

Pax et Bonum!

Fraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Circular for the month of April
Year of Our Lord A.D. 2008

Most dear Brothers and Sisters of Canada and isolated members who in your charity have united spiritually to our family in our holy Father Francis, the Lord give you His peace!

Now that the Church has entered into Paschal-Tide the liturgy and all things relating to the public worship of God bespeak an exceedingly great joy. It seems fitting therefore that this month we reflect on that blessed fruit of the Spirit of Love which marks in a very special way the Seraphic Order.

Our blessed Father Francis was a Saint filled with the Spirit of joy. It was something which he put into practice constantly as "*his ceaseless endeavor was to keep himself interiorly and exteriorly in a joyous mood.*"(1) As Tertiaries we are called to foster this spirit of joy and as minstrels of the Great King spread it to others. What kind of an example does a servant of God impress upon those who come into contact with him if he is outwardly gloomy and sad? Does he not communicate, like a demon, this spirit of sadness to his confreres? Francis, seeing one day a Brother who was outwardly mournful rebuked him severely saying: "*It behooves not a servant of God to show himself sad and ill-humored before men; he should, on the contrary, always be of good cheer.*" (2) On another occasion our blessed Father exclaimed: "*Only the devil and his followers are sad.*" (3)

Spiritual joy is a pre-requisite for being a son or daughter of St. Francis. The more the world turns to darkness, turns from the loving Face of God, the more it will need an example of peaceful and light hearted Franciscan joy. In fact, from the very beginning of the Order those who were to take up the garb of penance, though they were to be true penitents, they were also called to be "*minstrels and harbingers of joy to the whole world. With the Gospel of "glad tidings" they were to sound the praises of the Lord as knightly troubadours.*" (4) Our blessed Father Francis is our fearless and joy filled leader as he himself would, with waves of spiritual joy pulsating through his entire being, singing the praises of God in the french tongue.

Spiritual authors agree that Satan, if unable to lead a faithful soul into mortal sin, nonetheless endeavors with great tact to lead it into a state of desolation, tepidity and sadness. This he does so that the poor victim of his attack may not progress on the way to perfection with confidence and joy. Satan wishes to divide and conquer by paralyzing the servant of Christ with sadness and distress. Pere Almire Pichon, the spiritual director of St. Therese of Lisieux stated: "*Sadness is the devil's bath. Sadness is the eighth capital sin. Never with full advertence would I linger on a sad thought. Joy lends wings to the soul.*"(5) St. Therese of Lisieux, that blessed angel of Gospel perfection boldly resolved to fight to the death with feelings and thoughts of sadness by stating: "*I will never become discouraged!*" It is the evil one's duty of state to afflict souls of good will and rob from them that deep peace and joy of soul which can only come from God. The devil knows that in this tranquility and peace of soul, the Holy Ghost dwells, and that wretched demon wishes with all of his furious will to make the whispering of the Spirit of God imperceptible. It is the trick of the demon to reduce the flame of the love of God in the heart of a servant of Christ to a mere ember, making all spiritual exercises burdensome. The devil would love to see a fervent soul, paralyzed and tepid, like a knight without a shield or sword, so is the servant of God without the spirit of joy and

interior peace. It takes much vigilance but we must, as the psalmist says: "**keep our souls continually in our hands!**" (Ps.118.v.109) "**The devil rejoices most when he can rob the servant of God of the joy of the spirit. Satan's game is won when the heart is opened ever so little to allow him to inject a speck of dust with which to tarnish the candor of the mind and the purity of life. But as long as the heart is filled with spiritual joy, the serpent endeavors in vain to instill his deadly poison. The devils cannot harm the servant of Christ so long as they behold him filled with holy joy. But when the soul is in ill-humor, if discouraged and desolate, it easily becomes a prey to complete unhappiness or turns to vain pleasures.**" (6) These are the words of the Lark of Christ himself, our Seraphic Father Francis.

Far be it from us dear Brothers and Sisters to mistake that true joy which is "**joy in God, of God and from God**"(7) from that boisterous, charismatic and worldly joy, which is really not joy at all, in fact, it is sentimental and insipid. False joy is based on feelings and the things of the senses which can be present in the heart, even of the most irreligious worldling. Joy which takes pleasure in the things of this world, in and of themselves, is a false joy. Some of our Sainted Martyrs were seen to have a countenance filled with joy as their torturers hacked them to bits, was this a sensible joy? Was this not a true Christian joy? This was joy in suffering with and in the Poor Crucified One, a joy which knows it is redeeming souls with Christ. A joy which glances ever above to the Heavenly glory which is prepared for it. This is admirable dear Brothers and Sisters! It is Christ that must be the source of our refreshment and joy. May all of our work, sacrifices and conversation be anchored in Christ and mingled with a spirit of Franciscan joy after the example of the Saints.

