

Does

LIVING FRATERNITY

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

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

Believing without seeing, is the subject on which we will dwell, knowing that the Lord accompanies us and that we are surrounded by his presence.

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

APRIL 2013 MONTHLY MEETING

Opening Prayer and Song

(According to the Ritual or chosen by the fraternity)

Reading: (choose a person who can read calmly)

Believing without seeing

Does the beatitude that Jesus proposes after his meeting with Thomas not concerns us : « *Happy are those who believe without seeing.* » (John 20, 29). We are before a challenge: go forth in faith, without seeing, without signs or proofs other than the courage to let us be visited, disconcerted and brought elsewhere. And to believe with others.

It is a decisive meeting while taking into account the uncontrollable experiences: the difficulties in understanding and the delays in adhering « *Spirits without intelligence, hearts slow to believe* » says Jesus. We think then about the doubts and the need for proofs requested by Thomas, the efforts to recall and to share, the expectations and the deluded hopes, the losses and the absence deplored by Mary of Magdala, the crazes of short duration and the defections (Peter), the return to everyday life (those of the apostles at the lakeshore and during the times when fishing), the simple gestures of life (the road, the table, the confidences, the breaking of the bread). Are these evangelical crossings not similar to ours?

Let us listen to the reading of the Gospel according to Luke 24, 13-25 - The Walk to Emmaus

On that same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a village name Emmaus, about eleven kilometres from Jerusalem, and they were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. As they talked and discussed, Jesus himself drew near and walked along with them; they saw him, but somehow did not recognize him. Jesus said to them. « What are you talking about to each other, as you walk along? » They

stood still, with sad faces. One of them named Cleophas, asked him, « Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days? » « What things? » he asked. « The things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth,» they answered. « This man was a prophet and was considered by God and by all the people to be powerful in everything he said and did. Our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and he was crucified. And we had hoped that he would be the one who was going to set Israel free! Besides all that, this is now the third day since it happened.

Some of the women of our group surprised us; they went at dawn to the tomb, but could not find his body. They came back saying they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. Some of our group went to the tomb and found it exactly as the women had said, but they did not see him. »

Then Jesus said to them, « How foolish you are, how slow you are to believe everything the prophets said! Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and then to enter his glory?» And Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures, beginning with the books of Moses and the writings of all the prophets. As they came near the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther; but they held him back, saying, « Stay with us; the day is almost over and it is getting dark. So he went in to stay with them. He sat down to eat with them, took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke the bread and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other « Was it not like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us? » They got up at once and went back to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven disciples gathered together with the others and saying « The Lord is risen indeed! He has appeared to Simon! The two then explained to them what had happened on the road, and how they had recognized the Lord when he broke the bread.

Sharing

Questions for sharing:

- 1- In the reading, which sentence or phrase spoke to you the most?
- 2- What you do retain from this reading?

After the sharing, we continue by reading the following text.

My legitimate resistances

Like the disciples, I meet delays, closures, helplessness, withdrawals into my security, lack of understanding. **I must let myself be visited in what I am living, to be called by my name, to be questioned to go further by the witnessing of others, to be touched by the** « We have seen the Lord! » « Go tell my brothers! » **We still have not finished learning the importance of others on our journey.**

Meeting the living Jesus. But where?

The Resurrection is not something that has happened solely to Jesus but is an event that happens to the disciples and to each of us. **It is not the re-animation of a corpse** (often mixed with the ideas of re-incarnation) **but a presence of the resurrected Christ, seen otherwise.** It starts with a failure, a bereavement, a physical loss and an absence. It sets off a search to find Him, to form his Body, to meet Him in the present. He *give himself to be seen* where we have the need to meet him (diversion and helplessness, tears and bereavements, fears and surprises, discouragements and dreams, withdrawals into oneself, sharing en-route, separation from others, back turned away from Jerusalem). ***How to become***

witnesses of life beyond the signs of death? («Why are you looking among the dead for one who is alive, he has been raised.» Luke 24, 5)

Recollection

Let us take a moment to reflect and then share our answers to the question: **How to become witnesses of life beyond the signs of death?** The person animating can limit the sharing to two or three interventions.

