

Saint Francis Fraternity
Ongoing Formation
April 2013

Please remember to note anything, in any of the readings, that you find inspiring, puzzling, or would just like to revisit when we meet.

Scripture

- Matthew 19:21
- Luke 9:3
- Matthew 16:24

Profession in the SFO: Gift and Commitment (Cangelosi paper)

- Part 13, “The promise to live the gospel life” (page 15)
- Part 14 “After the manner of St. Francis” (page 15)

Excerpt from *Profession and the Secular Franciscan: Theological and Liturgical Foundations* by Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM

(<http://www.sfo-online.com/funone/12-16/chap16/16-PROFESSION.pdf>)

After the Manner of St. Francis

At Profession and throughout our lives as Franciscans, we endeavor to follow the Gospel of Jesus Christ “after the manner of St. Francis.” What does this mean actually? Do we constantly have to go through life asking ourselves the question, “What would Francis do?” Do we need to approximate 13th century Italy in our daily lives? What about radical, material poverty? Must we empty our bank accounts and walk around in rags? Remember, we become Franciscans NOT to become another Francis, but rather to journey toward Christ and eternal life with God. As one speaker so bluntly put it, “Francis is dead!” The audience let out a gasp... perhaps it was

shocking, but it is a reality nonetheless. His spirit is alive, of course, and that is the basis for living a life in his manner. But to what extent?

The most important thing we should care to know about St. Francis is his relationship to God and his journey to Him. This was made possible through knowledge of the Gospels. Francis' whole life was based on a radical living out of what he considered to be his calling to be a man of the Gospel. What we need to know is how Francis regarded what he read of the Gospel and what thought processes he went through to make it a reality in his life. There are factors which made Francis do what he did with the Gospel... geography, temperament, personality, view of religion and of the Church, etc.

He saw poverty — this colored his reading of scripture. He witnessed injustice — this influenced the way he treated people. He saw political and ecclesiastical grasps for earthly power — this helped him to appreciate total dependence on God. He experienced violence and prayed for peace and actually became a peacemaker.

You can see the next question coming. What is our experience of life against our reading of scripture — especially the Gospels? How will we regard all people as the creatures God has created and loved? How will we depend on God and abhor violence? How will we make Christ accessible to others? How will we see the heart and spirit behind the words of Scripture and allow them to affect our sisters and brothers?

Francis' approach to the Gospels was radical. His approach was joyful and brought life and light into the world. How will we do that in our own times, in our own societies — today in this century? This will be the Franciscan gift to the world.

For meditation and discussion

- What are some ways the gospel “inwardly specifies” (from Cangelosi, Part 14) the life of the Secular Franciscan.
- How would doing things “after the manner of St. Francis” challenge the way you presently live?
- Give an example of looking at the Gospel as Francis did and how it could be a part of your Franciscan life.