



Freedom to Love

Franciscan Journey Chapter 20

Searching for the Meaning of Life – Stories that Unite and Motivate

We Base our lives on truths bigger
than ourselves



Franciscans – Narratives Hold Priority

Early movement handed down mainly by stories

Stories inspire us

While belief & practices may differ among world religions, there are extraordinary similarities in their narratives – not in details but in their sweep! (Living Stones, Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778)

Practices

Narratives



Freedom – Power Given by God

- ▶ The more one does good – the freer one becomes
- ▶ Choose to do evil – become slave to sin – loss of freedom

FREEDOM – makes people RESPONSIBLE for their actions



Freedom – We are Responsible for our Actions

OLD TESTAMENT

Early Chapters of Genesis – People did not do well in making choices – examples:

- Adam & Eve
- Cain & Able
- King David



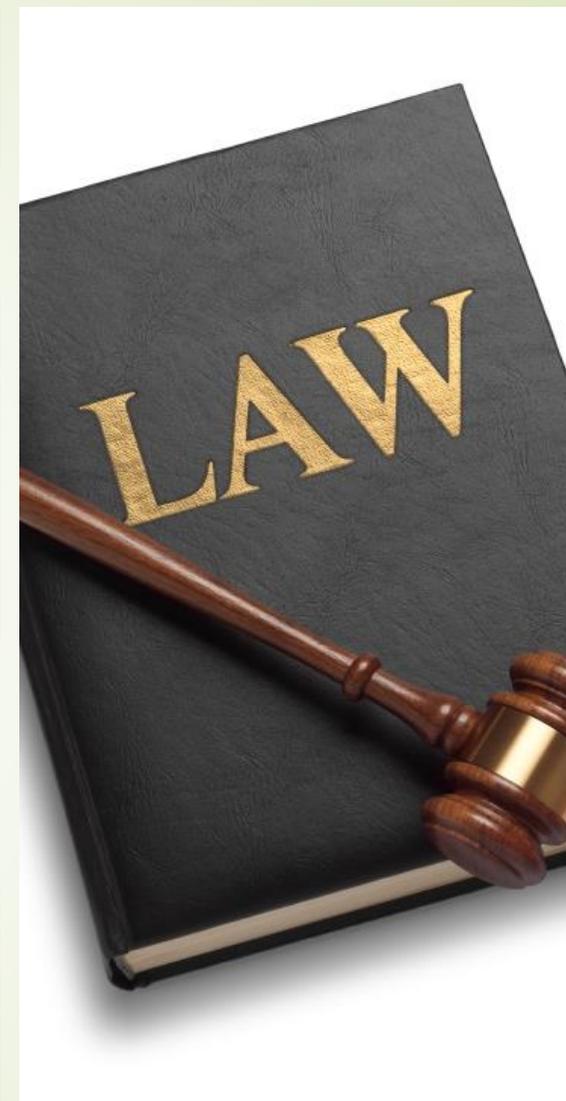


How Freedom – Functions Best

- RULES or GUIDELINES
- Borders - Framework
 - GAMES – framework which to Play
 - TEAM SPORTS – rules offer space within which talent is shown
- **KNOWING the RULES & Guidelines** enable us to function within a certain framework
- **REQUIRES RESPECT** for the “OTHER”
- **WITHOUT RULES** – Personal Freedom goes wild – the Joy of watching competition disappears – chaos, physical harm – no accountability

