

LIVING FRATERNITY

Theme: Looking with the heart ...

In this month of June, we are proposing, as the subject of reflection an article by Bruno Leroy, educator, writer : *Looking with the heart*

Good reflection and good sharing.

Recall: Our monthly meeting should favour an encounter with Christ. A spirit of prayer heralds a good encounter, and a good preparation promotes communal experience. At the meeting, having a copy of the Holy Scriptures, the Rule and General Constitutions, will provide clarity and depth for our edification and experience.

JUNE 2020 MONTHLY MEETING

Opening prayer or song (according to the Ritual or a song chosen by the fraternity)

Introduction

God turns his gaze of love on us that does not judge nor condemn. That is the look of Jesus. Because he looks at man with love, with his heart, his look is capable of creating life, of bringing love to life and of recreating man.

A look in the human language is the most lively expression of a person's deepest feelings (Cf. E. Levinas).

The human look has its origin in God's look, a look whose quality is eminently poetic. Poetic according to the Greek root of the verb create, with specifications added to it: such as to cause, to become, to give life, to invent, to imagine, to keep great account of, to do with art... The biblical Revelation is the fruit of the first look, an expression of poetic astonishment. The look of God is captured as the manifestation of respect for the human being, a sign of the deference in which any individual has a « value in his eyes » (Is 43, 4; 49, 16). In its origin, the look of God on man is one of astonishment and wonderment « And God saw everything he had made and behold, it was very good » (Gen 1, 31). **This look of the Divine artist is a creative look, a poetic look, of the uniqueness, of the value of each human being ...** According to André Frossard: « God does not know how to count up to one ». In his eyes, everyone is revealed as an original and irreplaceable person...

The Gospel emphasizes that everything is played and situated in the manner of looking. There is seeing and seeing. God's look on us is a look of love that does not judge or condemn. **This is the look of Jesus. Because he looks at man with love, with his heart, his look is capable of creating life, of having love awaken and of recreating man.** A look of love was sufficient for

the Samaritan to recognize her sin and that, from her parched heart, gushed out the desire of God, the living water that made of her the apostle of her village. (John 4, 1-42).

A look of love was sufficient so that Zacchaeus, distressed in his heart, opens to sharing and to hope (Luke 19, 1-10). A look of love was sufficient so that the woman caught in adultery received the light that helped her up, and freed her from sin and shame (John 8, 1-11). A look of love was sufficient so that Mary-Magdalene found fresh hope in tenderness and true love. (Luke 7, 36-50). A look was sufficient so that the disciples left everything and followed Jesus (John 1, 35-48). A look of love was sufficient for Mary, Mother of Jesus to become Mother of the Church (John 19, 26-27). A look of love was sufficient for Peter to dare again to say to the Lord: « **Yes, Lord, you know that I love you** » (John 21, 15-19).

Because Jesus looks with his heart, he sees what a person cannot see. In the widow's small offering, he recognized the generosity of a heart that loves God more than anything (Luke 21, 1-4). In Mary Magdalene's perfume, in her act of tenderness, he had taken and defended a great love. (Luke 7, 36-49). Thus, God and man become « entrails of motherhood » at once by the look. The look is the window to the heart. Through him the heart sees, falls in love, is moved, opens or closes.

The look is first and decisive. It is the creator of life or the destructor of hope. Everything can exist through one look as everything can be destroyed. **The look is important. In Hebrew, the same word signifies the look and the source. The look is the source of man.** Jesus shall say: « Your eye is the lamp of your body » (Luke 11, 34), that is the source of the light. By this look, man fills himself with beauty or ugliness, with love or hatred. The look is really a source for man and, by it, man may become a source for others.

Through this look, we have the power to become « entrails of motherhood » that gives life or refuses it, makes it to arise or to abort. We welcome others and let them come into us by the look even before we have opened our arms to them. The priest and the Levite saw the man stretched out on the ground with the look of the law. The Samaritan saw him with the look of mercy, with in his heart, the look of God. The miracle of mercy thus was accomplished (Luke 10, 29-37). To become a fellow man to God or man, is to welcome in our heart and with our heart by the look, a look enlightened by the Spirit gushing from the heart of Christ.

