

The Unfolding of the program

Welcome : Greetings. News sharing of what went on since the last meeting and how the theme was lived in the different activities of life.

1. Proclamation of the theme :

In our first meeting, we have reflected on the theme “A call for all.” The response to this call can take different pathways. The fmm have borrowed the Franciscan path traced by **Francis of Assisi**, a privileged witness of the Gospel. Today we bring forth the link between Francis of Assisi, Mary of the Passion and her fmm Institute. We will dwell on the questions of fraternity and of poverty, the two essential elements of their spirituality.

2. A call to an experience of this theme:

Have you already met Franciscan brothers or Franciscan sisters? What have you retained from this encounter? What do you know about Francis and Clare of Assisi? Are there any qualities or characteristics that have touched you among the religious or the laity who claim to be of Francis of Assisi?

3. What do our witnesses say :

Here we are called upon to speak of evangelical poverty, simplicity, respect for all creation, the stipulations of a fraternity and service to others, knowing that poverty is an attitude toward material goods that leads us to live simply, share and be of service to the poor and the needy.

Poverty and Simplicity: Mt 6:28-30; Mk 10:21

“As for clothes, why be concerned? Learn a lesson from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work; they do not spin. Yet I assure you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was arrayed like one of these. If God can clothe in such splendor the grass of the field which blooms today and is thrown on the fire tomorrow, will He not provide much more for you.”

“If you want to be perfect, go and sell what you have and give it to the poor; you will have treasure in heaven, then, come and follow me.”

Fraternity: Colossians 3:12-15

“Because you are God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. Over all these virtues put on love, which binds the rest together and makes them perfect. Christ’s peace must reign in your hearts, since as the members of the one body you have been called to that peace. Dedicate yourselves to thankfulness.”

In Service of Others: Jn 13:1-8.

“Before the feast of Passover Jesus realized that the hour had come for Him to pass from this world to the Father. He had loved His own in this world, and would show His love for them to the end. During the supper Jesus (...) rose from the meal and took off His cloak, He picked up a towel, tied it around Himself. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel He had at his waist.

Respect for all creatures: (Ref: *Active non-violence.*)

“On this planet, the human beings are in a relationship of absolute interdependence with all other forms of life. We have to take into account that only by living an authentic relationship with all creatures we are able to assume our responsibility in regards to the whole of creation.”

Francis:

Poverty: (Wisdom of the Poverello, p.28-29)

Francis knew, he the son of a rich clothing merchant of Assisi, how difficult it is to possess something and to remain the friend of all men – above all, the friend of Jesus Christ. Where each one endeavors to own property that is the end of a true community of brothers and friends. Nothing under the sun can prevent a man who possesses something from spontaneously protecting it from other men. In days gone by, he had explained this to the Bishop of Assisi who was appalled by the extreme poverty of the Friars. “*Lord Bishop,*” he had declared to him then, “*if we had any possessions, we would need arms to defend them.*”

Francis wanted his brothers to be called friars minor i.e. the one who occupies the last place. He demanded of himself and his brothers to be “the least,” the “servant.” It is from the clear source of the Gospel that he will draw. At the centre of Christian life as a way that will lead to the plenitude of life and to the witnessing that flows, there is the service of others.

Minority calls for simplicity and humility. The friars must remain humble with regard to all people in this world, in their behavior, their example and also by their

name. *“When they go into the world they will not argue, they will not quarrel, they will not judge others but they will be meek, peaceful, modest, amiable, humble, speaking with honesty to all in a suitable manner.”* Minority just as poverty is a way to fraternity. (Ménard, *in* ÉVANGILE AUJOURD’HUI. *La spiritualité franciscaine*. Paris, 2002, p.197-206)

Respect of all creation:

“Francis abounded in the spirit of charity; he was filled with compassion not only towards men in need, but also towards dumb animals, reptiles, birds, and other creatures, sensible and insensible.” (Thomas de Celano, First Life #77)

Mary of the Passion formulates this prayer:

“Lord Jesus, I ask of you to grant me poverty as my privilege and my treasure and beg this for me and my daughters, o poor Jesus, to better imitate you here below, to possess you and to love you in heaven, Amen.” She makes her own the words of Francis: *“Real power is love, which is detachment, which is poverty, which is God.”*

4. Reactions to these different passages:

- ❑ What are the reflections these different passages awaken in you?
- ❑ Poverty today is often associated with the absence of means, a misery that has to be denounced and fought against. Is this the type of poverty Francis is talking about? You, how do you see it? Are there different forms of poverty?
- ❑ If you were to define fraternity what would you say? Give examples of fraternity?

- ❑ How at this time when everyone values material goods (riches), knowledge, power, to a shameful degree, could one follow the evangelical and Franciscan path? Until now, can you say that these are virtues you have attempted to practice?

5. Practical applications for our everyday life:

- What can you do to be more familiar with the Franciscan way of life?
- What are the means at your disposition to achieve it?
- Is it possible during the coming weeks to make a detachment in order to build a more fraternal life?

Now is the time to announce or to write the practical application that we intend to do on this reflection of the Franciscan way...

6. Prayer or an appropriate hymn:

Spontaneous prayer

or “Lord make me an instrument of your peace”

or a hymn of your choice.

Franciscan Way



***Francis, a privileged
Witness of the Gospel***

Basic Formation

Leaflet Number 3