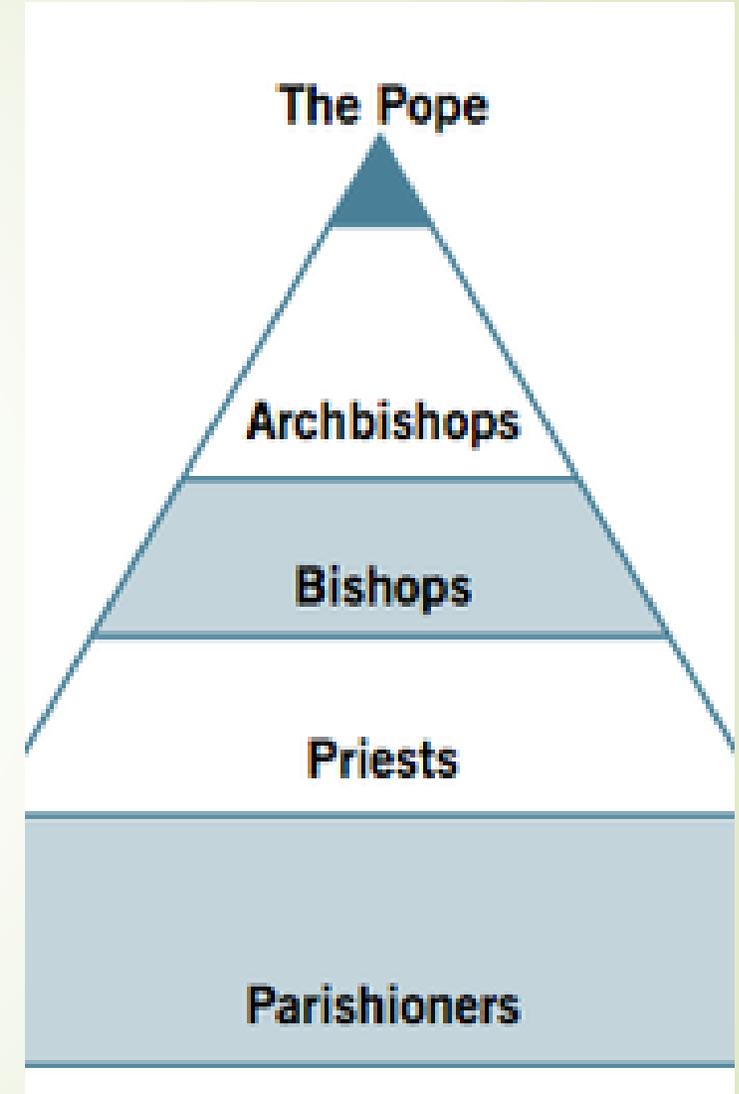
Rules, Laws in Human Life

- ▶ Laws and regulations are not infallibly helpful, but without good laws and structure, society would break down into chaos and disrespect.
- ▶ Structures create a framework within which to function.
- ▶ When laws and structures interfere with or stymie the work of the Spirit, we can change them
- ▶ Use freedom in order to dialogue about the influence provided by structures and laws
- ▶ Dialogue done with respect, can move us to change structures



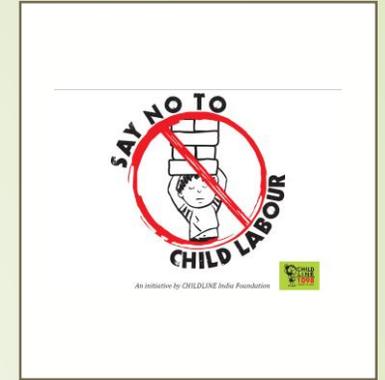
Religion is Gospel - oriented

- Needs law and structure to create an atmosphere of freedom for Gospel -living
- This freedom allows us to respond to the Gospel according to the call of the Spirit.
- Can change law, structure with respectful dialogue and reverence



People create their own Laws

- ▶ Societies and churches are not the only law givers
- ▶ People decide how things will function in their own homes or among family members
- ▶ Companies and Corporations make laws to control how people work within them – generally their goal is efficiency
- ▶ Efficiency is not evil unless it interferes with human rights
- ▶ Efficiency is often needed to increase profits – for this reason – it often wins over human needs



Franciscans who own or work in a Business

- When an atmosphere of freedom is not present –
- coercion or threats can become tools to force compliance,
- dialogue is rejected, chaos, depression and violence can rear their ugly heads



