

## LIVING FRATERNITY

### Theme: Faith and Pandemic ...

For the month of September, as the pandemic still exist during these months and that our faith may have been shaken during the «silence» of God whom we have prayed to deliver us from this curse that has spread itself to all the corners of the earth, we are proposing a stop to reflect on our Christian faith and its impact in our lives.

*Good reflection and 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.

## SEPTEMBER 2020 MONTHLY MEETING

### Opening of the meeting

The members can offer suggestions for a song by selecting one according to the theme or the month of the year, After singing, the prayer according to the Ritual or one chosen by the fraternity starts the meeting.

### A pontifical university conducts a survey on faith during the pandemic

The university's survey extended to August 15th to analyze the consequences of coronavirus on the faith of Catholics in Africa, Asia and Oceania.

(VNS) "Living the Faith during Covid-19": this is the title of the online survey that the Pontifical Urbaniana University conducts in Africa, Asia and Oceania, the three continents under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for Evangelization of the Peoples, which the University itself depends on. Launched on June 29th, the numeric survey will end on August 15th and hopes to answer a few specific questions, for example: "How did the faithful laymen live their faith when they did not access to the sacraments? How did ordained ministers reach the faithful when physical contact was not possible? How did religious men and women live their faith under such changed circumstances?"

*«We, Catholics, have been so used to attending Sunday Eucharist, going to Confession and other ritual practices, but Covid-19 brought that faith-life to a grinding halt in many a nation, without any forewarning»,* explains Father Elias Frank, Director of IUS Missionale, the journal of the Faculty of Canon Law of the university. Almost everywhere in the world, government authorities celebration of mass in public.

But, Father Frank writes that, «*the Church is the throbbing body of Christ*», *built on a rock: the simple closing of places of worship cannot be shaken even by Covid-19. Its chief is Christ and we are very sure that the Church will overcome any storm.*» The pandemic experience leads to a reflection, underlines again the Director of IUS Missionale: «*Is the Catholic faith only ritual or is there something else, something more?*» The actual survey hopes therefore to «*understand how people lived the faith and reacted to the closure of churches*». «*From the responses, we hope to understand what does this signify for the faithful in general to being part of the Church*», he concluded.

(This text is extracted from the site <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican/news/2020-08/university-urbaniana>. We suggest that you visit the site to see news from the Vatican

If there is in your area, a meeting of the fraternity and a sharing, we suggest taking time to share your thoughts on the next two of the questions in the questionnaire as well as some added ones:

1. "How did you live your faith when you did not have access to the sacraments?"
2. Did the ordained ministers reach you when physical contact was not possible?
3. How can you now participate in religious ceremonies in your area?
4. Were your fraternities able to organize meetings while keeping in mind government directives? If yes, how? If not, why?

### **Reflection and sharing**

Take the necessary time for reflection and deepening. The person assuring the animation should bring a copy of the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church so that the members can reflect together on the two articles presented below:

#### **57. If God is omnipotent and provident, why then does evil exist?**

To this question, as painful and mysterious as it is, only the *whole* of Christian faith can constitute a response. God is not in any way – directly or indirectly – the cause of evil. He illuminates the mystery of evil in his Son Jesus Christ who died and rose in order to vanquish that great moral, human sin, which is at the root of all other evils.

And to further deepen: numbers 309-310 ; 324, 400 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church :

#### **58. Why does God permit evil?**

Faith gives us the certainty that God would not permit evil if he did not cause a good to come from that very evil. This was realized in a wondrous way by God in the death and

resurrection of Christ. In fact, from the greatest of all moral evils (the murder of his Son) he has brought forth the greatest of all goods (the glorification of Christ and our redemption).

And to further deepen: numbers 311-314 et 324 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

## **Reflection on the link with the Rule and the General Constitutions**

We have a life project, a form of life, - our Rule. We suggest that you read Article 14 from **Chapter II, the Way of Life and Apostolic Activity**, Article 20 of the General Constitutions and find the link with the preceding text – Faith and Pandemic. Be sure to take the necessary time to find the links together.

### **Rule**

#### **Article 14**

Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that any one "who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself," let them exercise their responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service.

### **General Constitutions**

#### **Article 20**

1. Secular Franciscans, committed by their vocation to build the Kingdom of God in temporal situations and activities, live their membership both in the Church and in society as an inseparable reality.
2. As the primary and fundamental contribution to building a more just and fraternal world, they should commit themselves both to the generous fulfillment of the duties proper to their occupation and to the professional training that pertains to it. With the same spirit of service, they should assume their social and civil responsibilities.

## **Biblical Reflection:**

Read the Gospel of 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 September, if the return to our activities, is possible, let us make our meetings more secure by observing all directives for the wellness of all our members.

So, let us take the time, to pray during these difficult moments of the pandemic, intensifying our the life of our faith. Also, take some time to contact the members of our local Fraternity who may feel alone or isolated.

## **Events and information from the Church and the Order**

As all the gatherings or meetings are restricted or postponed, let us reserve more time to pray even more for the Church, the Franciscan Family, the sick, the persons alone and the families.

We also pray for the doctors, nursing personnel and all the people who remain in service in this time of crisis.

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

## **At home**

We suggest reciting the following prayer that Fr. Shibu Cyprian, ofmcap, composed as a result of a search on the Internet. Thank you, Fr. Shibu

### **PRAYER TO FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19**

Jesus Christ, you passed through towns and villages « healing all sickness and disability among the people. » On your order, the sick were healed. Come to our help now, in the midst of the universal propagation of the coronavirus, so that we can feel your curative love. Heal the men and women who are sick with the virus, that they can again find their strength and health. Heal us from the fear that keeps nations from working together and neighbours from helping each other mutually.

Jesus Christ, healer of all, remain by our side during this period of doubt and sorrow. Be with those men and women who have succumbed to the virus, may they rest with you in eternal peace. Be with the families of those persons who are ill or have died. Be with the doctors, nursing personnel, researchers and all the health professionals who are searching to find a cure to heal the sick.

O Mary, protect us, continue to take care of us and to lead us with Your love toward your son Jesus! AMEN.