literary and historical context.
 - **spiritual sense:** The interpretation of Scripture that sees not only the words of the text but also the people, things, and events they describe as signs. The spiritual senses flow out of the literal meaning of the words. The three kinds of spiritual sense in Scripture are the allegorical, moral, and anagogical senses.
 - **allegorical sense:** The spiritual interpretation of Scripture that shows how people and events in salvation history point forward to other times. The allegorical sense of Abraham offering Isaac is God's sacrifice of his own son, Jesus.
 - **anagogical sense:** The spiritual interpretation of Scripture that shows how events in Scripture point to what will be in heaven.
 - **moral sense:** The spiritual interpretation of Scripture that shows us how the heroes of Scripture portray a pattern for our own lives.
- Personal interpretations must be in accord with faith and not contrary to it. We do not become solitary "experts" in interpreting Scripture.
- Rely upon the magisterium of the Church when interpreting Scripture.

... in the Church.

- Differences are common among us:
 - familial ideas and guidance – may accept or reject.
 - influence of friends and professors with ideas that may be different from ours, editorials, security needs, or lack of time.
 - Religious TV and radio programs can attract us because we agree with their theological opinions. But they proclaim only one of many opinions expressed within the Church.
- The SFO Rule invites us to encounter the person of Christ in all these folks.
- Franciscans seek ways to relate to them - accept people where they are.
- Create a space for dialogue, build relationships.
- Our ability to engage in dialogue leaves the way open for a common understanding that enhances our faith.

... in liturgical activity.

- Liturgy finds its most perfect expression in the Eucharist.
- Pray with one another, but we also need to pray to their Father in secret and pray without ceasing.

- Liturgical celebrations should deepen our relationship with Jesus. In turn, the power of the relationship (initiated by the Holy Spirit) should move us to gospel living in daily life.
- They open us to God's love.

God is Love (*Deus Caritas Est*) Paragraph 15

- Love can be "commanded" because it has first been given.] This principle is the starting-point for understanding the great parables of Jesus.
- Gospel gives us an expanded understanding of the concept of neighbor: universalized, yet concrete.
- Love of God and love of neighbor have become one.

SFO Constitutions – Article 9.1 / 14.1

- The spirituality of the secular Franciscan is a plan of life centered on the person and on the following of Christ, rather than a detailed program to be put into practice.

U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults – Doctrinal Statements/Meditation – pp. 17-18

- Revelation is the self-disclosure of the living God and his plan to save us. Revelation shows us that God desires to have an intimate and loving relationship with everyone: personal relationships, covenants, prophets.
- Revelation reached its fullness in God's Son, Jesus Christ, which has been transmitted to us by Apostolic Tradition and Scripture.

Scripture Reflection: *Hosea 2:6-20*

I will hedge up her way with thorns;
and I will build a wall against her,
so that she cannot find her paths.
She shall pursue her lovers,
but not overtake them;
and she shall seek them,
but shall not find them.
Then she shall say, 'I will go
and return to my first husband,
for it was better with me then than
now.'
And she did not know
that it was I who gave her

the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and who lavished upon her silver
and gold which they used for Baal.
Therefore I will take back
my grain in its time,
and my wine in its season;
and I will take away my wool and my
flax,
which were to cover her nakedness.
Now I will uncover her lewdness
in the sight of her lovers,
and no one shall rescue her out of my
hand.

And I will put an end to all her mirth,
her feasts, her new moons, her
sabbaths,
and all her appointed feasts.
And I will lay waste her vines and her
fig trees,
of which she said,
'These are my hire,
which my lovers have given me.'
I will make them a forest,
and the beasts of the field shall devour
them.
And I will punish her for the feast days
of the Baals
when she burned incense to them

and decked herself with her ring and
jewelry,
and went after her lovers,
and forgot me, says the LORD.

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
and bring her into the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her.
And there I will give her her vineyards,
and make the Valley of Achor a door of
hope.
And there she shall answer as in the
days of her youth,
as at the time when she came out of the
land of Egypt.

"And in that day, says the LORD, you will call me, 'My husband,' and no longer will you call me, 'My Baal.' For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be mentioned by name no more. And I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will espouse you for ever; I will espouse you in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will espouse you in faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD.

- Consider the various senses of this passage:

- Literal – relationship between a husband and an unfaithful wife.
- Allegorical – the passage draws a parallel with the relationship between God and the unfaithful nation of Israel.
- Anagogical – points to the desire of God to establish and maintain a relationship with us. Even when we fall, he constantly calls us back to himself.
- Moral – as God is willing to forgive us, so should we forgive others.