

EXPERIENCING THE GOODNESS OF GOD THROUGH FRANCISCAN VALUES
FRANCISCAN HOSPITALITY

Topic: Relationship with the Poor/Hospitality

Goal: To provide the opportunity to reflect on hospitality as a Franciscan value.

Level: Beginning

Time: 45 – 60 minutes

Introduction: Our welcoming of the poor who live among us is based upon the example of both Jesus and Francis. In our words and our actions we are challenged to treat all with respect and dignity, responding to the needs of our poor brothers and sisters, the destitute and the outcasts among us, finding a home among them. “This is what we are called to do. This is what the world community can expect of us”

Opening Prayer:

Blessed are those who have no joy or delight except in the most holy words and works of the Lord and who uses them to lead others to the love of God in joy and gladness.

Admonition 20

Anyone who comes to the brothers (sisters), friend or enemy, thief or robber, is to be received with kindness. And wherever the brothers (sisters) are and anywhere they meet other brothers (sisters), they are to greet one another wholeheartedly and lovingly, and honor one another without grumbling. And they are to be careful not to look outwardly sad, like gloomy hypocrites, but they are to show themselves as happy in the Lord, and cheerful and truly gracious.

Rule of 1221- Chapter VII

In exchange for their service work, they may accept anything necessary for their own temporary needs and for that of their sisters or brothers. Let them accept it humbly as is expected of those who are servants of God and followers of the most holy poverty. Whatever they may have over and above their needs, they are to give to the poor. Let them never want to be over others. Instead they should be servants and subjects to every human creature for God’s sake.

TOR Rule 19

And, raising his eyes toward his disciples, he said:

Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours.

Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied,

Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh.

Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you.....

Rejoice and leap for joy on that day:

Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

Luke 6:20 -23

Reflection:

Hospitality and care for the poor mark us as followers of Francis. In addition to the well known story of the leper, there are numerous times when we find Francis seeking out those who were poor or considered outcasts and sharing hospitality with them. It is as though those on the margins led Francis to the mystery of the cross. The poor enabled him to move beyond himself to be open to the “other”. It allowed him to move forward in leaps and bounds on his own journey and to surmount the barriers that separate the clean from the unclean, the desirable from the undesirable, and the haves from the have-nots. Once he responded to the poor and outcast, everything was changed for him. For us, too, encountering the impoverished, walking for a while in the world of the marginalized and being with the have – nots of our world is a necessary step on the journey of discipleship. Like Francis, our vision will be shaped by such encounters forever and we will never be the same again.

Reflection Questions:

1. What changes in my life do I need to make in order for me to really reach out and become a person of hospitality for others?
2. Who are the “poor” that I encounter in my day to day living?
2. What practical way of direct service to the poor can I become involve with and commit myself to doing?

Concluding Prayer:

Lord, make me a channel of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon,
Where there is doubt, faith,
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light,
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much
 seek to be consoled as to console
 to be understood as to understand,
 to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Resources:

Francis: The Journey and the Dream by Murray Bodo
St Anthony Messenger 1988

Saint Francis of Assisi by Ivan Gobry
Ignatius Press 2006

St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources
Franciscan Herald Press 1973

All Praise to You
The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order
Franciscan Federation 2007