

To Love Jesus And To Make Him Loved

The Fraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Circular Letter For June
Year of Our Lord 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Penance, God give you peace!

Without a doubt, the spirit of the Holy Gospel, and the spirit of the Third Order of Penance, is a spirit which exults holy poverty. The Kingdom of Heaven is promised to all who are poor in spirit for the benediction runs, "theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." As St. Francis relates, the poor are not promised it in the future, but they already possess it, they have this Kingdom already. Poverty was the spirit of God in Christ Jesus the King. He came in perfect poverty, lived in perfect poverty, and Jesus Christ Our Divine Lord, died in perfect poverty. The crib, the carpenter's shop, the earthly preaching, and the Cross all bespeak poverty, all reflect a spirit of complete detachment, and even contempt for the things this world holds dear. This is the lesson of Jesus Christ and of His servant our holy Father Francis of Assisi.

To observe the Holy Gospel is the mission and goal of all Franciscanism. The most efficacious examination of conscience is the holding up of the Beatitudes with the counsels of the Gospel, and looking at how our hearts and conduct compare with what is written in them. We must not be mistaken, the Holy Gospel is not written solely for priests and nuns. It is not only for friars and monks, who pass their lives in convents and monasteries. The Holy Gospel is for all. It was written and passed on for you and for me, and especially for you and for me, since we have professed before God's Holy Church that we would observe it by becoming, through the grace of God, Franciscan Tertiaries.

All of the Beatitudes held up like a mirror before our souls shed abundant light for our meditation, but especially this first benediction, as it holds all the followers of Il Poverello fast in their tracks!

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

(Matt. 5 v.3.)

Truly blessed is the man who models his life after this Beatitude! But it is not an easy way dear brethren! How do we fare? Are we detached from all that is on this earth? Our beloved King has said: "*Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple*" (Luke 14 v. 33.) Note, the good God did not say, you priests, friars and monks, you must renounce all, you people in the world make merry and rejoice! "*Every one of you, that doth not renounce all that he possesseth.*" Every one without exception. But we have families, we have jobs, we have homes and cars! Indeed, the complete renunciation of all things like the First Order of Friars Minor is the perfect life in this world, without a doubt, but we too are the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. We too, can obtain the graces from the Passion of Christ to be totally detached from all that we possess! The Third Order is the tree from which we may pluck these graces like fruit and devour them! The things we set our hearts on in this life, if they are not Almighty God, will perish and eventually we will leave them behind anyway. Therefore let us study practical ways to observe poverty in the world. The first and most obvious practice would be *of ridding ourselves of all in our possession that is not of strict necessity*. After this, we could observe in the spirit of St. Francis:

Poverty in Dress:

"Let the brothers of this fraternity, commonly be dressed in cloth humble in price and colour, not utterly white nor black." (Rule of Nicholas IV Chp. III.) Clothing which is chaste and humble is the acceptable and preferred garb of the Tertiary. We could take up this article of the holy Rule of 1289 and avoid flashy colours, keeping our vestments simple. Our holy Father Francis gives the exhortation that we should, in

dress, imitate our Sister lark, who gives the good example "*not to wear fine and gaudy clothing, but cloth of a humble price and colour, just as earth is inferior to the other elements.*" (1.) It is surprising Brothers and Sisters what we can find in *used clothing* stores at very inexpensive prices! Modesty should be of course always observed. It is more perfect if Brothers refrain from short sleeves in Church and ladies should never wear sleeves that are not at least 3/4 cut down the arm, with skirts that are at least eight inches below the knee preferably with stockings which are dark in colour and not flesh toned after the specific counsel of St. Padre Pio who spoke with Christ on these things (regarding ladies dress). Low cut necklines are obviously illicit.

Humble and simple furnishings in the home are a practice which should be taken up by all of the followers of Il Poverello. Let the homes of our Franciscans be religious houses which contain holy images to aid in the continual spirit of prayer, the lifting of mind and heart to the good God. May everything in the homes of our Franciscans be conducive to a prayerful spirit.

Poverty in Transportation

"Nor is it lawful for them to ride on horseback unless compelled by infirmity or great necessity" Rule of the Friars Minor Chp.15.(2) Perhaps the Tertiaries who hold fast to Tradition could find a way to practice the virtue of Poverty in imitation of the holy Father Francis and his First Order by never using their vehicles unless absolute necessity calls for it.

For example, they could use their cars and trucks to get to work, for this is certainly necessary. But how about at other times, getting something to eat which is within walking distance? Visiting the sick or poor who are only a few blocks away? They may also take only what is necessary for their journey, that is, take only the money or provisions which would be needed for their trip and nothing more, after the Gospel counsel, "*take nothing for your journey.*" (Luke 9.V. 3.) (*) There are countless opportunities to practice poverty with regards to transport, perhaps we could take up the journey on foot for the Love of God, and thus be used as an instrument for souls while passing by a person in need? How lovely would this site be, a Tertiary in simple garb, a smile on their face, softly singing the praises of God! May God see to it that our Brothers and Sisters put this into practice! Before setting out, they could ask the good Lord to use them as instruments of His peace and love. A little tool, full of good will can do marvellous things for the glory of God. If nothing else, your simplicity and joyful spirit can be a good example and a sermon for others. They could also, after the Gospel counsel, give to all who ask by way of alms if they were to meet someone in need on their way. (*)

Poverty in Food

In our day, such a great commotion is made over delectable and fancy dishes of great price. Let our Brothers and Sisters reflect, when in the supermarket, whether the food they are looking at purchasing is in conformity with what their holy founder would approve of.

