

LIVING FRATERNITY

Theme: Wisdom

For this month of September, we are proposing a reflection on a text from the book *Écoute la Sagesse* by Henri Bloommestijn and Jos Huls, Carmelites and Claire Dumont, Daughter of Wisdom.

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.

SEPTEMBER 2019 MONTHLY MEETING

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

Introduction

As an introduction we suggest the following reading.

Wisdom works in our favour

« A holy people and blameless race – the Hebrew - wisdom delivered from a nation of oppressors. She entered the soul of a servant of the Lord - Moses – and withstood dread kings with wonders and signs.

She gave to holy men the reward of their labours, she guided them along a marvelous way, and became a shelter to them by day, and a starry flame through the night » (Wisdom 12, 15-17), ase 49) * ase : love of Eternal Wisdom by Father de Monfort.

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Here is the commentary accompanying these texts from the book of Wisdom

Wisdom delivers every time, the just from their exterior or interior oppressors, by revealing to them the incredible fact that they are passionately loved by this terrific God who loves without any reason, simply because He is Love. In this way, Wisdom makes us impassive to real or

imagined attacks from our oppressors in order to render us *free* from now on to abandon ourselves completely in his unconditional love that will never fail us.

Rather than falling into depression and pity for ourselves, we shall be as Moses invited to open ourselves, without hesitation, to the entry of Wisdom that will reveal to us, certainly and without interruption, the majestic operation of the divine force in our very human weakness. The view of the attacks and tribulations that inevitably arrive to us is immediately replaced by the conscience of the signs and wonders that God accomplishes, every moment, against all that can oppress us.

Wisdom never delays to reward the works and great costs to the just. Not because we are capable of doing great things, but because She has succeeded in vanquishing our resistance to her love by replacing it with her overabundant divine force.

Hopefully, She shelters us, during the day, from our egocentric presumptuousness, to render us invisible in the eyes of our critics and, possibly more often, from our desire to act on our personal lead and autonomous fashion, denying and suppressing the awareness of our total dependence on the grace and divine strength.

She enlightens us, with her extraordinary and abundant light, during the night, when we are disorientated and dazzled by her 'over-divine' reality. So, She guides us, by the unknown ways of her unconditional love, to the promised land and to her presence.

Reflection and sharing:

Questions for reflection:

1. Do I know my exterior oppressors? My interior ones?
2. How does Wisdom intervene in our life to check on what oppresses us?
3. She is one that delivers. Do we detect the signs of her presence?

After a silent reading of these questions by the members, take time to share your thoughts.

Deepening points from the Rule and the General Constitutions

In 2018, we celebrated 40 years of our way of life, we now suggest doing a review together of the articles within it.

Let us start by looking at the articles from **Chapter 1, the Secular Franciscan Fraternity**.

Here are the articles from the Rule and the General Constitutions that pertain to these.

Rules 1, 2, 3

1. The Franciscan family, as one among many spiritual families raised up by the Holy Spirit in the Church, unites all members of the people of God - laity, religious, and priests – who recognize that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi.

In various ways and forms but in life-giving union with each other, they intend to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church.

2. The Secular Franciscan Order holds a special place in this family circle. It is an organic union of all Catholic fraternities scattered throughout the world and open to every group of the faithful. In these fraternities the brothers and sisters, led by the Holy Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state. By their profession they pledge themselves to live the gospel in the manner of Saint Francis by means of this rule approved by the Church.
3. The present rule, succeeding "Memoriale Propositi" (1221) and the rules approved by the Supreme Pontiffs Nicholas IV and Leo XIII, adapts the Secular Franciscan Order to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times. Its interpretation belongs to the Holy See and its application will be made by the General Constitutions and particular statutes.

General Constitutions

Rule 1 – GC – Article **1.2**. There are many spiritual families in the Church with different charisms. Among these families, the Franciscan Family, which in its various branches recognizes St. Francis of Assisi as its father, inspiration, and model, must be included.

Rule 2 – GC – Article **1.3** From the beginning, the Secular Franciscan Order has had its own proper place in the Franciscan Family. It is formed by the organic union of all the Catholic fraternities whose members, moved by the Holy Spirit, commit themselves through profession to live the Gospel in the manner of St. Francis, in their secular state, following the Rule approved by the Church.

Rule 3 – GC – Article **4.3** The Constitutions have as their purpose:
-- to apply the Rule;
-- to indicate concretely the conditions for belonging to the SFO, its government, the organization of life in fraternity, and its seat.

Rule 3 – GC – Article **5.1** The authentic interpretation of the Rule and of the Constitutions belongs to the Holy See.

Sharing and questions for reflection:

Read each article of the Rule, followed by the article in the General Constitutions corresponding to it. Afterwards, share your thoughts on the content of these articles. Take the necessary time for this exercise.

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 September, as we return to our usual activities, let us be inspired by the Word of the Lord in our monthly fraternity meetings ...

Events and information from the Church and the Order

Recall the local and regional meetings and activities.

Remember to pray for the success of our Spiritual Conference in October.

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

At home

To end this gathering, here is the prayer suggested to follow the proposed text.

Prayer

God of tenderness and mercy
You come to our gathering
In every situation and place.

You do not hesitate to take upon yourself
Our burdens and our sadness.
You trace a way of light
In the shadow of our gravities.

Open our spirits and our hearts
To the revelation of your divine strength
In the middle of our weaknesses,
In our doubts, our hindrances.

Do not tire yourself to make us see
Your image of light, during the day as well as the night,
On the unknown roads where you guide us.