

Saint Francis Fraternity

Ongoing Formation

November 2013

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

Our November ongoing formation session will consist of listening to and discussing a talk entitled “‘Spirit and Life:’ Francis’s Reading of the Gospel” by Br. William Short, O.F.M. from the CD collection *St. Francis of Assisi: A New Way of Being Christian* which has been provided to all the fraternities by the regional council. Please prepare by considering the following.

Scripture - II Cor. 3:6

5 Not that of ourselves we are qualified to take credit for anything as coming from us; rather, our qualification comes from God,

6 who has indeed qualified us as ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit;^d for the letter brings death, but the Spirit gives life.

Readings

“In that love which is God, I beg and implore you to hear these fragrant words of our Lord Jesus Christ with humility and love, putting them into practice with all gentleness and observing them perfectly.”

~ St. Francis, *Letter to All the Faithful* as quoted in the SFO Rite of Admission

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“As a result, his life became a continuous process of allowing the words of the Gospel to enter profoundly into every fiber of his being: their sound, articulation, imagery, and meaning.”

~ Regis Armstrong, *The Franciscan Tradition (Spirituality in History)*

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“Francis embodies the Gospel journey from violence to nonviolence, wealth to poverty, power to powerlessness, selfishness to selfless service, pride to humility, indifference to love, cruelty to compassion, vengeance to forgiveness, revenge to reconciliation, war to peace, killing enemies to loving enemies. More than any other Christian, he epitomizes discipleship to Jesus. His witness continues to shine throughout the world.”

~ John Dear, *You Will Be My Witnesses Saints, Prophets, and Martyrs*

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“The apostle says: The letter kills, but the spirit gives life.

Those people are put to death by the letter who only wish to know the words alone, that they might be esteemed wiser than others and be able to acquire great riches to give to their relatives and friends.

And those religious are put to death by the letter who are not willing to follow the spirit of the divine letter but, instead, wish only to know the words and to interpret them for others.

And those people are brought to life by the spirit of the divine letters who do not attribute every letter they know, or wish to know, to the body but, by word and example, return them to the most high Lord God to Whom every good belongs.”

~ St Francis, Admonition 7

Questions for meditation and discussion

- With the overwhelming flow of words and images that we are all inundated with in today’s media environment, what can we do to help strengthen our reverence for the Words of the Gospels to the level St. Francis had?
- In what areas of my life do I need to work harder at going beyond simply knowing what scripture says and being sure to make it the living word by putting into practice?