

Why after you?

How you journey =
How you arrive

Bob Fitzsimmons SFO
National Chapter 2008
Secular Franciscan Order - USA

Propositum Vitae

- 1209 – Francis seeks approval of a new way of Life from Innocent III
- The “rule” consists of a few lines of Scripture:
 - Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, **follow me.**” (Mt 19:21)
 -
 - Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and **follow me.** (Mt 16:24)
 -
 - And he said to them, “**Take nothing** for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. (Lk 9:3)

- Not a Rule in the sense of a list of obligations, but a commitment to a lifestyle based on following Jesus.
- A major shift in the model of Church
 - **Church based on Acts**
 - **Church based on Jesus - Gospel Adventure**
- A way of life based on Francis' understanding of the Divine Economy.

Divine Economy to Human Economy

Michael Crosby OFM Cap

1. **All are equal**, created in the divine image (Jesus) - The Blueprint
2. God has entered into **mutual relationship** with each one (as well as all creation) - God's Poverty (Incarnation) & Humility (mutuality – desiring us)
3. Resources are to meet the needs of all so that all realize their dignity and have the **fullest potential mutuality, & participation**

Fraternity – Order ?

- **Francis vision** -- classless structure, a **fraternity (brotherhood)** of equals centered on Gospel/Christ, charged to meet the needs of each other without exercising authority over anyone. **Poverty = doorway to peace (living w/o grasping –"sine proprio")**
- **Reality** --Order (clericalization - governance), via a vertical hierarchical structure and it imposes a non-equal reality.

Chapter of 1219 early 1240's
Chapter of Narbonne 1260 – Constitutions

5 M's (Richard Rohr OFM) - a barometer

- Man
- Movement
- Maintenance
- Monument
- Memory

Lifecycle of any institution, organization,
including the SFO

Man – Movement

- Man (look in context of Jesus, Francis, Gospel)
 - Exciting, active, energizing, charismatic
 - A Great Person who **Correctly names Reality**

- Movement (Peter's Pentecost sermon)
 - Period of greatest growth and energy
 - Creative and RISKY

Not an attack on reality of what exists, just the movement to the edges of society to do it better

Maintenance & Monument

- Desire for increased stability &/or more normalcy -- **Institutional phase**

- Movement loses much of it's energy

- Maintenance and self-preservation become ends to themselves and **spirituality becomes more about performance not transformation**

- Mainstream with a Low-level of risk

Memory

- Unconscious stage - memory of a past adventure
- God's/Francis –
 - **Frozen People** - (petrified or fuzzy vs Paschal Imagination – Rolheiser “Come & See” – “Against an Infinite Horizon”)
 - **No grand-children – we all must make our own unique spiritual journey, today**
- **2009 -- Grace of our Origins** - re-capture the vision of our Founder & energy of the movement
 - = challenge to re-imagine Faith

Heritage & Roots -- Legacy

- ▣ **From Francis**
 - Goodness of God = always diffusive = gifted worthiness
 - that goodness exists in all creation
 - becoming like Jesus
 - Poverty (*sine proprio*) as the door to Peace (**heart of our Charism**)
- ▣ **From Clare (kept us alive as Franciscans)**
 - God is found in Nature and in our mutual relationships
 - Goal is to gaze (**The Mirror**) on Jesus, to imitate Jesus, **Lover/Beloved** relationship

- **From Bonaventure**
 - Trinity is the ultimate relationship of mutuality and overflowing loving – diffusive goodness (fountain fullness)
 - God is Love by nature, total, unconditional, self emptying/giving (*kenosis*). **Poverty**
 - God turns to us completely and can only give all to all. **Humility**

- **From John Scotus [break with PRIMARY Theology]**
 - Primacy of Jesus = God's greatest gift is Incarnation
 - "Thisness" we each are uniquely **God's beloved**

US – Heritage of the SFO

Develop an understanding of the heroes & heroines

of the SFO (Brothers & Sisters of Penance, & the heritage they left us!)

Like:

- Blessed Luchasio and Buonadonna
 - Elizabeth & Louis
- Angela of Foligno and many others
 - You & me

Journey determines arrival

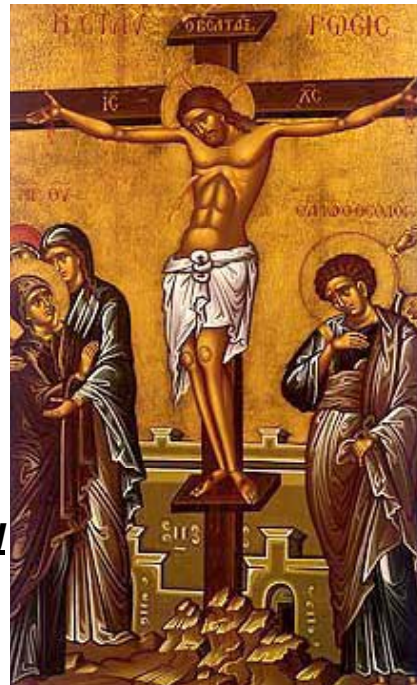
- **Primary Catholic Theology** emphasizes sin, fear, atonement, suffering and earning redemption
 - sin, original & personal (actual)
 - fear, Image of a God who demands reparation
 - atonement,
 - suffering and
 - earning redemption/salvation
 - ? What image of God does this view promote?

Most Christian
Spirituality
Points
to the events
Of Holy Week

Emphasis on
redemptive
suffering

holding back nothing

Take up your cross



Journey determines arrival

- **Alternate Catholic (Franciscan) Theology** emphasizes the beloved, a God who desires us!
 - Love, (not sin)
 - Poverty, (Incarnation)
 - Humility (turns to us - relationship)
 - Everything belongs, everything is gift, everything is good because GOD IS GOOD
- ? What might this view of God look like?

Francis points us to the Trinity and in particular its heart Jesus

A Table Fellowship which is **Christo-centric** within a **Trinitarian perspective**



What is needed for the Journey:

- **Desire** – our response to God’s Desire
- **Prayer** – vehicle to spirituality
 - Mantra, Centering Prayer/focus
 - Jesus (Breathing) Prayer –
- **Solitude** - entering the cave of the Heart to find the living God and then giving ourselves to life in:
- **Community**

Some Practical -- Suggestions

adapted from Henri Nouwen “Life of the Beloved”

Franciscan Spirituality--Eucharistic approach

1. **Taken or chosen** – we begin recognizing we are God’s beloved. This is our origin and starting point and the reason for the Incarnation. **This is what needs to be taught in our formation!!**
2. **Blessed** – speaking well of the other – not just ask God to bless, in our chosen-ness He already has, but in expressing our understanding of the dignity and value of each other

3. **Broken** – unique as is our chosen-ness. Spiritual, physical, mental, relational – can call us to rely on & trust others and to be compassionate to the brokenness of others.
 4. **Given** – the meaning of life in Christ is about taking up our cross, following, and being there always for other. We are not for our own sake, but we find significance in living for others
- **This is the adventure, daring to live the Gospel**

Prayer for Gazing

- Can be said before, after and during so you might get caught up in the “Look of Love”

From St. Francis:

**“Who are you O God?
And who am I?”**

Gaze at the Mirror

