

## ***Franciscan Journey* chapter 25 notes**

### **In Their Family...**

#### **Rule Article 17**

In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ.

By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for his Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.

#### **Commentary**

A third apostolic expression of gospel living concerns family life. The family is the God-given basic unit of human society and a miniature of the total world already redeemed by Christ. Hence, Franciscan-oriented families present a renewed world of love and dignity, are an example of Christ's love for his Church, and reflect the light of Christ in affront to the darkness of today's shattered families and prevailing godless values. Husbands and wives, then, have a special ministry in the Church to the world. This ministry is exercised in two ways: by leading and educating their children to experience Christ and by witnessing to others that God is present in the family. This Christian family living is one of the most particular expressions of the laity's life and mission in the Church.

#### **Constitutions article 24.1, 24.2, 24.3**

- Family is first place in which to live Franciscan vocation:
  - Make space for prayer, the Word, and catechesis.
  - Respect for life.
  - Love within marriage is a profound witness to family, Church, and world.
- Fraternity:
  - Spirituality of family a theme for dialogue and sharing.
  - Give fraternal attention to those in difficult family situations.

#### **Constitutions article 25**

- Initiate children into a knowledge and love for Franciscan life.
- Formation of groups of children should be encouraged.

#### ***US Catholic Catechism for Adults* page 376, 383**

- Family is environment where faith is professed and witnessed: pray, teach, forgive, serve.
- Family is domestic church, where God's grace is working within it.
- Healthy family is prerequisite of a healthy society.

#### **Phases of family life**

- Adjustments that marriage brings require changes in spouses.
- First pregnancy brings new discoveries about one's generosity.
- Change in lifestyle from a new baby require conversion, dialogue, and lots of love.
- Things continue to change as children grow, requiring patience, financial adjustment.

- Teen years require gentleness, understanding, firmness, forgiveness, and reconciliation.
- The Rule especially focuses on a spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life.
- Achieving this spirit requires a faithfulness to one another, prayer, family communication, forgiveness and interaction within the family circle.

### **Managing conflict**

- Parents set the tone of family life, an atmosphere of peace or chaos, of welcoming or exclusion.
- Nurturing dialogue:
  - Listening gives sense of being respected, leads to better understanding.
  - Take time to pray together, call upon the Holy Spirit for assistance.
  - Accept responsibility for actions.
  - Conversion: change negative/frustrating actions.
  - Forgive one another.
  - Develop tools to continue dealing with feelings and hurts.

### **Cultivate fidelity**

- Faithfulness promotes security.
- Requires deep, loving commitment, honesty, forgiveness, and reconciliation.
- Call upon God's grace.

### **Cultivate respect for life**

- Begins with the belief in the sacredness of life.
- Respect through all phases of life.
- Love, concern for education, faith, preparation for adulthood, independence.
- Respect as family members grow older.
- Embrace respect for all human life, no matter who they are or how bad they may be.
- All life is precious and we will live by that belief.
- We need the power of the Holy Spirit, hence we are a prayerful people.

### **Joyfully accompany their children...**

- Home is domestic church – where members learn about faith and role/ministry in life..
- Help them discover where they might best serve Christ.
- Youth programs are an opportunity to bring the Franciscan spirit to young people.
- Youth ministry as a way to bring Franciscan ideals and values to young people.

### **Scripture reflection: *Ephesians 3:14-21***

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

- Just as a family comes from a father, so every family, every society, every group among angels and men has God for Creator and Father. The point is that God is the prototype of all Fatherhood; human fatherhood is the copy and derivative of the divine.
- The Greek text contains a play on words that is masked by the English translation. The Greek word for family (*patria*) derives from the Greek word for Father (*patēr*). The concept of family (a clan or extended family, not a nuclear family) is obviously so important that it derives its very name from God's name
- God can accomplish things far beyond expectation if only we pray with faith (*Jas 1:6-8*) and remove from our lives the hindrances of sin.

***Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*, Reflection and Application (3:14-19)**

These five marvelous petitions of St. Paul for his readers arouse in me a desire that God would grant me these same gifts. I desperately need to be strengthened by the mighty power of the Spirit in my inner self so that I can love, so that I can pray, so that I can endure, so that I can say no to all the impulses of my fallen nature. I want Christ to take possession of my heart, his dwelling place, and to drive out all the squatters who take up residence whenever I leave my heart untended.

***Little Flowers of St. Francis – The Prophet – Chapter 12 – pp 585-586***

- All of the brothers grew in ways that were important to them.
- Brother Masseo grew in humility by accepting whatever Francis assigned.
- The other brothers grew in charity and wanted to share in Brother Masseo's burden.
- In a family, various members have different needs, so accommodations should be made to support and encourage the growth of all members.

***USCCA – The Purposes of Marriage / Effects of the Sacrament***

- Fidelity in marriage flows from Christ's fidelity to the Church.
- Married love is ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children.
- The fruitfulness of married love includes the moral, spiritual, and faith life the parents hand on to their children.

***Poverty & Joy – The Spirit of Prayer & Holy Devotion – Wm. Short, OFM – Page 81***

- Prayer, contemplation, life in the hermitage are a part, but only a part, of the 'full gospel' spirituality of Francis, Clare and their followers.
- His preferred phrases describe a basic attitude toward prayer as an underlying condition of life: to have 'the spirit of prayer and holy devotion;' to desire 'the spirit of the Lord and his holy operation.'
- Being 'poor in spirit' is the condition for all genuine prayer.