

LIVING FRATERNITY
Theme: «The Golden Rule of Human Nature »

In the month of October, during our fraternal meetings, we are proposing a message from Pope Francis given before the Angelus on September 3rd in which he affirms that «*The golden rule that God has inscribed in the human nature*» is «*that only love gives meaning and happiness to life*». We encourage you to read and work together on this message from the Pope.

Recall: At the monthly meeting, members should have at their disposal a Bible, at least one copy of the General Constitutions, a copy 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.

Good preparation – Good meeting

OCTOBER 2017 MONTHLY MEETING

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

Introduction

At the start of our meeting, let us read these few words from the message of September 3rd.

- a) Presiding the Marian prayer in Saint Peter Square, the pope warned of this « Spending your talents, energy and time to only save oneself, protect and realize oneself, leads in reality to losing oneself, that is to a sad and sterile existence.»
- b) «If on the contrary, he added, we live for the Lord and base our life on love, as Jesus had done, we will be able to savour authentic joy and our life will not be sterile, but it will be fruitful. »
- c) Denouncing the temptation to follow a Christ without a cross, Pope Francis has encouraged us « to not let ourselves be absorbed by the vision of this world, but to always be more aware of the need and of the effort for we Christians to walk against the current and up-hill. »

Reflection:

After the reading of the words presented, share your thoughts on these words. Do we agree with these words, yes or no? Take the necessary time to share.

Biblical Reflection:

Read the Gospel of the day or the one according to Matthew 16, 21-27. Share your thoughts on this gospel, using the following questions:

1. To whom does it speak? What does it teach us?
2. How does it reach us personally?
3. Is it one of hope? One other message? Why and how?

Words from Pope Francis

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today's Gospel passage (cf. Mt 16:21-27) is the continuation of last Sunday's, which highlighted the profession of faith of Peter, the "rock" upon which Jesus wishes to build his Church. Today, in stark contrast, Matthew shows us the reaction of the same Peter when Jesus reveals to his disciples that He will have to suffer, be killed, and rise again (cf. 21). Peter takes the Teacher aside and reproaches Him because this — he says — cannot happen to Him, to Christ. But Jesus, in turn, rebukes Peter with harsh words: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men" (v. 23). A moment before, the Apostle had been blessed by the Father, because he had received that revelation from Him; he was a solid "rock" so that Jesus could build His community upon him; and immediately afterwards he becomes an obstacle, a rock but not for building, a stumbling block on the Messiah's path. Jesus knows well that Peter and the others still have a long way to go to become his Apostles!

Sharing:

After the reading, take time to share your impressions on Peter's reaction and that of Jesus in this excerpt of Matthew's gospel.

At that point, the Teacher turns to all those who were following Him, clearly presenting them the path to follow: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (v. 24). Always, today too, the temptation is that of wanting to follow a Christ without the cross, on the contrary, of teaching God which is the right path; like Peter: "No, no Lord! This shall never happen". But Jesus reminds us that his way is the way of love, and that there is no true love without self- sacrifice. We are called to not let ourselves be absorbed by the vision of this world, but to be ever more aware of the need and of the effort for we Christians to walk against the current and up-hill.

Reflection:

Read the text, afterwards share your thoughts on the last sentence in the preceding paragraph. (About 15 minutes)

Jesus completes his proposal with words that express a great and ever valid wisdom, because they challenge the egocentric mentality and behaviour. He exhorts: "whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it (v. 25). This paradox contains the golden rule that God inscribed in the human nature created in Christ: the rule that only love gives meaning and happiness to life. To spend one's own talents, one's energy and one's time only to save, protect and fulfil oneself, in reality leads to losing oneself, i.e. to a sad and barren existence. Instead let us live for the Lord and base our life on love, as Jesus did: we will be able to savour authentic joy, and our life will not be barren; it will be fruitful.

Sharing:

After the reading, share a word, a phrase that affected you particularly in this paragraph. Take the necessary time to share your thoughts.

In the Eucharistic celebration we relive the mystery of the Cross; we not only remember, but we commemorate the redeeming Sacrifice in which the Son of God completely loses Himself so as to be received anew by the Father and thus find us again, we who were lost, together with all creatures. Each time we take part in the Holy Mass, the love of the crucified and Risen Christ is conveyed to us as food and drink, so that we may follow Him on the daily path, in concrete service to our brothers and sisters.

Reflection:

Read. In silence, the preceding text and afterwards speak of what the Eucharist brings us in daily life. (About 15 minutes)

Prayer to the Virgin Mary

May Mary Most Holy, who followed Jesus up to Calvary, accompany us too and help us not to be afraid of the cross, but with Jesus nailed [to it], not a cross without Jesus, the Cross with Jesus, which is the cross of suffering for love of God and of our brothers and sisters, because this suffering, by the grace of Christ, bears the fruit of resurrection

In the Footsteps of Francis

(Extract from the Letter to the Faithful (2LFID0, verses 19-21, François d'Assise, Écrits, Vies, témoignages, Éditions du VIIIe Centenaire, Paris 2010)

We, therefore, love God and adore him with a pure heart and a pure spirit, as he himself, searching above all, said: *The true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.* Effectively, all those, *who adore him, must adore him in the spirit of truth.* And speak to him with praise and prayer, *day and night, saying « Our Father who is in heaven, because we must always pray and never falter.»*

Deepening of points taken from the Rule and the General Constitutions

Rule –Article 10

Uniting themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed his will into the Father's hands, let them faithfully fulfil the duties proper to their various circumstances of life. Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to him even in difficulties and persecutions.

General Constitutions

Article 10

"Christ, poor and crucified", victor over death and risen, the greatest manifestation of the love of God for humanity, is the "book" in which the brothers and sisters, in imitation of Francis, learn the purpose and the way of living, loving, and suffering. They discover in Him the value of contradictions for the sake of justice and the meaning of the difficulties and the crosses of daily life. With Him they can accept the will of the Father even under the most difficult circumstances and live the Franciscan spirit of peace, rejecting every doctrine contrary to human dignity.

Article 12.2

With Jesus, obedient even to death, they should seek to know and do the will of the Father. They should give thanks to God for the gift of freedom and for the revelation of the law of love. In order to carry out the will of the Father, they should accept the help which is offered to them through the mediation of the Church by those who are constituted as authority in her and by their confreres. They should take on the risk of courageous choices in their life in society with decisiveness and serenity.

Life-Objective:

Starting in the month of October, place more effort in applying oneself to life in fraternity by reminding ourselves that our Franciscan spirituality must radiate in our daily activities.

Events and Information from the Church and the Order

Remind the members of regional and local activities.

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

At home

Here is a last word from Pope Francis.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, as I renew my spiritual closeness to the peoples of South Asia, who are still suffering the consequences of the floods, I would also like to express my profound participation in the suffering of the residents of Texas and Louisiana struck by a hurricane and extraordinary rains, which have caused fatalities, thousands of displaced people and enormous material damage. I ask Mary Most Holy, consoler of the afflicted, to obtain from the Lord the grace of comfort for these our harshly tried brothers and sisters. And I would like to thank you for wishing me a good trip. Thank you, thank you!