

Franciscan Journey chapter 29 notes

Servant Leadership

Rule Article 21

On various levels, each fraternity is animated and guided by a council and minister (or president) who are elected by the professed according to the constitutions.

Their service, which lasts for a definite period, is marked by a ready and willing spirit and is a duty of responsibility to each member and to the community.

Within themselves the fraternities are structured in different ways according to the norm of the constitutions, according to the various needs of their members and their regions, and under the guidance of their respective council.

Commentary

This fraternity is bound together with the leadership of a president and a council who are ready and willing to serve, and it is expressed in diversified ways according to the needs of the area. Two implications ensue from the first part of this paragraph: the importance of choosing available and competent and willing leaders and, secondly, the responsibility of Secular Franciscans themselves to exercise complete control in administrative and temporal matters. The stress of diversified fraternity styles implies that the structure of the community must be tailored to the needs of those who form it.

Constitutions article 31.1, 31.2, 31.3, 31.4

- Offices filled through elections except in the first phase of establishing a fraternity
- Office of minister or councilor available and responsible to all in fraternity as a true community
- Leaders of OFS perpetually professed, open to dialogue, ready to give and receive help and collaboration
- Leaders animate meetings, seek to inspire, witness, promote collaboration

Constitutions article 32.1, 32.2

- Leaders live and foster communion, peace, and reconciliation
- Task to lead is temporary – leaders prepared both to accept and to relinquish the office

Constitutions article 33.1, 33.2

- Respect plurality of expressions of the Franciscan ideal
- Councils of higher levels should not do what can be carried out either by local fraternities or by a council of a lower level (Catholic Social Teaching principle of subsidiarity)

Qualities of Franciscan leaders

- Duties of fraternity offices outlined in Constitutions articles 49-52
- Good leaders regularly use empowering words: "Thank you" and "What do you think?"
- Christ gave us the model of servant leadership at the Last Supper
- Power/authority of officers to be used for common good, not for personal purposes or needs

- Authority and power = animate and guide, not command and prescribe
- Leaders require clarity about Franciscan vision – achievable, stretches us to do more
- Invite dialogue among members to reflect on vision and make it their own
- Make decisions with the vision in mind, flexible enough to adjust and refine decisions
- The council, in dialogue, will determine when, where, and how issues will be dealt with
- Seek “both/and” approaches – join differing ideas in a manner beneficial to fraternity
- Council should seek involvement of members with special skills in important issues
- Healthy relationships within the fraternity and beyond fraternity borders are vital
- Profession opens the door that involves the individual in leadership roles
- Nominees must be competent for the role

Constitutions article 49.2

- Elections every three years in the way established by the Constitutions and statutes

Scripture reflection: *Revelation 22:1-6*

Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

- Already we drink of the water flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb through our present sharing in the life of the Holy Spirit. Already we feed on the fruit from the tree of life, the cross of Jesus, namely, the Eucharist. (*Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*)
- The water issuing from the Lord and the Lamb is an apocalyptic expression of a trinitarian mystery: in eternity, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. (*Ignatius Study Bible*)
- Peace and security will now reign supreme. And the dream of every man will come true—to see God (something impossible to attain on earth). Now all the blessed will see God (cf. 1 Cor 13:12); and because they see him they shall be like him (cf. 1 Jn 3:2). The name of God on their foreheads shows that they belong to God (cf. Rev 13:16-17). (*Navarre Bible*)
- John’s glowing description is not only encouragement: it is challenge. We are summoned, here and now, to “lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely” (Heb 12:1). We are to look, beyond evil, to what is good in our world. We are to turn with confidence to the God who, though the One seated on the throne, is the gracious God who wipes away every tear. (*Sacra Pagina*)

Christianity and Social Progress – (Mater et Magistra) – Saint Pope John XXIII – Paragraphs 236-239

- Three stages to follow in putting social principles into practice: look, judge, act
- Be careful to maintain respect and esteem for each other despite differences in opinion
- Find points of agreement
- Spirit of understanding and unselfishness

On the Way to Work – Vinal Van Benthem OFS – See-Saw – pages 67-68

- We all, in the course of an average day, have many such exchanges – with family, friends, employers, employees, co-workers, store clerks, and so on. We all, in the course of an average day, look at other individuals and in some way address or respond to them. The question is: do we really see them?

Engaged Spirituality – Joseph Nangle, OFM – Contemplation – pages 44-46

- Contemplation seen in an integrated way – as a way one moves through life
- Francis also walked through the world consciously contemplating God's handprint on everything... an ongoing, contemplative response to life