

LIVING FRATERNITY

Theme: « Lenten time ... a time of reflection. »

In this month of March and this time of Lent, in preparation for the feast of Easter, we are proposing Pope Francis' homily of Ash Wednesday February 14th 2018. The text invites all Christians to see Lent as a favourable time to make changes in our lives and welcome the announcement of the Lord's Passover.

Good reflection and good sharing.

Recall: A spirit of prayer heralds a good encounter, and a good preparation promotes a 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.

MARCH 2019 MONTHLY MEETING

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

Introduction

The season of Lent is a favourable time to remedy the dissonant chords of our Christian life and to receive the ever new, joyful and hope-filled proclamation of the Lord's Passover. The Church in her maternal wisdom invites us to pay special attention to anything that could happen or even corrode our believing heart.

We are subject to numerous temptations. Each of us knows the difficulties we have to face. And it is sad to note that when faced with the ever-varying circumstances of our daily lives, there are voices raised that take advantage of pain and uncertainty, the only thing they aim to do is sow distrust. If the fruit of faith is charity – as Mother Teresa often used to say – then the fruit of distrust is apathy and resignation. Distrust, apathy and resignation: these are demons that deaden and paralyse the soul of a believing people.

Lent is ideal time to unmask these and other temptations, to allow our hearts to beat once more in tune with the vibrant heart of Jesus. The whole of the Lenten season is imbued with this conviction, which we could say is echoed by three words offered to us in order to rekindle the heart of the believer: *pause, see and return*.

Reflection and sharing:

Take the time to share your thoughts on the content of the previous paragraphs. (About 15 minutes)

Continue the reading

Pause a little, leave behind the unrest and commotion that fill the soul with bitter feelings which never get us anywhere. Pause from this compulsion to a fast-paced life that scatters, divides and ultimately destroys time with family, with friends, with children, with grandparents, and time as a gift ... time with God.

Pause for a little while, refrain from the need to show off and be seen by all, to continually appear on the "notice board "that makes us forget the value of intimacy and recollection.

Pause for a little while, refrain from haughty looks, from fleeting and pejorative comments that arise from forgetting tenderness, compassion and reverence for the encounter with others, particularly those who are vulnerable, hurt and even immersed in sin and error.

Pause for a little while, refrain from the urge to want to control everything, know everything, destroy everything; this comes from overlooking gratitude for the gift of life and all the good we receive.

Pause for a little while, refrain from the deafening noise that weakens and confuses our hearing, that makes us forget the fruitful and creative power of silence.

Pause for a little while, refrain from the attitude which promotes sterile and unproductive thoughts that arise from isolation and self-pity, and that cause us to forget going out to encounter others to share their burdens and suffering.

Pause for a little while, refrain from the emptiness of everything that is instantaneous, momentary and fleeting, that deprives us of our roots, our ties, of the value of continuity and the awareness of our ongoing journey.

Reflection and sharing:

Do a personal and silent reading of the preceding paragraphs, and afterwards share what has touched you particularly. (About 15minutes)

Continue the reading

Pause in order to look and contemplate!

See the gestures that prevent the extinguishing of charity, that keep the flame of faith and hope alive. Look at faces alive with God's tenderness and goodness working in our midst.

See the face of our families who continue striving, day by day, with great effort, in order to move forward in life, and who, despite many concerns and much hardship, are committed to making their homes a school of love.

See the faces of our children and young people filled with yearning for the future and hope, filled with "tomorrows" and opportunities that demand dedication and protection. Living shoots of

love and life that always open up a path in the midst of our selfish and meagre calculations.

See our elderly whose faces are marked by the passage of time, faces that reveal the living memory of our people. Faces that reflect God's wisdom at work.

See the faces of our sick people and the many who take care of them; faces which in their vulnerability and service remind us that the value of each person can never be reduced to a question of calculation or utility.

See the remorseful faces of so many who try to repair their errors and mistakes, and who from their misfortune and suffering fight to transform their situations and move forward.

Reflection and sharing:

Following the reading the preceding paragraphs, share your thoughts on the content. Take the time needed so that each member can express themselves.

Continue the reading

See and contemplate the face of Crucified Love, who today from the cross continues to bring us hope, his hand held out to those who feel crucified, who experience in their lives the burden of failure, disappointment and heartbreak.

See and contemplate the real face of Christ crucified out of love for everyone, without exception. For everyone? Yes, for everyone. To see his face is an invitation filled with hope for this Lenten time, in order to defeat the demons of distrust, apathy and resignation. The face that invites us to cry out: "The Kingdom of God is possible!"

Reflection and sharing:

Share what you feel while reading the preceding texts, taking the necessary time for sharing.

Continue the reading

Pause, see and return. Return to the house of your Father. *Return* without fear to those outstretched, eager arms of your Father, who is rich in mercy (cf. Eph 2:4)

Return without fear, for this is the favourable time to come home, to the home of my Father and your Father (cf. John 20:17). It is the time for allowing one's heart to be touched ... persisting on the path of evil only gives rise to disappointment and sadness. Rue life is something quite distinct and our heart indeed knows this. God does not tire, nor will he tire, of holding out his hand.

Return without fear, to experience the healing and reconciling tenderness of God. Let the Lord heal the wounds of sin and fulfill the prophecy made to our fathers: "A new heart I will give you,

and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek 36:26)

Pause, see and return!

Deepening of points of the Rule and the Constitutions

Rule Article 6

They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.

Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.

General Constitutions Article 17.1

Called to work together in building up the Church as the sacrament of salvation for all and, through their baptism and profession, made "witnesses and instruments of her mission", secular Franciscans proclaim Christ by their life and words. Their preferred apostolate is personal witness in the environment in which they live and service for building up the Kingdom of God within the situations of this world.

Life Objective:

In this time of preparation that is Lent, we should make good use of it to have a good journey towards Easter ...

Events and Information from the Church and the Order

Remind to mention meetings and local and regional activities.

End of the meeting: (a prayer or song chosen by the fraternity)

At home

Do a reading of the proposed texts in the Living with Christ, or the New Testament, particularly those that remind us of Christ's life and mission.