Looking with the heart, is to discover in man this « essential invisible to the eyes », this part of beauty, of nobility, of purity, of good that there is in each being despite the contrary appearances. Firstly, it is to see man, and not his sin or his weakness. Looking with the heart, is to see in everyone what is the best, in how he is « the image of God ». **Look of mercy, born of love, this one is bearer of life, creator of life, of joy and of hope. It is capable of making exist what did not exist and give life to what had been dead.**

A little tale from Henri Nouwen, Dutch theologian, illustrates admirably what the look of the heart is capable of realizing. « One day, he writes, a sculptor was working on a large block of marble. A child was watching him and saw pieces falling on the ground. Not understanding, he goes away. After a couple of weeks, he returns to the sculptor's home. And there in the place of the block of marble, he sees the statue of a superb lion.

Surprised, he asks the sculptor: how did you know that there was a lion in the marble? Because my heart knew that it was, answered the sculptor ». Is that not the look of Jesus? Seeing one another with the heart like the sculptor, is to allow him to exist, to have appear what is the best in him. In each of us, in each man, there is a « lion », a « marvel » to discover or to be born. God knows in his heart that in every man, there is a son.

Will we know, by looking at this man, recognize a brother to love and to let exist according to the admirable parable of this rabbi who, to challenge his disciples, one day asked them this question: « - In your opinion, how can we distinguish day from night? How can we recognize the moment where the night ends and where the day begins? – It is, one says, when we can distinguish a dog from a sheep. - No! says the rabbi. –Is it, another one says, when we can recognize the difference between a fig tree and a date palm. - No! says the rabbi. – It is perhaps, a third one ventures to say, when we can, at a distance, differentiate a man from a woman? – Not at all! answers the rabbi. So he added after a long moment of silence: As long as you have not yet recognized in the face of any man a brother to love, it is still night in your heart. »

Bruno LEROY. source <http://brunoleroyeducateur-ecrivain.hautetfort.com>

Reflection and sharing

Take the time to reflect and share this text very rich in signs of the tenderness and love lavished by Jesus:

1. Find them (highlighting or underlying them)
2. Note the signs which, most particularly, speak to me. Why?
3. Am I very conscious that the look that God sets on me and all of us is always a benevolent, merciful, loving and reassuring look? If not or insufficiently may this time of pandemic, of meditation and of solitude serve to better deepen our faith and the assurance that God being love, his gaze on me can only be one of love?
4. What kind of look do I place for myself on myself and on others that surround me? Do I have to rectify it? Modify it? Perfect it? If Yes, how to do it in the light of this text?

Life-Objective

In this month of June, the Church reminds us of the feasts of the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred-Heart of Jesus.

So, let us take the time, to pray during these great moments in the life of our faith. Also, take some time to contact the members of our local Fraternity that may feel isolated during this time of isolation.

Events and information from the Church and the Order

As all the gatherings are cancelled, let us take time to pray longer for the Church, the Franciscan Family, the sick, the persons alone and the families.

Let us pray for the doctors, nurses and all the persons who remain in service.

Recall of the Rule and the General Constitutions

In 2018, we celebrated 40 years of our way of life, we now suggest doing a review together at this time, of article 13, from **Chapter II, the Way of Life and Apostolic Activity**, as well as articles 18.2 and 18.3 of our General Constitutions that pertain to it. Take time to carefully read the articles.

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

Article 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.

Article 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.

At home

During the month of June 2020, and in the coming months, take time to again slowly read the text. Also, take time to meditate it to deepen and also possibly to share it by sending it to your closest friends or family members, to persons in your neighbourhood. Or again by calling a member of my fraternity and share our discoveries.

Also, take time to read our Rule (life project), extracts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, especially these numbers 214;221;231;733 et 1022.