IF YOU WANT
PEACE,
WORK FOR
JUSTICE

FAMILIES NEED RULES

to guide a healthy family life

Learn

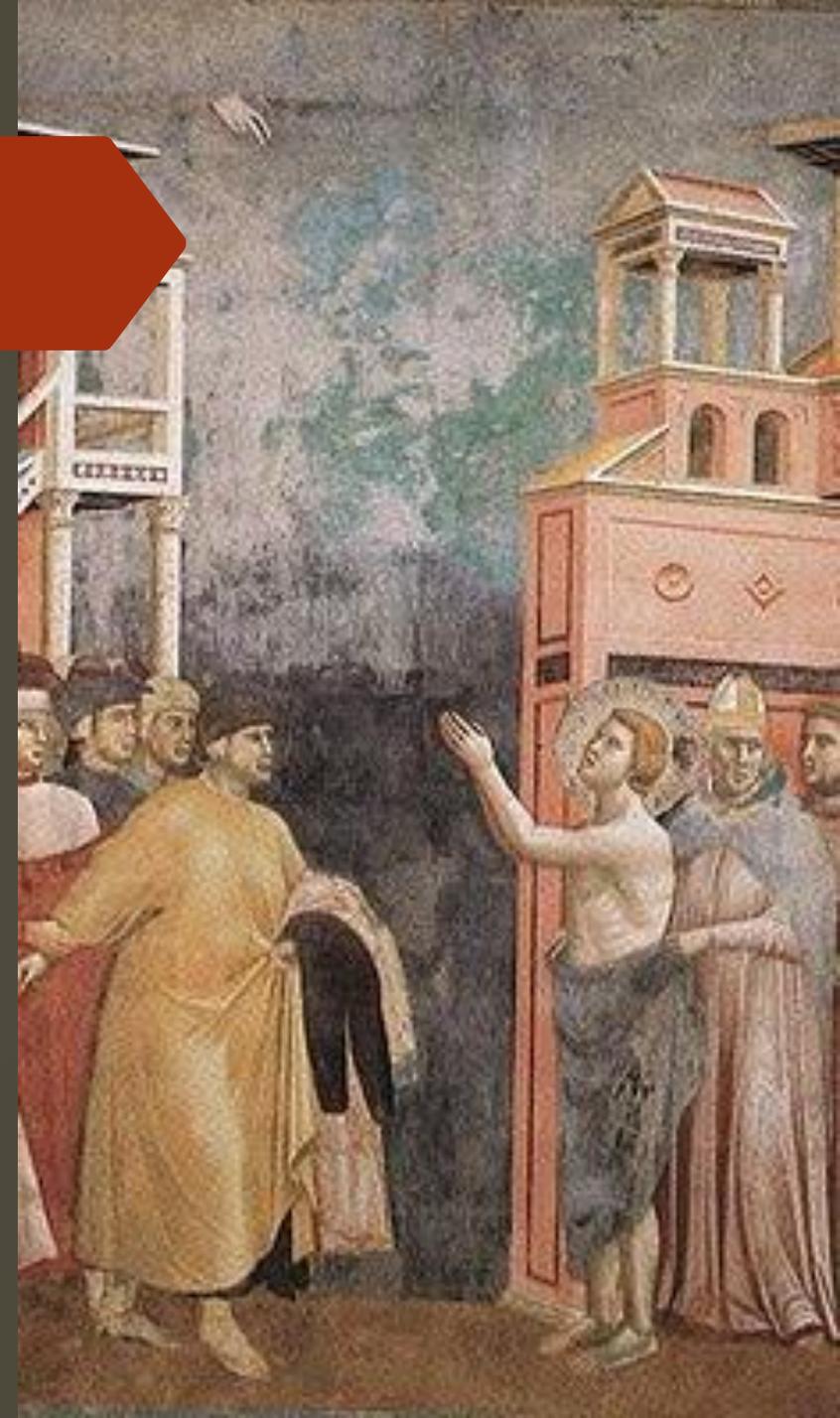
- To Accommodate needs of others
- Essential to growing up

Create

- Safe atmosphere
- Dialogue
- Respect

Change

- When source of constant arguments
- Rules, guidelines need to change
- Changing domineering structures & rules



They should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters (OFS Rule #12)

We all have the task of being free

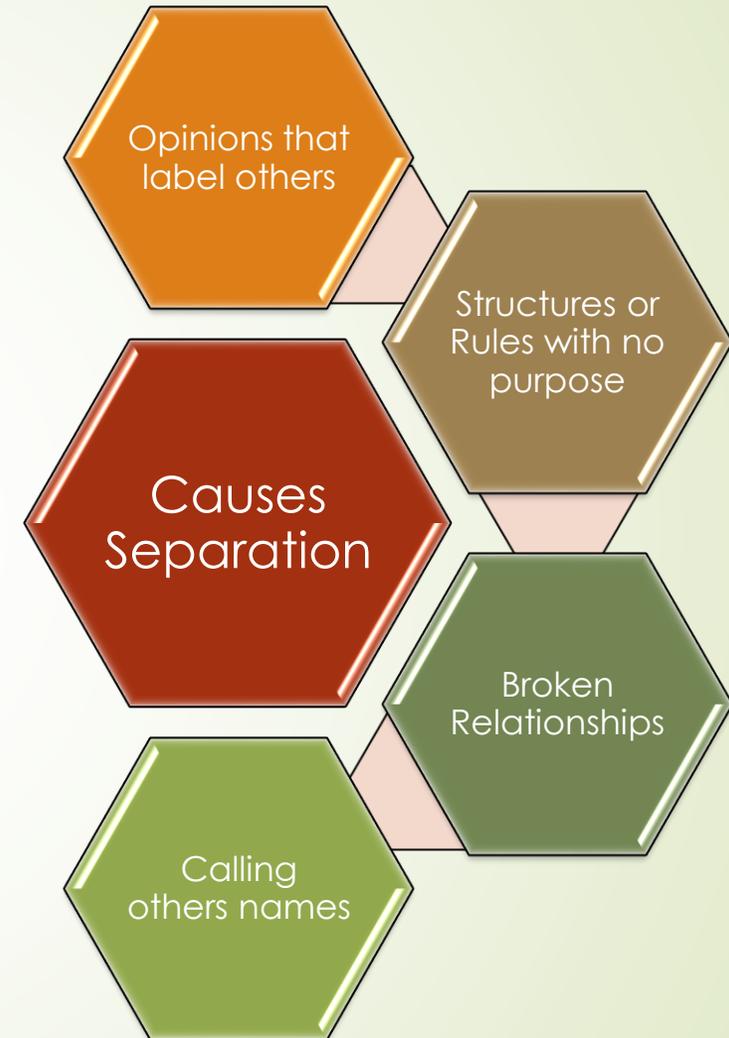
FRANCISCANS cannot tolerate anything that causes separation among people

When they passionately disagree, we try to do this in a way that relationships are not broken.

