

Ongoing Formation (9)

Reflection on last month's resolution:

Topic Joyful Spirit



Franciscan Spirituality is characterized by joyfulness. This joy is rooted in knowing that God loves us and makes himself present to us in the sacraments of the Church. To cultivate joy, by embracing the immediate moment, opening and closing each day with thanks, forgiving self and others. (Padre Pio Centre)

Rule: Chapter Two Rule 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.

Constitutions: Article 26.1

Even in suffering, Francis experienced confidence and joy from:

- *The experience of the fatherhood of God;*
- *The invincible faith of rising with Christ to eternal life.*
- *The experience of being able to meet and praise the creator in the universal fraternity of all creatures.*

Following the Gospel, Secular Franciscans therefore affirm their hope and their joy in living. They make a contribution to counter widespread distress and pessimism, preparing a better future.

Scripture: Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Writings of St Francis:

True and Perfect Joy (cf 2 Cel 125 and 145)

Francis said: " Write what true joy is:

A messenger comes and says that all the master in Paris have come into the Order; write: This is not true joy. Or that all the prelates beyond the mounters have entered the Order; Write: This is not true joy. Again, that my brothers have gone to the nonbelievers and converted all of them to the faith. Again, that I have so much grace for God that I heal the sick and perform many miracles: I tell you that true joy does not consist in any of these things."

Brother Leo asked;" What then is true joy?"

Francis replied: " I return from Perugia and arrive her in the dead of night; and it is wintertime, muddy and so cold that icicles have formed on the edges of my habit and keep striking my legs, and blood flows from such wounds, and all covered with mud and cold, I come to the gate, and after I have knocked and called for some time, a brother comes and asks:

Who are you?

I answer; "Brother Francis"

He says;" Go away; this is not a proper hour for going about; you may not come in"

And when I insist, he answers;" Go away, you are a simple and a stupid person; we are so many and we have no need of you. You are certainly not coming to us at this hour.!"

And I stand again at the door and say: " For the love of God, take me in tonight!"

I tell you this: If I had patience and did not become upset, there would be true joy in this and true virtue and the salvation of the soul.

Church documents:

Evangelii Gaudium Pope Francis

The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. In this exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come.

Points to ponder:

1. Would others be able to describe you as a joyful person? Are the blocks in your life that stop the flow of joy?
2. Do you have any experiences that might be similar to the true joy described by St Francis?

Resolution: For the next month, what is one specific thing that you could try to do to show more joy to the world around you?

Practical Suggestions:

- Spread joy by visiting someone you have not seen in a while.
- Write a letter to an old friend.
- Gather items together to go to Saint Vincent de Paul
- Give some money to someone begging on the street.
- Forgive someone who may have hurt you in the past.