

LIVING FRATERNITY

Theme: To be who we are ... witnesses to the Good News ...

For this month of June, we are proposing a reflection on our role in our world, in our environment, as witnesses to our project of evangelical life – live the gospel every day. The chosen texts are excerpts from the *Nouvelle Revue Franciscaine* of 2011 and 2012.

Good reflection and good sharing.

Recall: A spirit of prayer heralds a good encounter, and a good preparation promotes communal experience. At the meeting, having a copy of the Holy Scriptures, the Rule and General Constitutions, will provide clarity and depth for our edification and experience.

JUNE 2019 MONTHLY MEETING

Opening prayer or song (according to the Ritual or a song chosen by the fraternity)

Introduction

Our project of evangelical life disposes us to promote and discover the Good News, and to share it in our fraternity, in our family. As Pope Francis invites us to renew our knowledge of these texts, we are proposing a new look at our role in the promotion of the Scriptures.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

There will never be any possible evangelization without the action of the Holy Spirit. On Jesus of Nazareth, the Spirit descended at the moment of baptism as the voice of the Father – « You are my beloved Son, you have all my favour » - manifests in a sensitive way his election and his mission. It is « led by the Spirit » that he lives the decisive combat and supreme ordeal in the desert before beginning this mission. It is « with the power of the Spirit » that he returns to Galilee and begins his preaching in Nazareth, applying to himself the passage from Isaiah: « The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ». To the disciples he is on the point of sending them forth, he says : «Receive the Holy Spirit».

In fact, it is only after the coming of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, that the Apostles go forth to all the horizons of the world to begin the great task of evangelization of the Church. The Spirit makes Peter, Paul or the Twelve speak the inspiring words that they must pronounce, that will also fall « on those who listen to the Word ».

Reflection and sharing:

1. We know that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization and that Jesus is the first and foremost evangelist. How can we reconcile these affirmations?
2. How does the Holy Spirit take action in the life of the Church and in evangelization?

Listening to the Word

Listening, what is it? « *Listening*, wrote Maurice Zundel, *is the highest action, the rarest and yet the most necessary*». It is not simply hearing, but also understanding; it is to capture a message and its signification. In our world invaded by electronic communication and the technologies related to it, are we hearing much the Word of God, or the Holy Spirit and our fellowman? And if, we hear a message, do we understand it well, or interpret it or guess at it?

How can we discern the voice of God among the thousands of voices that we hear every day in our world? It is said that God speaks to us in many ways. He speaks to us through other people, through our friends, our parents, our priests... He speaks through the events of our lives, in which we can discern an act of God. He speaks equally through nature, creation, and he naturally and especially speaks through his word, in the Holy Scriptures. It is important to learn to learn how to listen to a text, historically from the past, but always actual. The living word of God invites an entry into prayer, and also makes of a reading of the Scriptures a conversation with God. Saint Augustine, in his homilies, often said: « *I have knocked many times at the door of this word, until I was able to hear what God was telling me* ». It is also important to carry out a community reading, because the living subject of the Scriptures is the People of God. It is the Church.

Reflection and sharing:

Take the time to share your thoughts or reflections on what for you is listening to the Word. Then share a few examples (about 15 minutes).

A Word that moves ...

When someone speaks, it is often, if not often, difficult to really capture what he or she means to say. One can interpret his words; sometimes understand the opposite meaning. God knew the men and women. As he had things to tell them, he wanted them to understand without ambiguity: he did not want to say words that they could interpret. He gave a human form to his Word. And thus the term «Word» became flesh.

Since, Jesus, Word of God, speaks to us of the Father. It is this Word that has created the universe. It is this Word that has healed the sick. It is this Word that has calmed the storms. It is this Word that has revealed the secrets of the Father. Jesus, Word of God, continues calling out to us. The Gospel is not a catalogue of precepts. It is the Word of Jesus that goes before us to show us the way.

Reflection and sharing:

Take the time to share your answers to the following questions.

1. Am I concerned about my knowledge of the Word of Jesus?
2. Do I listen attentively to it?
3. Am I faithful in putting it into practice?

Artisans of unity

The spiritual testament of the Lord tells us that unity among his disciples is not only proof that we are his, but proof also that he was sent by the Father, test of credibility for Christians and for Christ himself. Evangelists, we must not offer to the faithful of Christ, an image of people divided and separated by disputes that do not edify, but of people mature in faith, capable of meeting together beyond the real tensions resulting from a common, sincere and disinterested research of the truth. Yes, this sort of evangelization is certainly linked to the witnessing of unity given by the Church.

Reflection and sharing:

We are secular Franciscans. How can we give the example of unity with our brothers and sisters in our families, in our environment, in our activities? Share your thoughts.

Deepening points taken from the Rule and the General Constitutions

Rule Article 4

The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.

Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.

Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel.

General Constitutions

Article 8.2(b)

They seek to deepen, in the light of faith, the values and choices of the evangelical life according to the Rule of the SFO, open to the challenges that come from society and from the Church's life situation, "going from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel", in the personal and communal dimensions of this journey.

Article 9.2

The secular Franciscan, committed to following the example and the teachings of Christ, must personally and assiduously study the Gospel and Sacred Scripture. The fraternity and

its leaders should foster love for the word of the Gospel and help the brothers and sisters to know and understand it as it is proclaimed by the Church with the assistance of the Spirit.

Biblical Reflection:

Read the Gospel of Sunday or the Gospel of the day.

Share your thoughts on this gospel, using the following questions:

1. To whom does it speak? What does it teach us?
2. How does it reach us personally?
3. Is it a message of hope? Another kind of message? How and why?

Life-Objective

In this month of June in this Summer season, let us read more frequently the Word of God by giving it moments of prolonged and contemplative silence.

Events and information from the Church and the Order

Recall the local and regional meetings and activities.

End of the meeting: (a song to the Sacred Heart or another chosen by the fraternity.)

At home

Recall of the following text:

The promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

1. I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.
2. I will establish peace in their homes.
3. I will comfort them in all their afflictions.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all, in death.
5. I will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.
6. Sinners will find in my Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Lukewarm souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.
9. I will bless every place in which an image of my Heart is exposed and honored.
10. I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
11. Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in my Heart.
12. I promise you in the excessive mercy of my Heart that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays in nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments. My divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

A good and beautiful summer timer to all!