

## ***Franciscan Journey* chapter 14 notes**

### **A Rebuilding Task**

#### **Rule Article 6**

They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all the people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.

Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.

#### **Commentary**

Sharing Christ's mission through life in the Church is the third point developed on the meaning of gospel living. By word and example the Secular Franciscans bring to those around them the living Christ they have experienced. As it were, they become a living gospel for all to read. This evangelization is based on obedience to the Holy Spirit, who inspires and forms the Church, the body of Christ. So, the Secular Franciscans foster an openness to the Spirit and creatively exercise their mission. Furthermore, they hear the call of the Spirit through loyalty, frank dialogue, and cooperation with legitimate Church authority. This obedience makes ministry authentic and consistent without stifling their creativity.

#### **Constitutions - article 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, 17.4**

- Called to work together in building up the Church and, through baptism and profession, made witnesses and instruments of the mission of the Church.
- Their preferred apostolate is personal witness in the environment in which they live and service for building up the Kingdom of God within the world.
- Those called to catechize and preach should make the love of Francis for the Word of God their own.

#### **Baptism and profession are intimately connected**

- Baptism brings us into the family of the People of God.
- Baptism is the first gift in a series of gifts by which God enters the life of the baptized.
- Baptism frees us from original sin, but also makes us a new creature loved by God. This theological view celebrates God's love in the baptismal action.
- We are called to deeper intimacy with Jesus through profession.
- Profession calls for a life that is faithful to the Rule as our return gift to God, the Church, and the world, which gives witness to God's love.

#### **Go forth as witnesses**

- The Rule shows the way that Franciscans witness to God's call through their baptism and profession.

- Franciscans lovingly share fresh ideas about God's love. They share ways for people to understand the wonder of the Trinity's love for us and how to practice it in daily life.
- Dialogue is our natural way to have conversations about common beliefs or common differences. Instead of creating a dominating atmosphere, Franciscans create a welcoming atmosphere of hospitality.
- Dialogue means listening to people who hold similar or different ideas with a spirit of respect, reverence, and courtesy. If we still disagree when the dialogue is complete (for now), we will be true to our desire to maintain unity.
- When we engage in dialogue we surrender control of what the conclusion may be.
- Done respectfully and with love, dialogue helps fulfill Christ's prayer for unity.
- Avoid actions that would separate us from one another.

### **Returning to Jesus**

- Jesus has the words of eternal life.
- Jesus dealt with pharisees, tax collectors, lepers, the blind, adulterers, etc.
- In the midst of all this activity he spent time in solitude, communing with his Father.

### **Rebuilding the Church**

- Re-building faith in people, ourselves and others
- Rebuilding hope in people who feel betrayed and depressed (a not infrequent occurrence)
- Bringing love to people who only experience its shallow expression or are objects of hatred and violence by others.
- In a spirit of hospitality we seek to diminish anger and resistance and sadness because we respect others.
- We create a welcoming space so conversations can deal with tough issues.
- That same hospitable space will welcome the Holy Spirit's inspiration.

### **Saved in Hope (*Spe Salvi*) - Benedict XVI Paragraph 47**

- "Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Cor 3:12-15).
- The fire which both burns and saves is Christ himself, the Judge and Saviour.
- This encounter with him, as it burns us, transforms and frees us, allowing us to become truly ourselves.
- Our defilement does not stain us forever if we have at least continued to reach out towards Christ, towards truth and towards love.
- At the moment of judgement we experience and we absorb the overwhelming power of his love over all the evil in the world and in ourselves.

### **The Prayer Before the Crucifix - *Francis of Assisi - The Saint - Vol 1 - Page 40***

- Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, Lord, that I may carry out Your holy and true command.

### **Imitation: Becoming what we love - *Franciscan Prayer - Ilia Delio OSF - Page 147***

- The Franciscan path is different because it does not ask, “what would Jesus do?” but “how does Jesus live in me?”
- Christ, the Word incarnate, is the person in whom each person finds his or her unique meaning and origin.
- The logic of the Franciscan *imitatio Christi* is God’s self-emptying love which is incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ.

### **Scripture Reflection: *Isaiah 55: 1-11***

“Every one who thirsts,  
come to the waters;  
and he who has no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without price.

Why do you spend your money for that which is  
not bread,  
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?  
Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,  
and delight yourselves in rich food.

Incline your ear, and come to me;  
hear, that your soul may live;  
and I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
my steadfast, merciful love for David.

Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander for the peoples.

Behold, you shall call nations that you know not,  
and nations that knew you not shall run to you,  
because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy  
One of Israel,  
for he has glorified you.

