

Formation Session

Be Present to God's Will

NASHVILLE, TN -- Teresa Baker, SFO, outgoing national formation chair, pointed to the evangelical, penitential and secular aspects of the Secular Franciscan calling during Wednesday's on-going formation session at the national chapter (held Oct. 14-19 in Nashville).

She made a distinction between apostolic life, which is doing good works, and evangelical life, which is a call to be the image of God, to be present to His will and to "wherever we are at the moment."

Being a presence means being "available to what God would have us do, the life of the Gospel."

"Don't trip over God at the doorstep" in the rush "to go out to do good works," she said.

It's similar with the penitential aspect. Penitential life is not a matter of "doing penance," but rather, the openness to grow in God's gift. "It's turning over our lives to God."

Our participating in God's gift "depends on our capacity to be receptive... to dwell in Christ, and with Christ, live in bountiful love and service to others."

The wonderful thing about the secular aspect of "our vocation" is that "we are called to be what we already are" – living in service of the Lord in the world. "We are to be 'leaven' wherever we find ourselves."

She added: "We are to be a gift to the world," bringing "joyful optimism."

"Look for the silver lining wherever God puts you... We become holy in the world" and "make a difference by our presence."

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