

Franciscan Journey chapter 27 notes

Bearers of Peace

Rule Article 19

Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.

Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others.

Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend toward the ultimate encounter with the Father.

Commentary

A particularly Franciscan ministry is peacemaking. Peace grows out of the search for personal integrity and harmony with others and the discovery of God's presence everywhere. It is built up by affirming oneself, seeing others as revealers of God's love, taking a positive approach to solutions, and communicating constantly with the Lord. It is putting aside all thought of violence and embracing a largeness of heart. The result of peace is joy and hope. A special application of this ministry of peacemaking is preparation for death, at which time a person arrives at that ultimate encounter with God and an eternal peace in his presence that fulfill the earthly quest for peace.

Constitutions article 23.1, 23.2, 23.3

- Bearers of peace:
 - spread peaceful ideas and attitudes
 - collaborate with fraternities, churches, and Franciscan family
 - collaborate with movements promoting peace
- Respect those who conscientiously refuse to bear arms
- Make a last will and testament to preserve peace in the family

Constitutions article 26.1, 26.2

- Affirm hope and joy in living, counter widespread distress and pessimism
- In fraternity, promote mutual understanding, welcoming, joy, encouragement

Constitutions article 27.1, 27.2

- Accept illness and difficulties, increase detachment, forward into the community of saints
- Climate of faith and hope, prepare for Sister Death with serenity

Peace

- In our world, nations, cities, families struggle with violence in a dysfunctional society
- Peace must be built up unceasingly
- Franciscans are bearers of peace; we bring our Franciscan spirit to tackle problems
- True peace requires more than the cessation of violence

- Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity: safeguarding the goods of people, free communication, respect for the dignity of people, practice of fraternity (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 2304)
- Create a process for enemies to reconcile and forgive
- Promote dialogue instead of violence
- Dedication to peacemaking is built on the foundation of relationships
- Seek out ways of unity and harmony through dialogue
- Recognize the transforming power of love and pardon

Joy and Hope

- "Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance..."
- What do we need to do to bring joy into our lives?
- We don't so much seek joy as discover that it comes when gospel values and ideals take root in our lives and finds support in a good sense of humor
- Joy comes when:
 - we trust God
 - we are faithful to our profession
 - our relationship with God grows and blossoms
 - we seek positive solutions rather than negative judgments
 - we view the wonders of creation
 - good plans reach fulfillment
- Hope, like faith and charity, relies on the gracious love of God

Sister Death / Resurrection

- Resurrection gives us reason for hope when Sister Death invites us to "pass over"
- Resurrection of Jesus shows that death is not an end of everything
- God is with us in pain and suffering
- We cannot solve every form of suffering nor escape the entrance of Sister Death
- We deal with suffering through our relationship with God, united to the suffering of Jesus
- We unite ourselves with Christ and bring redemptive power to our suffering
- We deal with suffering with wisdom and faith, following example of Jesus and Francis

Scripture reflection: Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24

O LORD, you have searched
 me and known me!
 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
 you discern my thoughts from afar.
 You search out my path and my lying down,
 and are acquainted with all my ways.
 Even before a word is on my tongue,
 behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.
 You beset me behind and before,
 and lay your hand upon me.
 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 it is high, I cannot attain it.

Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.
If I say, "Let only darkness cover me,
and the light about me be night."
even the darkness is not dark to you,
the night is bright as the day;
for darkness is as light with you.

For you formed my inward parts,
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am wondrously made. Wonderful are your works!
You know me right well;
my frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately wrought in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.
How precious to me are your thoughts,
O God! How vast is the sum of them!
If I would count them, they are more than the sand.
When I awake, I am still with you.

Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any wicked
way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

- When Christians pray this psalm, they can become more aware of their dependence on God, more trustful of him, closer to him through Jesus Christ, who "knows what is in man" (cf. *Jn 2:25*), and can experience the inner presence of the Holy Spirit, who "searches everything" (cf. *1 Cor 2:10*). The psalm is a call to practice the "presence of God" more fervently.

Little Flowers of St. Francis – The Prophet – Chapter 8

- Francis's definition of true joy comes not from earthly desires, but from recognition of his own humility, poverty, and sole reliance upon God
- "If we endure these things patiently and with happiness, thinking of the sufferings of the blessed Christ, which we must endure for His love, O Brother Leo, write that here and in this place is perfect joy."
- "Above all the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which Christ grants to His friends, is that of conquering our own selves and gladly, for the love of Christ, to endure sufferings, injuries and insults and difficulties, because we cannot glory in all the other gifts of God, since they are not ours but God's..."

Christ is Risen! Alleluia! /A Transcendental Event – US Catholic Catechism for Adults

- Paschal Mystery = Christ's death and Resurrection
- We can now die to sin, and we pass over into divine life already here on earth and more completely in heaven
- Death is conquered
- By raising Jesus from the dead, the Father has placed his seal upon the work accomplished by his only begotten Son
- We see now the fullness of Jesus' glory as Son of God and Savior

Compendium Catechism – The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

- OT viewed sickness as weakness, bound up with sin, although prophets intuited redemptive value
- Jesus showed compassion toward the sick, victory over sin
- Church cares for the sick and accompanies them with prayer of intercession
- Anointing of the Sick on forehead and hands confers special grace that unites the sick person intimately to the Passion of Christ
- The sacrament gives comfort, peace, courage, forgiveness of sins
- Viaticum (Eucharist received by the dying) is the seed of eternal life and the power of the resurrection