Though we are to be joyful, let us observe the reality of the world we live in. A world of souls who have been created and bought at the price of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. Souls, who have been created by a loving Father. Immortal souls who have minds created to know Him, and many do not. Hearts created to love Him, alas, many do not. Wills created to serve only Him, and choose to serve only the flesh and bow to its every gratification! What a tragedy is the loss of souls! God has chosen you Franciscan Tertiaries, it is your vocation to go into the whole world and with joy preach the Gospel, and this more by example than by words. Who, if not you sons and daughters of Francis, will take the Gift of God and kindle in the hearts of men the fire of His love? What a tragedy also if we fail to live up to our destiny to become saints! Sr. Lucy the Fatima seer when speaking to Fr. Fuentes spoke thus: "**It is necessary for each one of us to begin to reform himself spiritually. Each person must not only save his own soul but also help to save all the souls that God has placed on our path. The devil does all in his power to distract us and to take away from us the love for prayer; we shall be saved together or we shall be damned together.**"(8) Of course, we must begin in our own homes to make the little society of our own families a place where Christ is King. Of course, by having many children and raising them as true Catholics in the spirit of St. Francis and the Gospel, this is the greatest work and duty we must do for the glory of God. It will be through the burning hearts of our families that the world will certainly be lit up and won for Jesus Christ the King.

With your example of serene and peaceful joy, even amidst the trials of the daily cross of living in our age of apostasy; with a warm and inviting demeanor which makes no compromise with truth, you can indeed influence this world of souls. Christ must reign, each and every heart rightfully belongs to Him, and we must ask with a humble confidence, the graces necessary to become little Jesus'. If the world no longer sees Jesus, if the world is not won entirely for Christ, it is because we are failing to be Christ in this world! How else will He enter into the public circles, into everyday life? You in Him and He in You! With Seraphic joy after the example of St. Francis, give Him to others. Do not be afraid to pass on what you have received to those who are receptive to truth, you will not lose it forever; for Almighty God will increase in the vessel of the generous giver the burning fire of His

love and even its capacity to receive more. ***“I have run the way of thy commandments, when thou didst enlarge my heart.(Pslm 118.V.32)”*** And so it is, it will be in giving that we shall receive from the good God. Kneeling at the foot or our altars before the Glorious and Risen Crucified we may ***“draw waters with joy out of the saviour’s fountains”*** (Is.12.v.3.) and each morning if you so desire, at every Mass, through Him, with Him and in Him you will receive the graces to cast fire upon this earth filled with the hearts and souls of men. Truly we must be, little Jesus’ who with great generosity imitate our King who said ***“I am come to cast fire on this earth and what will I that it be kindled?”***(Luke 12.v.49.) It is us, dear Brothers and Sisters who are the little matches in the Hands of the Great and Divine Arsonist! It is His Will that he use little weak instruments in starting a great conflagration. May we not dare to resist His tender invitation, let us allow ourselves to be struck and burnt up for the salvation of our brothers and sisters who do not know, love or serve such a wonderful God. It is good to remember when we are victims of that grumpy and perpetually sad demon, the words of encouragement and advice given by St. Padre Pio: ***“ Take heart and don’t fear the gloomy wrath of Lucifer. Always remember this, that it is a good sign when the enemy makes an uproar and roars around your will, as this shows he is not inside it. Courage, my most beloved daughter, I offer you these words with great feeling, and in Jesus, courage I say! There is no need to fear when we can say with determination, even if without feeling: Long live Jesus!”***

In closing this circular, we wish a hearty congratulations to a new addition to our Franciscan Fraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On Monday March 3rd, Br. John Cormier from Nova Scotia made his clothing into the Seraphic Order. Welcome to the family Br. John, and in the words of the Holy Scriptures: “Gaudium tibi sit semper! (Joy be to thee always! Tobias 5.v. 11.)

Wishing you all a blessed Paschal-Tide, your little servant in the Seraphic Father St. Francis,

Br. Pio-Francis. Minister Prefect.

Br. Pio-Francis T.O.S.F.

All circular letters reviewed by our Fr. Director,

Albi Freddy Mery pithu

Rev. Fr. Freddy Mery, SSPX and come with his priestly blessing.

- (1) Ideals of St. Francis by Hilarin Felder. Pg. 229.
- (2) Ideals of St. Francis by Hilarin Felder. Pg. 232.
- (3) St. Francis of Assisi Mirror of Christ. By Isidore O’Brien OFM.
- (4) Ideals of St. Francis. Pg. 233.
- (5) Seeds of the Kingdom by Pere Almire Pichon.
- (6) Ideals of St. Francis. Pg. 232..
- (7) Ideals of St. Francis. Pg. 236
- (8) <http://www.fatima.org/essentials/opposed/frfuentes.asp>
- (9) <http://www.santorosario.net/english/stpioapril.htm>