

***Franciscan Journey* chapter 21 notes**

Freedom to Love

Rule Article 13

As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and as an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly, for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.

Commentary

Hand in hand with simple living is coming to recognize that in Christ all are equally brothers and sisters. There is no room for prejudice or exclusiveness in the Franciscan way of life. In fact, the sense of community and the will toward community compel the Secular Franciscans to discover Christ in everyone, especially the lowly and poor and disadvantaged.

U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults

- Moderation restrains our attachment to worldly goods and our appetite for consumerism.
- Fulfill obligations: promises, contracts, etc.

Constitutions 18.1, 18.2, 18.3

- Contribute toward civilization that promotes dignity of people.
- Oppose exploitation, discrimination, exclusion, attitudes of indifference.
- Promote building of fraternity among peoples, conditions worthy of life, freedom of all.

“a gentle spirit”

- Understand that people are not perfect.
- Accept person without giving approval to poor choices. Opens door to dialogue.
- Good grasp of reality, take action that fits situation, focus on goal to be achieved.
- Prayerful approach, guidance from Holy Spirit.

“a courteous spirit”

- Built on respect for others, recognition of dignity.
- Courtesy more than politeness: springs from inner spirit of respect for all.

“accept all people as a gift”

- Must embrace if serious about proclaiming the Kingdom of God.
- Franciscan identity teaches us how to act, opportunities for conversion.

“accept people as an image of Christ”

- Requires a change in us. We must begin to search for the image of Christ in people. Listen.
- Peeling away layers of poor decisions takes time, trust, persistence in love, caring spirit, patience.
- Fulfill the Gospel in our daily lives and persist in discovering the image of Christ in others.

“ready to place ourselves on an equal basis with all people”

- Spirit we bring to conversations and contacts with people.
- Being human, created in the likeness of God, is the basis of our equality.
- Special love and concern for the poor and marginalized.
- Strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.
- Bring joy to others through our common collaborative efforts.

Created in God’s Image -- *US Catholic Catechism for Adults*

- Made in image of God includes capability of self-knowledge, entering into communion with others through self-giving.
- God created first humans in a state of original holiness and justice, so that we are able to live in harmony with his plan.

Francis: ‘Vivere Sine Proprio’ – *Poverty and Joy* - Short

- Francis’s Form of Life:
 - “to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - includes living “without anything of one’s own.”
- Non-possessing life:
 - Living as a disciple, following teaching of the Beatitudes.
 - Live according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh.
- Reason for detachment: It is the Most High who says and does every good thing. All good things belong to God alone.
- In the Incarnation, as in the Eucharist, Christ chooses to “descend,” to be among people “in humble appearance.”
- Letting go is not for its own sake, as a moral virtue; it is a letting go for the sake of the poor, modeled on the generous self-giving of God seen in the birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Fifth Lesson; *The Minor Legend of Francis* – Bonaventure

- Should Francis’s companions live among the people or go off to solitary places?
- Francis realized that he was sent by the Lord to win for Christ souls which the devil was trying to snatch away.
- Became herald of the Gospel, proclaiming the Kingdom of God.