

## LIVING FRATERNITY

**Theme : « Lord, what do you want me to do? »**

In November 2013, we continue to work on the meaning of the text « *Lord, what do you want me to do?* », presented at *Fraternité 2012*, by Fr. Pierre Brunet, ofm.

A Church to build? Are we ready to once again answer the question: Lord, what do you want me to do? How can we answer it in our present world? It is a question that invites us to reflect on our role as Secular Franciscans in the Church today.

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*

## NOVEMBER 2013 MONTHLY MEETING

### Opening Prayer and Song

(According to the Ritual or chosen by the fraternity)

**Reading:** (choose a person who can read calmly)

### A Church in ruins

We actually observe many aspects of these ruins: the material aspect (heaviness of temples, costs of maintenance, of restoration and management, questions of heritage, etc.); the human aspect (aging clergy, reduction in the population attending church, lack of vocational and pastoral relief, pastoral personal, desertion of the sacraments, end of certain communities, compulsory merges, etc.); the experiential aspect (evangelical and spiritual under-development ; void in the transmission of adult Christian experience, etc. [many older Catholics have never learned what it meant to be Christian]).

*(Instead of praying for vocations, rather pray to be and to multiply the true Christians (the workers for the harvest!)).*

### Sharing

After reading the preceding text, share a few experiences that have a link with the aspects mentioned above. (About 20 minutes) then, continue with the following reading:

### Look further than our ruins!

We can get tired of folklore, of Gregorian chant, of processions, of a certain parish life... *But*

*can we be bored of Christ?* We have the challenge of returning to the reality of the message of Christ and its depth.

**Return to the Living Word.** Our challenge is to surpass the material ruins (the temporary patching up) ... the need for structures, for personal, the efforts of short-term consolidation) to return to the essential: the experience of a personal and community meeting with the resurrected Christ. We are his living Body.

## **Recollection**

Let us take a few moments to reflect on the sentence: « We are his living Body ». What is our reaction as we read this sentence? (about 15 minutes)

Continue reading the text.

## **Restore the House-God** (the universe, the world, the Church)

The restoration of the human Community is the thousand-year project of the Alliance of God since its origins. Restoring supposes abandonments, deaths, priorities, risks and reforms in depth. Restoration on the human scale, on a small scale, toward a vision of the future. Work for the institution of the Kingdom.

Put less energy into the machine, the pastoral maintenance, the worship and the sacraments and put more energy in the evangelisation in depth, in the apprenticeship of the Word, in the initiation of the spiritual experience, in the apprenticeship of reading the signs of the times, the courage to go toward other shores. In a perspective of collaboration.

## **Recollection**

**In small groups, take a few minutes to reflect and share on the following:**

What is our answer to the second part of the text that begins with: *put more energy in the evangelisation in depth, in the apprenticeship of the Word, in the initiation to the spiritual experience, the apprenticeship of the reading of the signs of the times, the courage to go toward others shores.* Give a few examples. (About 15 minutes)

Continue reading the text.

## **The restoration of Saint-Damiano.**

It is surprising to read Clare's account of the material restoration of Saint-Damiano. **Those who are invited to this restoration are the poor living in the area. Francis has practically nothing and he appeals to people who have nothing, who are practically nothing socially.**

*In effect, at that time, climbing onto the wall of the said church, he spoke in a loud voice, in French, to a few poor who lived nearby: Come and help me in the building of the monastery of Saint-Damiano, because there will be here, women whose renowned life and saintly conduct will glorify our celestial Father in all his holy Church.* (Test C1 12-14)

### **A permanent building site**

The restoration and the edification of the actual Church (moribund and emerging) remains in building mode. The image of a building site evokes necessary and concerted works: destroy, recover, consolidate the structures, expand, clean, repair, build new, etc. **What is happening to the social plan** (miseries and dangers in all sectors) **is also found in the ecclesial plan.**

Restoring the Church and humanity seems a permanent task, often disproportionately relative to our possibilities. We will always have the preoccupation of the women at the tomb that early morning: « Who will roll away the stone? » The task is immense, on a small scale.

**Together, we can ask the question, together we can find the solution. It is here that the resurrected Crucified comes to meet us.**

### **Which building site for the Church?**

Bishop Charbonneau identified difficult passages and primary tasks for the Church to realize again after 50 years since the Vatican II Council. Pass:

- from a clerical Church to a Church of the baptized,
- from a Church of Christianity to a missionary Church,
- from a ritual Church to a Church centered on the Word,
- from a Church that adapts to the world to a Church that participates in its mutation,
- from a normative Church to a spiritual and human Church,
- from an uniform Church to a plural Church,
- from a Church worried about the legitimate order to one concerned for the poor.

**These passages are the questions for our actual Christian life, regardless of our age and our condition in life.** [Celebrate the announcement from Vatican II, 22]

### **Sharing**

Silently read these passages and reflect on them ... then take a moment to share.

### **In the footsteps of Francis**

*(Excerpt from Letter to the Order, verses 34 to 37, Claire et François d'Assise, Écrits, Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 2003)*

And because he who is God listens to the words of God, we must consequently, we who have been more specially delegated to divine offices, not only listen and do what God says, but moreover, so that it penetrates in us the depth of our Creator and our submission to him, keep the vessels and other liturgical objects that contain these holy words. This is why I am warning all my brothers and I encourage them in Christ, wherever they find written these divine words, to venerate them as best they can, and, as much as possible, as this concerns them, if they are not well preserved, or if they lay spread about in some place in a dishonest manner, that they gather them and preserve them, honoring the Lord in the words that he has pronounced. Many items, in effect, are made holy by the words of God and it is in virtue of the words of Christ that the sacrament of the altar was produced.

## **Deepening of points taken from the Rule and the General Constitutions**

### **OFS Rule, Article 22**

The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.

### **General Constitutions, Articles 46.1 and 47.1**

#### **Article 46.1**

The canonical establishment of the local fraternity belongs to the competent religious major superior at the request of the brothers and sisters concerned and with the prior consultation and collaboration of the council of the higher level to which the new fraternity will be related according to the national statutes.

The written consent of the local Ordinary is necessary for the canonical establishment of a fraternity outside the houses or churches of the Franciscan religious of the First Order or the TOR.

#### **Article 47.1**

Each local fraternity, the primary cell of the one SFO, is entrusted to the pastoral care of the religious Franciscan Order that canonically established it.

### **Life - Objective:**

During the month of November 2013, we invite you to remember the members of our fraternities who are now resting in the house of the Lord ...

### **Events and Information from the Church and the Order**

Remind the members of all fraternities of regional and local activities.

**End of the meeting** (a prayer chosen by the fraternity)

### **At home**

To continue our reflection, go and see in the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the articles 147-152, 168, 173 and 174. In the Catechism, the numbers 752, 759, 772, 773, 781, 782, 836-839 present our place in the Church.

Reference Vatican II, Decree on the Apostolate for Lay persons, article 22, par. 1

### **Lay persons who have a special title in the service of the Church**

Are worthy of esteem and particular respect in the Church the celibate or married lay person who in a definite manner or for a certain time place their person, their professional abilities in the service of institutions and their activities. It is a great joy to see from day to day the increase in the number of lay persons who dedicate themselves to associations and works of the apostolate, whether in their own countries, in the international sector, and especially in the Catholic communities for missions and emerging churches.