“Seek the LORD while he may be found,  
call upon him while he is near;

let the wicked forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
let him return to the LORD, that he may have  
mercy on him,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

“For as the rain and the snow come down from  
heaven,  
and do not return there but water the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

so shall my word be that goes forth from my  
mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I intend,  
and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

### ***Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture***

- Exhortation to accept Salvation.
- Salvation is here proposed under the figure of food and drink, offered gratis to the hungry and thirsty.
- The exiles are exhorted to seek Yahweh now when he can be found, to call to him now when he is near.
- Let sinners abandon their ways and plans and be converted to Yahweh who is rich in mercy and forgiveness.

### ***Navarre Bible***

- These oracles are a call for conversion, a call to take advantage of the salvific gifts so generously offered.
- Can be read by Christians as an invitation to share in the new and eternal Covenant sealed with the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, a pledge of salvation for all mankind.
- In the Eucharist, the banquet of the New Testament, the words of the prophet come true in the complete sense in the words spoken by our Lord when he instituted that sacrament: "Take and eat" the true bread of life, the very finest food, which money cannot buy.
- The Lord, who allows himself to be found and who does not judge in the way that men do, is willing and able to grant forgiveness.
- "To be converted means to ask for forgiveness and to seek out the strength of God in the Sacrament of reconciliation, and thus begin again, advancing step by step every day, learning to overcome ourselves, to win the spiritual battles that we face, and to give of ourselves joyfully, 'for God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Cor 9:7)" (John Paul II, *Novo incipiente*, 8 April 1979).

### **Profession and the Secular Franciscan (section 16) - FUN Manual**

- Vocation to and profession in the OFS is something driven by the Holy Spirit.
- Profession is the "foundational moment in the identity of the Professed."
- The Lord speaks to the Professed and the Professed speaks to the Lord in intimate ways that bind the two together for life.
- Participation in the Profession Rite is a confession of faith. says that we believe in such a way, that we are willing to allow our words and actions betray the fact that we are true followers of Jesus Christ and His Gospel.
- The professed Secular Franciscan will need the grace to make good on the promise to "dedicate myself to the service of His Kingdom" – words which are pronounced during the moment of Profession.
- At Profession, one is also graced with the Holy Spirit who has given the vocation in the first place. This is why the Holy Spirit is called down upon those to be professed during the ceremony. It is the same type of invocation prayed at Mass upon the gifts of bread and wine so that they be transformed into the body and blood of Christ.
- It is an action of Christ and of the Church ... the Church being the whole body of Christ; head and members. It is to be seen as a communal act; an ecclesial act.

- When we see Profession as something belonging to God's eternal plan, something which exists in the continuum of the Church's time, then it takes on more importance – not only for the Church but also for us. It is quite a significant event in our lives – a transformational event – a life changing event in God's time.
- Members of the local fraternity make the presence and the action of the Church visible. The fraternity is a visible sign of the Church.
- Those to be Professed in the OFS should realize that from now on they will belong to a special family within the Church which will entail not only rights but also obligations and responsibilities.
- The priest is witness who manifests the action of the Church. He is the guarantor and reassures the Church as to the suitability of the candidates. He ratifies or conforms the promises made in the name of the Church.
- Mass emphasizes what takes place at Profession, that is, there is a sacrificial dimension of self-giving taking place. **The candidates by promising to live the Gospel life, make themselves entirely available to God and place their own bodies (persons) on the altar of Christ's sacrifice, as a holy victim pleasing to God.**
- Profession is a commitment of life for life.
- Profession revitalizes our baptismal promises and allows us to draw new strength from the baptismal promises made years ago.
- The basic baptismal relationship ... is made "**stronger**" and "**closer**."
- The Professed Secular Franciscan shares something unique with St. Francis. That is the call to rebuild the Church.
- "Consecration" is " ... to dedicate, to reserve something, to destine a person for God and His exclusive service."
- The graces of Profession allow us to be led wherever the Lord wishes to take us for whatever reasons He may have. The Professed person becomes God's own property so that s/he may be transformed from within.
- Profession contains an obligation contracted before God.
- Profession also contains a commitment to observe a form of life or Rule.
- By means of Profession there is also the definitive incorporation into the Order.
- Remember, we become Franciscans NOT to become another Francis, but rather to journey toward Christ and eternal life with God.
- Francis saw poverty – this colored his reading of scripture. He witnessed injustice – this influenced the way he treated people. He saw political and ecclesiastical grasps for earthly power – this helped him to appreciate total dependence on God. He experienced violence and prayed for peace and actually became a peacemaker.
- What is our experience of life up against our reading of scripture – especially the Gospels?
- St. Francis of Assisi "made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people."
- For the Secular Franciscan it is Lent every day – not a drudge, but a joy. In the "turning toward the Lord" we find our joy and peace.