

LIVING FRATERNITY

Theme: Saint Joseph and the Church ...

In this month of March, we are proposing some passages from the book *L'Église que j'espère*, an interview by Father Spadaro, s.j. with Pope Francis. (*French version, Flammarion, Ser. 2013*)

Good reflection and good sharing.

Recall: 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.

MARCH 2020 MONTHLY MEETING

Opening prayer or song (to Saint Joseph or a song chosen by the fraternity)

Introduction

On March 19th, feast of Saint Joseph, during the inaugural mass of his Saint-Peter ministry, Francis had said that he considered his specific task was one of « guardian », precisely like Saint Joseph, that is to say « in the constant attention to God, open to the signs », capable of being « attentive » to what surrounds him », to « make the wisest decisions ». And for Pope Francis this attention consists in always knowing that « God surprises us ». The question he asks is this one: « Do I let myself be surprised by God, as Mary did, or do I shut myself away in my securities, material securities, intellectual securities, ideological securities, the securities of my projects? »

Sharing:

After reading of the preceding text, share your thoughts using the following questions.

1. How is Saint Joseph a model for us, just like Mary?
2. How did he discern what he had to do?
3. Do I also let myself be surprised by God?
4. Have I ever let myself be surprised? When? How? What was the result?

Take the necessary time to share that will allow all the members to express themselves.

Continue the reading

... From the interview with Pope Francis, is clear that the element of spirituality ... that helps him the best to live his Saint-Peter ministry is « discernment ». Discernment is the spiritual process that allows distinguishing the spiritual momentums that lead us to God from those who would move us away from him. This applies to everyone's life, and discernment helps to take decisions and make choices according to the Gospel. (P. 52).

The evangelical spiritual discernment therefore searches to recognize the presence of the Spirit in the human and cultural reality, in the seed already planted of his presence in the events, in sensibilities, in wishes, in deep tensions in hearts and social, cultural and spiritual contexts.

« God already lives in our city », writes Jorge Mario Bergoglio. It is an interior attitude that invites an opening inwardly to dialogue, to meeting, to finding God everywhere, wherever that is and not only in reduced terrains or in all well recognized and closed ones. Above all, this attitude does not dread the ambiguity of life and faces it with courage.

Sharing:

After the reading of the text, share your thoughts using the following questions.

1. For you, what is discernment? How do you define it?
2. Are there particular circumstances where it must be exercised? Name a few.

Continue the reading

The actions and decisions, therefore, must have deep roots and be accompanied by an attentive, thoughtful and prayerful reading, the signs of the times, everywhere present, from the largest event to the written letter by any of the faithful. (P.53)

« Vatican II was re-reading of the Gospel in the light of contemporary culture. It produced a movement of renovation that simply comes from the Gospel itself. The fruits are considerable. It is enough to recall the liturgy. The work on the liturgical reform was a service to the people as well as a re-reading of the Gospel from a concrete historical situation. There are certainly some explanatory lines of continuity or discontinuity, however one thing is clear : the way to read the Gospel by actualizing it, proper to the Council, was absolutely irreversible. (P.78)

Sharing:

Following the reading, share your responses using the questions presented below.

1. How can we efficiently read the signs of the times?
2. Presently what are these signs, and can they be read in the light of the Gospel and Jesus' promises?

Continue the reading

The church of Francis, emphasizes Father Spadaro, is a Church in discernment living with its eyes wide opened, constantly turned to God, capable of reading in a realistic manner the events, able to be attentive to its surroundings.

Therefore, here is the pope's call: « Are we a Church still able to warm the heart? A Church able to bring back to Jerusalem? To return home? »... We need a Church that gives heat again, that inflames the heart. » Here is, a fertile Church, able to give life to the world. (P.81)

Sharing:

Let us reflect on these last questions.

1. With which means can we reheat the hearts?
2. Bring back to Jerusalem?
3. Bring home those who have become estranged?

During this month where we celebrate March 19th as the feast of Saint Joseph, let us take the time to pray him in a special way, meditating his availability to God's call and his relationship with Jesus and Mary. He is a model of father, husband and servant. How can I imitate him in my daily life and in my family relationships?

Biblical Reflection:

Read the Gospel of the Sunday following your meeting in order to be prepared to hear the celebrant's homily.

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 a message of hope? Another kind of message? How and why?

Life-Objective

In this month of March, we are on our journey towards the great feast of Easter, let us take time to prepare ourselves in fraternity to celebrate these Holy days

Events and information from the Church and the Order

Recall the local and regional meetings and activities.

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

At home

Perform a search on Saint Joseph and then share the result with the members of the fraternity.

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 17 from **Chapter II, the Way of Life**, as well as article 24.1 our General Constitutions that pertain to it. Take the time to read carefully the articles from the Rule and from the General Constitutions.

Take the necessary time to share your ideas on the content of these articles.

Rule Article 17

In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ.

By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for his Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their human and spiritual journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.

General Constitutions

Article 24.1

Secular Franciscans should consider their own family to be the first place in which to live their Christian commitment and Franciscan vocation. They should make space within it for prayer, for the Word of God, and for Christian catechesis. They should concern themselves with respect for all life in every situation from conception until death.

Married couples find in the Rule of the SFO an effective aid in their own journey of Christian life, aware that, in the sacrament of matrimony, their love shares in the love that Christ has for his Church. The way spouses love each other and affirm the value of fidelity is a profound witness for their own family, the Church, and the world.