Some spend great amounts of their hard earned labour and set their hearts on that which will be cast into the gutter. Our Father Francis when looking at one of the first dishes he had begged for, was so repulsed that he thought he could vomit. However, for the Love of God, he conquered himself and ate the mess of alms he begged. It was sweet to the taste! Of course, the Tertiary is not bound to eat stale bread and old onions every day of the week. But perhaps they could choose the nourishing and simple dishes found in the houses of peasants and of the poor.

It would be very commendable for our Tertiaries who can do so, in a spirit of true Franciscan aceticism, to take up the practice of the early Tertiaries abstaining from meat on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, while taking only lunch and dinner as their sole meals daily. Indeed, for those willing and able, all of the days of fasting and abstinence of the Rule of Nicholas IV would be very commendable and would be a strong answer to the widespread pampering of the flesh of our age. (*Of course this is not to be held as*

obligatory for all of our Tertiaries in Tradition. Rather it is to be taken as an exhortation to raise the bar in their spiritual life and prepare the ground of their souls for the reception of many graces.)

They could also refrain from storing up many groceries for future use. They could buy what was going to be used for the space of a week. Thus providing for their needs and still relying on Holy Providence to provide for the future. For the Franciscan is called to live the holy Gospel, which states clearly: *"Be not solicitous therefore, saying, What shall we eat: or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore solicitous for tomorrow; for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."* (Matthew Chp.6. V.31-33.)

Poverty in Media

"Let access to immodest banquets, and/or spectacles, or meeting places... be entirely prohibited to them." (Chapter VI Rule of Nicholas IV.) Brothers and Sisters of Penance, in the Name of the Most High, please do not allow yourselves to enter into modern day movie theatres, worldly dances and the like! Please do not allow yourselves or family members to watch the modern day rubbish which we see vomited from the television screen! In the Name of the Lord, do not allow yourselves to be enticed by the flashy images of modern media and computer games, much of it is indefinitely from Hell and much of it is an occasion of sin. A few moments in front of this black box can be the ruin of your soul, and so cable TV should be absolutely avoided by all Franciscan Tertiaries and cable should be removed from the Tertiary home. What would the Seraphic Patriarch say to the lounging of his son's and daughter's in a movie theatre or in front of a television set? I dare say he would be aghast! Would the Seraphic Father approve of his son's and daughter's listening to the rock, rap or dance music of our age? It is unthinkable, absolutely impossible! Ban these things for the love of the good God, from your homes that the peace of Christ may reign therein.

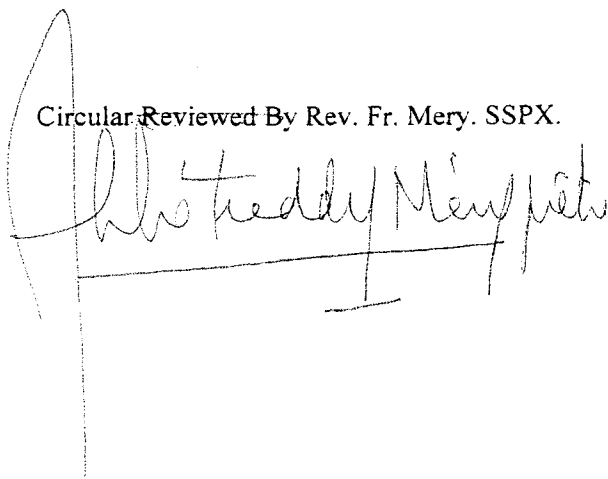
We close with a warning from the lips of Our Divine Lord which trail the Beatitudes of Luke's Gospel: *"Woe to you that are rich. Woe to you that are filled. Woe to you that now laugh. Woe to you when men shall bless you!"* (Luke 6. V. 24-26.) It is good dear brethren to remember that he who abides by a Rule approved for centuries by the Holy Church, can not go wrong if that Rule guides him into a life of death to self for the sake of the good God, Who Himself has told us: *"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."* (Matt. 16.v.24.) May all of the above be accompanied with and done for a great love of God, without which, all of these observances are nothing.

Also, a warm and hearty congratulations to Miss. Christine Camidge who became Sr. Catherine on June 8th. Also congratulations to Mr. Frank Kasamara who began postulancy in the T.O.S.F on the same day taking the Franciscan name of Maria-Franciscus, and to little Joshua Papania who was received into the Archconfraternity of the Cord on the same blessed day. May Jesus Christ be praised with the Queen of the Seraphic Order, Mary most holy, for all the choice fruit our fraternity has been gathering! Deo gratias.

Br. Pio - Francis

Br. Pio-Francis, Min.Prefect.

Circular Reviewed By Rev. Fr. Mery. SSPX.

A large, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. Fr. Mery, SSPX". The signature is written over a horizontal line and is quite stylized.

1. Omnibus of Sources. Mirror of Perfection 113. Marion. A. Habig.
2. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/wost/wost06.htm#page64>

(*) Taken from an interview with Br. Paul OFM. Cap.
Holy Scripture Quoted from the Douay-Rheims New Testament. TAN.