

LIVING FRATERNITY

Theme: « Go, more lively, more enthusiastic »

In February, we present a first excerpt from the presentation by Fr. Louis Cinq-Mars, ofm cap, which Francophones received at *Fraternité 2013*.

Recall: At the monthly meeting, the fraternity should have in place at the disposal of the members a Bible, at least one copy of the General Constitutions, an example of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and at least one copy of Living with Christ. Also, members should have in hand their own copy of the Rule.

Note: Is our meeting place favorable, welcoming, and warm? This is an important point to consider for encouraging our members to express their various points of view on the subject.

FEBRUARY 2014 MONTHLY MEETING

Opening Prayer and Song (According to the Ritual or chosen by the Fraternity)

Reading of the Word of God

Note: as the content of the present meeting contains various excerpts divers from the Gospel, we will not take the time to read and share on the Word of God proposed in the daily Mass until after having taken into account and shared the following content.

As the readings are made by members, we shall prepare ourselves to share on the questions suggested in the section **Sharing**. It is therefore suggested to first take them into account together.

Reading: preparation text (read by the animator)

Excerpt from the introduction of the presentation by Fr. Louis Cinq-Mars to remind us of the theme he presented: «go, confident and happy! »

The theme of this gathering is an echo to the words full of kindness that Francis hears while he was in prayer before the cross in the small church of Saint Damian: «Francis, do you not see that my house is falling into ruins? Go therefore and repair it! »

This is about a context of intense research. He is alone (or with an anonymous companion and he does not understand quite well what is happening). Context where Francis does not have all the answers. However, he is racked by the desire to follow Christ.

Reading: GO!

The Word of Christ to Francis is a requirement; a requirement that open the eyes to what is already there and evident, the church or the Church in ruins, the human family divided by wars, greed, exclusion. »Already the meeting with the lepers had opened his eyes on the misery of this exclusion. He had become their friend, staying among them and serving them humbly.

Note: (choose another person to read each excerpt of evangelical passages)

This requirement can also be found in the Gospel, for example in the Gospel of John (8, 1-11) where Jesus is called upon to judge a woman accused of adultery. She is sent away forgiven.

But when it, they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus looked up and said to her, « Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? » She said « No one, Lord. » And Jesus said: « Neither do I condemn you, go, and do not sin again. »

We also find it in Luke 10, 25-37 when Jesus meets a lawyer who wants to be just. This one is sent to witness the goodness of God.

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying « Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? » He said to him, « What is written in the law? What do you read there? And he answered, « You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself. » And he said to him « You have answered right; do this, and you will live. » But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus «And who is my neighbour? » Jesus replied « A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying ‘ Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers? » He said, « The one who showed mercy on him. » And Jesus said to him « Go and do likewise. »

Or again on the road to Jericho where Jesus meets a blind man (Mark 10, 46-52).

And they came to Jericho; and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, Bartimae'us, a blind beggar, the son of Timae'us, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say « Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! » And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, «Son of David, have mercy on me! » And Jesus stopped and said, « Call him. » And they called the blind man, saying to him, « Take heart; rise, he is calling you. » And throwing off his

cloak he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, « What do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, « Master, let me receive my sight. » And Jesus said to him, « Go your way; your faith has made you well. » And immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.

Elsewhere in Luke (17, 1-19) the cleansed leper is sent on to live in gratitude.

When he saw them he said to them, « Go and show yourselves to the priests. » And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus, « Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner! » And he said to him, « Rise and go your way, your faith has made you well. »

Sharing:

Choose an excerpt among the four presented above. Read the chosen passage. Afterwards, answer the following questions, everyone for each other, noting your answers in preparation for sharing.

Questions:

1. What do I notice that is happening?
2. Who are the principal personages? Secondary?
3. What do I observe about these personages?
4. What do I observe about the place where the action takes place?
5. What is said? Requested? Offered? Refused? Contradicted? Discussed?
6. What is Jesus' attitude? His behaviour? What are his reactions?
7. According to you, why is this?

Continue the reading when sharing is ended.

Thus, the *go* pronounced by Jesus is often an invitation to gratitude for what is given freely and generously by God; an invitation to enter into a new manner of living that breaks with the past without waiting: « Go and do likewise »

What is extraordinary is that each man or each woman who answers generously and humbly to the *go* of Christ participates in his life, he who is the eternal envoy.

Additional Reflection if there is ample time left

Let us listen in silence the reading of today's Gospel. Then, take some moments to share. How does the Gospel speak to us today? Why does it?

In the footsteps of Francis

(Excerpt from the Legend of the Three Companions, Chapter V, François d'Assise, Écrits, Vies témoignages, Éditions du VIIIe Centenaire, Paris, 2010)

A few days later, as he was passing near the church of Saint-Damian, he was told in spirit to enter to pray. Once inside, he started to pray with fervour in front of an image of the Crucified Lord, who spoke to him with piety and kindness saying to him, « Francis, do you not see that my house is falling in ruins? Then go and repair it for me! » Trembling and stunned, he said, « I will gladly do it, Lord. » He understood in effect that one was speaking to him about this church here because of its very great dilapidation threatened imminent collapse. This allocution filled him with such great joy and enlightens him with such a great light that he truly perceived in his soul that the crucified Christ had spoken to him.

Deepening of points taken from the Rule and the General Constitutions OFS Rule, Article 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 charisma of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church.

General Constitutions, Articles 1.1 and 1.2

Article 1.1 All the faithful are called to holiness and have a right to follow their own spiritual way in communion with the Church

Article 1.2 There are many spiritual families in the Church with different charismas. Among these families, the Franciscan Family, which in its various branches recognizes Saint Francis of Assisi as its father, inspiration, and model, must be included.

Life - Objective:

During the month of February, renew our calling to Franciscan life ...

Events and Information from the Church and the Order

Remind the members of regional and local activities.

End of the meeting (a prayer or an hymn chosen by the fraternity)

At home

To prolong our reflection, go and look on our shelves or in our bookcases, for a book on the life of Saint Francis and read a passage from it.