

LIVING FRATERNITY

Theme: « Saint Louis and Education »

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In March, we continue with the presentation of a fifth theme on Saint Louis of France. It will show us how Saint Louis was concerned with the education of his subjects. How as Secular Franciscans can we be aware of the effect of a good education on our contemporaries?

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, each member should have in hand their own copy of the Rule.

Good preparation --- Good meeting

MARCH 2015 MONTHLY MEETING

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

Reading: (choose a person who reads calmly)

Before going to bed, he would have all his children come before him and reminded them of the actions of good kings and of good emperors. And he told them to take example on such persons. He would also tell them of the actions of nasty princes who, because of their luxurious tastes, abductions and avarice had lost their kingdoms. (According to Jean de Joinville, Life of Saint Louis)

HISTORIC CLARIFICATION: SAINT LOUIS OR THE CONCERN FOR AN INTEGRAL EDUCATION

In the thirteenth century, there is no division in the various knowledge disciplines, and theologians are also mathematicians, physicians, and philosophers.

Sometime before his death, Saint Louis wrote a letter to his eldest son Philip (refer to the end of the file). He tackles education from the point of view from a human dimension – he wants to make a man of Philip – and a political dimension – he equally wants to make a king of him.

To form a man, for Saint Louis, is to form a Christian. To teach the love of God and Christ is, in his eyes, the first principle of education, and the ultimate goal for education is to allow a person to accomplish his vocation, to draw the person towards the Christian ideal. As for the royal function, it must imperatively be exercised with justice, and aim to establish peace.

Pause:

Do a moment of sharing using the following question: What do we retain of Saint Louis in the preceding paragraph? (About 10-15 minutes). Have the reading continued by another person.

PASTORAL CLARIFICATION: TO EDUCATE IS TO MAKE ANOTHER GROW

After 800 years, the educational model is different. However there is in the life of Louis IX a constant that remains fully current: saint Louis is a man who always had to choose life, regardless of the suffering (the death of many of his children) and the difficulties encountered. It must be the same for us. In spite of its fragilities, its risks, its uncertainties, life is good and the Lord sends us this call: «Choose life » (Dt 30, 19). See GC 25

Our life is given to us by God: of all eternity, we are called by vocation to be children of God. When we look at it in this perspective, education can only be an integral education, supported by moral as well as spiritual values.

To accompany the spiritual development of children, it is good to attach ourselves to what Christ says and to put ourselves in his school. As He took the time to journey with disciples of Emmaus and to enter with them in the Word, we must also offer our children a way to initiation, that allows Jesus' words and actions to find an echo in their lives and opens them to prayer in the Church... in not forgetting that the first teacher, is the Holy Spirit. We are only the elders in the faith. (GC 25)

Pause:

Read the preceding text and share your ideas on the aspects of what should be an integral education according to Saint Louis. (About 10 minutes) then continue the reading.

FROM SAINT LOUIS TO TODAY

A group discussion of 10-12 minutes follows which can be animated by the director of formation. This is done with the help of the following texts in which the questions are found.

Being present in the world

Saint Louis wanted to offer his children « an integral education », both human and Christian. And are we, outside of our family life, in our professional realm or in our various commitments, inhabited with the desire to help one another to grow humanly and spiritually? How can we contribute to this growth?

Transmission

In his testament letter, Saint Louis defines the key values that he hopes to transmit to his children. And what values do we place as our priorities?

How can we reconcile the freedom of each child that is entrusted to us and our ambition for him or her?

We are sometimes saddened to notice that those we have accompanied in their growth have not always continued to walk in faith. How can we continue nevertheless our mission as spiritual awakeners?

Spiritual Life

In the education that we give, is there a place for a life of prayer? Adults, do we pray with our children?

Does the education that we give pass on only by word or by example? Is there consistency between the two?

How can we imitate the pedagogy that Jesus displays with the Companions from Emmaüs (this story is given further on)?

Proposal to give a personal follow up to the time of sharing:

Try to write a letter that would tell your children what you fundamentally believe, what you believe is good and indispensable for their human and Christian blossoming, beyond all the difficulties that they will encounter in life, that their life will however be successful ...

Reflection:

Now, let us listen, in silence, to the reading of the Gospel according to Luke 24, 13-35 – The Companions of Emmaüs ... then take a moment for sharing.

In the footsteps of Francis

(Excerpt from Thomas de Celano, Chapter on the description of a minister general and other ministers, from verse 185, François, Écrits, Vies, Témoignages Éditions du VIII Centenaire, Paris, 2010)

A man who, even if it is conceded that he excels over others by the gift of letters, most however display the image of pious simplicity in his manner and cherish virtue. Note: For Francis or, probably for Leo who inspired this passage to Thomas de Celano, the degree of education was not a determining factor in the choice of a minister.

Deepening of points taken from the Rule and the General Constitutions

General Constitutions

Article 25

Out of the conviction of the need to educate children to take an interest in community, «bringing them the awareness of being living, active members of the People of God » and because of the fascination which Francis can exercise on them, the formation of groups of children should be encouraged. With the help of a pedagogy and an organization suitable to their age, these children should be initiated into a knowledge and love of the Franciscan life. National statutes will give appropriate orientation for the organization of these groups and their relationship to the fraternity and to Franciscan youth groups.

Life - Objective:

During the month of March, during our fraternal meetings, let us share our reflections on our time of preparation to the great feast of Easter...

Events and Information from the Church and the Order

Remind the members of regional and local activities.

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

At home

To continue our reflection, reads the following passage:

LIVING ACCORDING TO THE VATICAN II

Universal Right to Education

All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education that is in keeping with their ultimate goal, their ability, their sex, and the culture and tradition of their country, and also in harmony with their fraternal association with other peoples in the fostering of true unity and peace on earth. For a true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and of the good of societies of which, as man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share.

Therefore, children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments to that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy. Let them be given also, as they advance in years, a positive and prudent sexual education. Moreover they should be so trained to take their part in social life that properly instructed in the necessary and opportune skills they can become actively involved in various community organizations, open to discourse with others and willing to do their best to promote the common good.

This sacred synod likewise declares that children and young people have a right to be motivated to appraise moral values with a right conscience, to embrace them with a personal adherence, together with a deeper knowledge and love of God. Consequently, it earnestly entreats all those who hold a position of public authority or who are in charge of education to see to it that youth is never deprived of this sacred right. It further exhorts the sons of the Church to give their attention with generosity to the entire field of education, having especially in mind the need of extending very soon the benefits of a suitable education and training to everyone in all parts of the world ». (*Declaration on Christian Education « Gravissimum Educationis »*, § 1)