

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

How Saint Francis put Brother Masseo in charge of the door, alms and cooking; then at the request of the brothers he removed him.

Saint Francis wanted to make Brother Masseo humble, so that he would not lift himself up in vainglory because of the many gifts and graces God gave him, but by virtue of humility with these to grow from virtue to virtue. One time when he was staying in a solitary place with those truly holy first companions of his, among whom was the same Brother Masseo, he said on day to Brother Masseo, in front of all the companions: “O Brother Masseo, all these companions of yours have the grace of contemplation and prayer; but you have the gift of preaching the word of God to content the people. So I want you to have charge of the door and alms and cooking, so that these brothers may pursue contemplation. And when the other brothers eat, you will eat outside the door of the place, so that those who come to the place, before they start knocking, can be satisfied by some good words of God from you, so there will be no need then for anyone besides you to go outside. And do this in merit of holy obedience.” Brother Masseo pulled back his capuche and bowed his head and humbly accepted and carried out this obedience for many days, taking charge of the door, alms and cooking.

The companions, as men enlightened by God, began to feel great remorse in their hearts over this, considering that Brother Masseo was a man of great perfection like them and even more, and the whole burden of the place was placed on him and not on them. For this reason all of them, moved by one will, went to ask the holy father that he be pleased to distribute those duties among them, since their consciences could not bear that Brother Masseo carry so many burdens. Hearing this, Saint Francis accepted their advice and agreed with their will. He called Brother Masseo and said to him, “Brother Masseo, your companions want to do part of the jobs I gave to you, so I want these jobs to be divided.” Brother Masseo said, with great humility and patience, “Father, whatever you assign me, all or part, I’ll consider it all God’s doing.” Then Saint Francis, seeing the humility of Brother Masseo and the charity of the others, preached to them a wonderful and great sermon about most holy humility, teaching them that the greater the gifts and graces God gives us, the more we must be humble, because without humility no virtue is acceptable to God. When he finished preaching he distributed the jobs with very great charity. *To the praise of Jesus Christ and the little poor man Francis. Amen.*

The Purposes of Marriage / Effects of the Sacrament – USCCA – pp 283-285

The marriage covenant, by which a man and woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love, has been founded and endowed with its own special laws by the Creator. By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as to the generation and education of children. Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament. —CCC, no. 1660

The Catechism teaches that Christ’s grace in the Sacrament of Marriage protects the essential purposes of marriage: the good of the couple and the generation and education of children. These purposes are protected and fostered by the permanence of the marriage bond and the mutual fidelity of the spouses.

“What God has joined together, no human being must separate” (Mk 10:9). We have already noted that God’s plan for marriage involves a permanent covenant embraced by the couple. The Church declares every valid sacramental consummated marriage to be indissoluble, that is, no one can dissolve the marriage bond.

The Sacrament obliges marital fidelity between the spouses. Love has a definitive quality about it. It is more than a practical arrangement or a temporary contract. Marital intimacy and the good of the children require total fidelity to conjugal love. This flows from Christ’s own fidelity to the Church, which he loved so much that he died for her. By their mutual fidelity, the spouses continue to make present to each other the love of Christ and lead each other to greater holiness through the grace they receive from the Sacrament.

Married love is ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children. These are the unitive and procreative purposes of marriage. “By its very nature the institution of marriage and married

love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory" (CCC, no. 1652; GS, no. 48). The fruitfulness of married love includes the moral, spiritual, and faith life the parents hand on to their children. Parents, as principal educators of their children, are at the service of life.

Together with their children, parents form what the Second Vatican Council called the domestic church. The Church lives in the daily life of families, in their faith and love, in their prayers and mutual care. The Catechism notes that "All the members of the family exercise the priesthood of the baptized in a privileged way" (CCC, no. 1657).

Not all married couples are able to have children. "Spouses to whom God has not granted children can nevertheless have a conjugal life full of meaning.... [and] can radiate a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality and of sacrifice" (CCC, no. 1654).

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

Francis and his companions 'followed the footsteps' of Jesus also by integrating prayer with preaching, work, and travel. They set aside time daily for liturgical prayer and took opportunities for prayer alone, in hermitages, apart from the surrounding society and towns. In this chapter we will examine some of those activities considered the 'spiritual practices' of the Franciscan tradition.

But we should use that term cautiously, because it suggests a dichotomy between the 'material' side of that tradition (work, travel, relationships) and the 'spiritual' (identified with practices of prayer or meditation). Hopefully, at this point in our treatment of the Franciscan tradition, such a division seems artificial, as it should. Prayer, contemplation, life in the hermitage: these are a part, but only a part, of the 'full gospel' spirituality of Francis, Clare and their followers.

Francis is not notable in the history of spirituality for developing or teaching techniques of prayer or meditation. 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.' Preserving this spirit was to take precedence over every kind of work, and every other concern, including the study of theology. It was not identical with practices of prayer, since some say 'many prayers' but easily grow angry when criticized by others: they are not truly 'poor in spirit,' the condition for all genuine prayer.

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 fulness 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.