**LIFE WITH GOD IN FRATERNITY**

Excerpts from *Ite, nuntiate …,* Rome 2017

Our life with God is the foundation for everything; it is the heart of our lives as Friars Minor, it is the nourishment that gives us strength for our everyday relationships in fraternity, and it is the energy that kindles the fire of mission. Being in a living relationship with God means that we will have a generous, tender, open, and willing heart, which allows itself to be transfixed by the Love of Christ, and by that of the brothers, especially in its dealings with those who suffer. It means a loving relationship with the God of mercy, which becomes apparent in the friar, at peace with himself and with his brothers.

The true Peace that comes from God alone can be communicated only by a friar who is himself already reconciled. Promoting a culture according to the “Spirit of Assisi” then becomes possible, a culture of non-violence, of goodwill, of tenderness in fraternal relationships, of forgiveness, and respect for creation. We become peacemakers, sowing peace in our world. (p.43)

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Blessed is the “new form of peaceful fraternity”, which sows forgiveness by forgiving, which builds new relationships, having respect for the little and the lesser, because God has made us great with the promise of a Kingdom that grows like yeast in our daily crosses, like salvation springing up from our wounds.

Blessed is the “new form of joyful fraternity”, which weeps with those who endure so much injustice, without rebellion, and is engaged in the building of a new Kingdom, to be established forever in every heart and home, in every family and fraternity — because Jesus made himself a brother to us.

Blessed is the “new form of just fraternity”, whose weakness gives witness to the power of God’s Word — a Word that is heard *sine glossa*, thus allowing obedience to light up the day’s journey; who eat bread dignified by the sweat of work, and experience the satisfaction of sharing faith in God who brings his promises to fruition through the silent and uninterrupted eloquence of the Signs of the Times.

Blessed is the “new form of persecuted fraternity”, where the Gospel is good news first of all for the fraternity, and subsequently for all those encountered along the way; always living as pilgrims and strangers, and, as far as they are able, proclaiming to all creatures that no one is Almighty but God.

Rejoice and be glad in perfect joy, brothers, when by your life in fraternity you give a ‘new form’ to the newness of the Gospel, according to the Franciscan Rule and Life: a life that is prayerful, fraternal, minor, missionary and evangelizing, in continuous Ongoing Formation, following the footprints of Christ in his Church; walking with all men and women who become our brothers and sisters in service; joining with all creatures who are also our brothers and sisters, confessing together, in the Joy of the Gospel, the paschal song of creation: Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility, totally entrusting ourselves to the blessed promise of Jesus, the Christ: “Rejoice and be glad, your reward will be great in heaven” (Matt 5:12). (pp. 62-63)

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