

LIVING FRATERNITY

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

During the year 2013, our suggestion to you is to deepen the meaning of the text « *Lord, what do you want me to do?* » presented at *Fraternité 2012*, by Fr. Pierre Brunet, ofm.

We have subdivided it into 11 sections for the animations of Living Fraternity.

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

Good preparation - Good meeting

JANUARY 2013 MONTHLY MEETING

Opening prayer or song

(According to the Ritual or chosen by the fraternity)

Reading:

While one person calmly does the reading of the following text, the others will listen.

Introduction

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

This question that we find in the Bible, many saints have asked themselves this question during their spiritual journey. It expresses the willingness to be available, whether we ask it on a personal basis or in community. We can ask it after listening to a testimony, a preaching or before or after experiencing a shattering event. Let us continue with our reading of the excerpts chosen from Fr. Pierre Brunet's text.

IN THE PSALMS

« *Lord, what do you want me to do?* » is not formed as a question but as a pressing desire, an impatience, an anxiety because of searching for God, or to suffer his silence. The petitioner in the Psalms exhaust himself in searching, wants to know, wants to *know the way that he must take*. And he does not mind repeating it. « Teach me your ways, O Lord; make them known to me » (Ps 25, 4). « Teach me, Lord, what you want me to do, and I will obey you faithfully; teach me to serve you with complete devotion. » (Ps 86, 11; 143,8; 27,11). The petitioner shouts his

desire, his anticipation, his anxiety and above all his fatigue: « All that I long for is known to you » (Ps 38, 10); « So tell me, Lord, what can I expect? » (Ps 39, 8); « I cannot rest for complaining » (Ps 55, 3); « Worn out with calling » (Ps 69, 4).

The Psalm 119, in verses 33-37, 40 shows the need that we have to know the will of the Lord: *Teach me, Lord the meaning of your laws, and I will obey them at all times. Explain your law to me, and I will obey it; I will keep it with all my heart. Keep me obedient to your commandments, because in them I find happiness. Give me the desire to obey your laws rather than to get rich. Keep me from paying attention to what is worthless. I want to obey your commands; give new life, for you are righteous.*

« **What do you want me to do?** »

- Jesus' prayer to his Father, at Gethsemane: ***My Father, if this cup of suffering cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done!*** (Mt 26, 42)
- The question from the rich young man who practices his religion well: ***Master, what good deed must I do to possess eternal life?*** (Mt 19, 16) and also: ***What more do I need to do?*** (Mt 19, 20)
- The question from old Nicodemus: ***How can a grown man be born again? Can he go back into his mother's womb and born again?*** (John 3, 4)
- The question from the crowd to Peter and the Apostles, after the Pentecost in Jerusalem: ***What shall we do, brothers?*** (Ac 2, 37)
- The question from the prison guard to Paul and Silas, after their release: ***Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*** (Ac 16,30)

« **What do you want me to do?** »

- **A question that Francis of Assisi makes his during the interior transformations of his youth and for the rest of his life.**

« **Lord, what do you want me to do?** »: **a question of conversion** (desire to « fall in love again with God »). **I am on the edge of changing something, of seeing things differently, of greeting a new situation, of entering into the will of the Lord, there where I live. There is no time for this question, no privileged situation. It accompanies the turning points of my life.**

Recollection

During a few minutes, each member is invited again to read the text and to make notes (by underlining or highlighting) what words or phrases, in it are most significant to them.

Afterwards, the reading is continued with the following:

THE BIBLICAL QUESTION STARTS WITH LIFE

Jesus ponders this question in the depth of his anguish at Gethsemane and in his temptation to avoid suffering. **The rich young man** asks it of Jesus to go further in his religious practice and in his life's success. **Nicodemus** asks it at night, by spiritual curiosity. **The people of Jerusalem** asks it of Peter after the Pentecost: he has moved their hearts through his fiery preaching. **Francis of Assisi** asks it in his youthful conversions, while he is torn between his easy life and his desire to live otherwise. Clare answers it indirectly when she encourages Agnes of Prague ***to always look to the beginning.*** (2LAg 11)

// The question comes about where we are, where we find our footing and our heart. It comes up into what we are crossing through, especially in the situations that happen without our choosing them. It makes us walk (*pilgrims and strangers*), keeps us young, makes us persevere in time, brings us back to the source of our faith or of our commitment. It vibrates in everyone; often, provoked by others, by what is happening today in the world and in the Church. It helps to *make the point, to discern*. It signifies that we are ready to contemplate our life, our Christian faith, our relationship with others and with God differently.

Sharing

Our sharing time is done using the notes taken during our silent reading of the preceding texts. We can either transcribe them onto a board or very simply read them while explaining our choices.

In the footsteps of Francis

*(Excerpt from the 1st Rule, Chapter 1, verses 1 and 2, **Écrits de François et Claire, Ed. du Cerf, Paris, 2003**)*

The rule and the life of these brothers is this one: live in obedience, in chastity and without personal items, and follow the teaching and the footprints of our Lord Jesus-Christ who said: « If you want to be perfect, go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me. »

Deepening of points taken from the Rule and General Constitutions

OFS Rule, Article 7

United by their vocation as « brothers and sisters of penance» and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls « conversion.» Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.

On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father's mercy and the source of grace.

General Constitutions, Articles 8.2, 13

Article 8.2

They seek to deepen, in the light of faith, the values and choices of the evangelical life according to the Rule of the SFO:

- in a continually renewed journey of conversion and formation;
- open to the challenges that come from society and the Church's life situation, "going from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel";
- in the personal and communal dimensions of this journey.

Article 13

1. Secular Franciscans, called in earlier times "the brothers and sisters of penance", propose to live in the spirit of continual conversion. Some means to cultivate this characteristic of the Franciscan vocation, individually and in fraternity, are: listening to and celebrating the Word of God; review of life; spiritual retreats; the help of a spiritual adviser, and penitential celebrations. They should approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently and participate in the communal celebration of it, whether in the fraternity, or with the whole people of God
2. In this spirit of conversion, they should live out their love for the renewal of the Church, that should be accompanied by personal and communal renewal. The fruits of conversion, which is a response to the love of God, are the works of charity in the interactions with the brothers and sisters.
3. Traditional among Franciscan penitents, penitential practices such as fasting and abstinence should be known, appreciated, and lived out according to the general guidelines of the Church.

Life - Objective:

In the month of January 2013, it is suggested that we again read the excerpts that we have gone through and together deepen them during our monthly meeting ...

Events and Information from the Church and the Order

Recall of National, Regional and Local activities.

End of the meeting with a prayer (choice of the fraternity)

At home

In order to continue our recollection, we do the reading of the excerpts from the following gospels: Mathew 19, 16-22, Mark 10, 17-22, Luke 18, 18-23. These excerpts report on the answer Jesus gave to the rich young man.

References for article 7 of the OFS Rule:

Vatican II, Constitution on the Church, Decree on ecumenism, 4;

Vatican II Decree on the ministry and life of priests, 18, b.

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we find, in the following articles: 952, 953, 1439, 1937, and from 1940 to 1947 more clarifications on the subject of our responsibilities towards the resources received.