

# LIVING FRATERNITY

Theme : « 800 years following saint Francis »



In this month of June 2024, we offer for your reflection the Letter from Pope Francis to the members of the Franciscan Family for the 8<sup>th</sup> Centennial of the Bullata Rule (1223-2023).

We wish that your meeting be a sharing of its content and that it be a true fraternal experience.

## JUNE 2024 MONTHLY MEETING

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### Opening of the meeting

After the song, a prayer according to the Ritual or another, chosen by the fraternity, the meeting begins.

Dear brothers and sisters,

It is with joy in my heart that I wish to send you my best wishes on this very important occasion for the entire Franciscan family, whose presence in prayer and filial closeness I have felt since the very beginning of my Petrine ministry. The eighth centenary of the approval of the Rule of the Friars Minor by Pope Honorius III at the Lateran, on November 29, 1223, is a propitious occasion not only to recall a historical event, but above all to revive in you the same spirit that inspired Francis of Assisi to strip himself of everything and give birth to a unique and fascinating form of life, because it is rooted in the Gospel and lived *sine glossa*. May this jubilee be for all times one of interior rebirth, of a renewed missionary mandate of the Church which calls us to meet the world where many brothers and sisters wait to be consoled, loved and cared for.

This is why, driven by these feelings, I offer you exhortations arising precisely from the words of the Poor Man of Assisi, who suggests to his brothers to observe: “[...] poverty and humility and the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. [...]” (*Rule bullata 12.4*).

Indeed, the Bullata Rule begins and ends with an explicit reference to the Gospel. The opening expressions are in illuminating synthesis of the entire Rule: “The Rule and life of the Friars Minor is this: to observe the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, living in obedience, without anything of their own and in chastity” (*Rule bullata 1, 1*).

The Gospel was at the center of the existence of Saint Francis; and the Church approved his words, handing it over to him and to all of you, Franciscans, as a text which no longer expresses only the spiritual intuition of a Founder, but rather a form of life. It is a message of joy that I have often wanted to emphasize because it “fills the hearts and the whole life of those who encounter Jesus” (*Evangelii gaudium n.1*).

### **Reflection and Sharing:**

After reading the preceding paragraphs, share what spoke to particularly. Take the time necessary to allow the members to share their thoughts,.

### **Continue reading**

It is therefore urgent to return to the foundations of a Christian and baptismal commitment, capable of drawing inspiration, in every choice, from the Word of the Lord: Christ is the central point of your spirituality! Be men and women who truly learn “the rule and the life” in His school!

Dear ones, to live the teachings of the Master, it is necessary to remain in the Church. Francis manifests this decisively, because to the introductory sentence which describes the desire to follow the evangelical counsels, he immediately adds suggestive and singular words in content and language: “Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope Honorius and to his canonically elected successors and to the Roman Church. And that the other brothers are bound to obey Brother Francis and his successors”(Rule bullata 1, 2-3)

In this bond of “obedience and reverence” towards the Pope and the Church of Rome, he recognized an essential element for fidelity to the call and for receiving Christ in the Eucharist; this is why he declares without hesitation his essential belonging to the Church. Well, live the spirit of the Rule in listening and in dialogue, as the synodal path suggests. Tenaciously support the Church, repair it by example and witness, even when it seems to cost more!

Finally, I would like to return to the intuition also contained in the *Bullata Rule* to go through the world. Speaking in the first person, the Seraphic Father affirms: “I advise, I warn and I exhort my brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ: when they go through the world, let them not quarrel, let them do not quarrel with each other in words and do not judge others; but let them be gentle, peaceable, and modest, gracious, and humble, speaking honestly to all, as is proper. [...] Into whatever house they enter, let them first say: Peace to this house [...]” *le bullata 3, 10-13*).

### **Reflection and Sharing:**

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### **Continue reading**

Going through the world for you, Franciscan brothers and sisters, means concretely carrying out your itinerant vocation in a style of fraternity and peaceful life, without quarrels or disputes either between you or with others, demonstrating “minority”, with kindness. and gentleness, announcing the peace of the Lord and entrusting yourself to Providence: it is a special evangelization program, possible for everyone.

From this perspective, it is good to rediscover the beauty of typically Franciscan evangelization, which is born from fraternity to promote fraternity; in fact, it is life that speaks, the love given in service is the greatest way of announcement. So find strength in this particular vocation, typical of “minors” and “poor”, as you are by desire and belonging. It is given to you by Francis in his Rule, and I am convinced that it is in harmony with the

invitation that I address to the Christian community to be a “Church going out”: “Faithful to the model of the master, it is vital that today the Church goes out to announce the Gospel to everyone, in all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, without repulsion and 3 without fear. The joy of the Gospel is for all the people, no one can be excluded” (*Evangelii gaudium*, n. 23).

And that is why I say to you: do not hesitate to travel the world in “brotherhood” and in “minority” sharing the beatitude of poverty, becoming an eloquent evangelical sign and showing in our time, unfortunately marked by wars and conflicts, through all kinds of selfishness and logic of exploitation of the environment and the poor, that the Gospel is truly good news for man so that he can find the best direction for the construction of a new humanity with the courage to set out towards Jesus, who “for your sake, although he was rich, he became poor, in order to enrich you through his poverty” (cf. 2 Cor 8:9).

Dear brothers and sisters, I entrust you with the mission of knowing how to identify the right paths to follow in order to correspond with audacity and fidelity to the charisma received. As you prepare to recall the fundamental stages of the history of this numerous Franciscan Family, I invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary and Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi and I gladly send my Blessing, asking you, please continue to pray for me.

Francis

## **Biblical Reflection**

Do as Francis did, open the Gospel of the day or of the preceding Sunday and read the passage that you find there. Afterwards, share in fraternity your thoughts using the following questions.

1. To whom is this gospel addressed?
2. What does it teach us?
3. Who does it speak to us personally?
4. Is it a message of hope? Why and how?

Take the time needed to allow a good sharing..

## **Life-objective**

In this month of June 2024, at the start of vacation time, , let us take a moment and thank the Creator for offering us nature to admire and protect it as our patron saint Francis of Assise did ...

**En of the meeting** (song or prayer chosen y the fraternity)

**Suggestion** Together recite the following prayer.

Pope Francis' prayer, invoking our Seraphic Father Francis

Saint Francis,  
Man wounded by love, Crucified in body and in spirit,  
We took to you, decorated with the holy stigmata,  
To learn how to love the Lord Jesus,  
brothers and sisters with your love, with your passion.

With you it is easier to contemplate and follow  
Christ, poor and Crucified.

Give us, Francis,  
The freshness of your faith,  
The certainty of your hope,  
The gentleness of your charity.

Intercede for us,  
So that it may be sweet for us to bear the burdens of life,  
And in trials we may experience  
the tenderness of the Father and the balm of the Spirit.

May our wounds be healed by the Heart of Christ,  
To become, like you, witnesses of His mercy,  
Which continues to heal and renew the life  
of hose who seek Him with a sincere heart.

O Francis, made to resemble the Crucified One,  
Let your stigmata be for us and the world resplendent signs of life and resurrection,  
To show nw ways of peace and reconciliation.  
Amen

*To each brother and sister we wish a very nice summer  
Where praise and gratitude will be honored!*