

Saint Francis Fraternity

Ongoing Formation

September 2015

Article 10

United themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed His will into the Father's hands, let them faithfully fulfill the duties proper to their various circumstances of life. Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to Him even in difficulties and persecutions.

Food for thought

"Christ, poor and crucified", victor over death and risen, the greatest manifestation of the love of God for humanity, is the "book" in which the brothers and sisters, in imitation of Francis, learn the purpose and the way of living, loving, and suffering. They discover in Him the value of contradictions for the sake of justice and the meaning of the difficulties and the crosses of daily life. With Him they can accept the will of the Father even under the most difficult circumstances and live the Franciscan spirit of peace, rejecting every doctrine contrary to human dignity.

~ General Constitution of the Secular Franciscan Order, Article 10

With Jesus, obedient even to death, they should seek to know and do the will of the Father. They should give thanks to God for the gift of freedom and for the revelation of the law of love. In order to carry out the will of the Father, they should accept the help which is offered to them through the mediation of the Church by those who are constituted as authority in her and by their confreres. They should take on the risk of courageous choices in their life in society with decisiveness and serenity.

~ General Constitution of the Secular Franciscan Order, Article 12

The true evangelical life is countercultural, because we have the power to break through and rise above negative social values to give them a positive meaning and effect. We know too well that the cross, or our sharing in Christ's passion, comes to us every day: personal trials, the load and monotony of daily work, the difficulties of life, the annoyance of certain persons, accidents, sickness, death, sorrow, even misunderstanding, opposition, oppression, loneliness. Hence, part of obedience is to

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work through these crosses to discover their redemptive quality: the will of God to purify and sanctify us and others, so that the trial of the cross becomes the triumph of the passion, leading toward unity with God and building the kingdom.

~ Benet A. Fonck, OFM, *Called to Follow Christ*

As Franciscans, it is not so important what we offer, but rather the willingness to offer whatever opportunity to serve that God chooses to give us. We are all given a particular station in life which best enables us to fulfill God's will. It is within this context of our individual circumstances that we are asked to faithfully execute our duties. The method by which we are to serve is given to us quite simply in the gospel. If we are to progress "from Gospel to Life," we must heed these Words: "Love one another as I have loved you," (Jn 13:14) Everything we do in the Church, our homes, the market place, the fields and in our communities must exemplify his love.

~ Karol Morton, OFS, *Called to Make Present the Charism*

Questions for meditation and discussion

- As a fraternity/family, how can we help each other to faithfully fulfill the duties proper to our various circumstances of life?
- Do you try to place your will into the Father's hands on a daily basis or do you pick and choose the duties you perform based on preference or on what's easiest?
- In what ways has your Franciscan calling made you "counter-cultural"?