Let us continue the reading - with another person, if possible.

Let us consider our deaths great and small.

What we live becomes a necessary transition in order to meet Him. Most of the time, the paschal experience is only understood afterwards. **We journey without losing sight that He is present on our paths.**

Our deaths

Physical : health difficulties, accident, convalescence, serious illness, loss of physical autonomy and/or cognitive (ex. Alzheimer).

Material : fire, robbery, vandalism, *breaking up home*, moving.

Relational : separation, divorce, bereavement, departure of a sibling, quarrel among friends.

Psychological : harassment, dependence, de-intoxication, depression, suicide.

Professional: loss of employment, career change, various demands (ex. - student).

Moral : reputation, scandal, others' judgment, non-recognition.

The ages of life : anniversary, solitude, aging, preparing one's retirement, placing a parent in residence.

Spiritual : shadows, unanswered prayers, hardness, half-heartedness, temptations.

Nature : black ice, overflowing river, earthquake, uncomfortable season changes.

Let us consider our recoveries.

Learning to manage our daily deaths (*Talitha Koum* : *wake up, get up, stand up in Life*, because the Resurrection is at work in our daily personal life. The Easter Gospels remind us of it.

Return into Galilee and towards the « other shores ».

The women and the disciples are sent back to Galilee (to their homes, to where everything began, to where everything can begin again, elsewhere). The meeting with the Resurrected begins where my feet, my head and my heart are. Where I can deal with my life, my questions, my discoveries, my difficulties, my need to be comforted, my ability to celebrate and to make memories. In Galilee, it is more than a place, it is a way to live, to leave our comfort zones, to become missionaries.

Recollection

A pause to tell each other, for us, what is to « return to Galilee? » Let us take a few minutes to prepare our answers to the question. Afterwards, some interventions may be shared.

In the footsteps of Francis

(*Admonition 16*) **On cleanliness of heart**

Blessed (are) the clean of heart, since they themselves shall see God" (Mt 5:8). Truly are they clean in heart who despise earthly things, seek heavenly ones and do not ever withdraw from adoring and beholding Our Lord, living and true, with a clean heart and soul.

Deepening of points taken from the Rule and the General Constitutions

OFS Rule, Article 13

As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the first-born of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.

General Constitutions, Articles 18.2 and 18.3

18.2 They should deepen the true foundations of universal kinship and create a spirit of welcome and an atmosphere of fraternity everywhere. They should firmly commit themselves to oppose every form of exploitation, discrimination, and exclusion and against every attitude of indifference in relation to others.

18.3 They should work together with movements which promote the building of fraternity among peoples: they should be committed to "create worthy conditions of life" for all and to work for the freedom of all people.

Life - Objective:

During the month of April 2013, why not take a walk in a natural setting, admire what we notice and recite the « I believe in God » ...

Events and Information from the Church and the Order

Recall of National, Regional and Local Fraternity activities.

End of the meeting with the Prayer for the Year of Faith

At home

In order to continue our reflection, let us go and look in the Compendium, the numbers 27, 386 and 442. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, you can find the articles 150-151, 1814-1816 concerning our faith.

Also, we can find in the New Testament, the following excerpts giving us the disciples' witness.

« Rabboni, Master ! » (Jn 20, 16 : Mary of Magdala in the Garden),

« My Lord and my God » (Jn 20, 28 : Thomas in the Cenacle),

« It is the Lord ! » (Jn 21, 7 : Peter at the lakeshore),

« We have seen the Lord ! » (Jn 20, 25 : the disciples to Thomas),

« Yes. Lord, you know that I love you. » (Jn 21,16 : Peter after the meal at the lakeshore).