

LIVING FRATERNITY

Theme: What joy! A Savior is given unto us ... it is Christmas!

In this month of December 2021, we offer a return on the Birth of Jesus Christ, by presenting these texts from Living Fraternity of the years 2015 and 2019. The Formation Commission made this suggestion to help us remember this important event in our spiritual life. We offer the text from the Gospel according to Luke and the story of Christmas in Greccio.

Good reflection and study to everyone

DECEMBER 2021 MONTHLY MEETING

Opening of the meeting

The members can offer suggestions for a joyous song, to afterwards, do a prayer according to the Ritual or one chosen by the fraternity to start the meeting.

Introduction

Now take time to read this text from the Gospel according to Luke (2, 1-20) that describes the Nativity of the Lord. Afterwards, let us share our thoughts or experiences with the help of the questions.

The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first census, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary his betrothed, who was with child.

And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you; you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased."

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard wondered at what the shepherds told them.

But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Sharing:

Let us together look this passage of the Gospel according to Luke. Allowing the time necessary to answer the questions.

1. Who are the principal personages? Secondary?
2. Am I questioned by the choice of the place where the birth has occurred?
3. What has touched me in this text?
4. Why do we speak of the « mystery » of Incarnation?
5. What new ways of looking can we now have on this gospel and on our life as « Christian»?

The Nativity in Greccio

It happened that, three years before his death, he decided to do a memory of the nativity of the child Jesus in order to awake his devotion to the village of Greccio, with the greatest possible solemnity. Having asked and obtained the permission on the part of the holy pontiff so that this would not be put as a novelty, he had a manger prepared, bring some hay and bring a steer and a donkey to the area. (Friars' hermitage).

The brothers are convoked, the inhabitants arrive, the forest reverberates with voices and this night, venerable by its clear and abundant lights, its harmonious and resonant praises, becomes splendid and solemn. The man of God stood before the crib, filled with piety, inundated in tears and unbounded by the joy.

The formalities of the mass were celebrated on the manger, while Francis, minister of Christ, sang the Holy Gospel. Afterwards, he preached on the birth of the poor King as he called him to the people present, when he wished to name him, « the child of Bethlehem » because of the tenderness of his love. On the other hand, the lord John of Greccio, a virtuous and true knight who, having abandoned the militia for the love of Christ, was united to the man of God by a great friendship, asserts having seen a quite beautiful small child sleeping in the manger, that the blessed father Francis, surrounding by his arms, seemed to wake from his sleep.

Indeed not only, does the holiness of the witness make the devout knight's vision credible, but it also brings the proof, the truth that was indicated and brought the confirmation of the miracles that followed. In fact, in the eyes of the world, Francis' example awoke the hearts of those who had fallen asleep in their faith in Christ: and kept by the people, the hay from the crib marvellously healed the

suffering beasts and prevented them from many other diseases: God glorified his servant in all things and demonstrated the evident prodigies of his miracles through the efficiency of his holy prayer.

(Extract from the Legenda Major by Bonaventure, 10, 7, François, d'Assise, Écrits, Vies, Témoignages Édition du VIIIe Centenaire, Paris, 2010)

Reflection:

Reading the text once again, what concrete action can I do that would imitate our patron saint's example? Name some that you have certainly accomplished.

Biblical Reflection:

Read the texts of Sunday or of the day, or the preceding day

- Take a moment of reflection; then underline words or inspiring phrases ...
- Share your thoughts on the gospel: a) How can it be integrated in our life

Linking points from the Study Guide to the Rule and the General Constitutions

While preparing this document, we found an article from our Rule and one from the General Constitutions that have a link to the texts presented. Let us look at article 11 Chapter II, the Way of Life and articles 15.1 – 3 from the General Constitutions.

Rule - Article 11

Trusting in the Father, Christ chose for himself and his mother a poor and humble life, even though he valued created things attentively and lovingly. Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that according to the gospel they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God's children.

Thus, in the spirit of "the Beatitudes", and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of the Father, they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.

General Constitutions – Article 15.1 - 3

1. Secular Franciscans are committed to live the spirit of the Beatitudes and, in a special way, the spirit of poverty. Evangelical poverty demonstrates confidence in the Father, creates interior freedom, and disposes them to promote a more just distribution of wealth.

2. Secular Franciscans, who must provide for their own families and serve society by means of their work and material goods, have a particular manner of living evangelical poverty. To understand and achieve it requires a strong personal commitment and the encouragement of the Fraternity in prayer and dialogue, communal review of life, and attentiveness to the instructions of the Church, and the demands of society.

3. Secular Franciscans should commit themselves to reduce their own personal needs so as to be better able to share spiritual and material goods with their brothers and sisters, especially those most in need. They should give thanks to God for the goods they have received, using them as good stewards and not as owners. They should take a firm position against consumerism and against ideologies and practices which prefer riches over human and religious values, and which permit the exploitation of the human person.

Life-Objective:

In this month of December 2021, let us continue praying for the doctors, nursing personnel and all the people who remain in service. May we not hesitate to express our support and our gratitude to them.

During our fraternal gatherings, let us share the joy of meeting again and of speaking of our memories in this time of Advent and of Christmas ...

Events and Information from the Church and the Order

Remind the members of regional and local activities.

At Home

Read this excerpt from 1 Celano 84 ...in front of a crèche at home or elsewhere.

Also we must recall and honor with a reverent memory what he did, in the third year before the day of glorious death, in the fortified village that is called Greccio the day of the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was in this country a man named John, of good reputation, but of even better life. The blessed Francis cherished him in a particular way because, although in his country he was noble and honorable to the highest point, he had tread upon the nobility of the flesh to follow the nobility of the spirit.

The blessed Francis, as he often did, had him come to him about fifteen days before the nativity of the Lord and said to him: « If you wish to celebrate the present birth of the Lord at Greccio, hurry and come in advance and do what I tell you, prepare it with care. Because I want to recall the memory of this child who was born in Bethlehem and observe in detail, as much as possible through my mortal eyes, the annoyances in the needs of the child, as he lay in a crib and how, next to an ox and a donkey, he was laid on the hay. »

Hearing this, the good and loyal man ran quickly and prepared in this place everything that the saint had said ... At last the saint of God came and, finding everything prepared, he saw and was filled with joy. In fact, a crib was prepared, hay was brought, an ox and a donkey were brought in. There simplicity was honored, poverty exalted, humility praised and this made of the village of Greccio to become a new Bethlehem.

A Joyous Christmas and a Happy and Healthy Year 2022!.