Requires strong faith and reliance on the HOLY SPIRIT

Requires maturity and concern for the "other" (LOVE)

NOT easy – to achieve Gospel freedom without reliance on Holy Spirit



SCRIPTURE

CONTAINS FRAMEWORK FOR LIFE

Evangelization the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity

Preach and teach

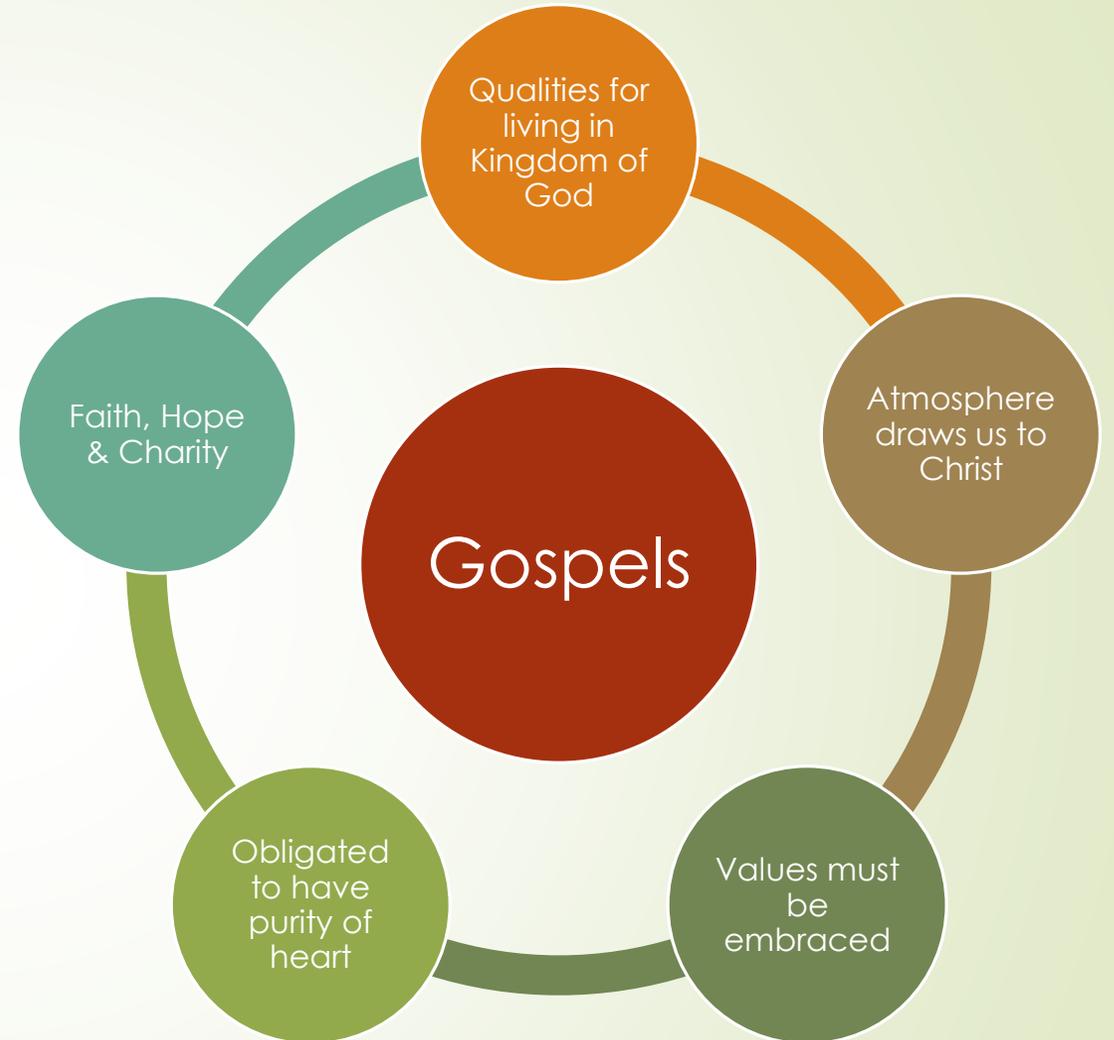
Channel of Gift of Grace

Reconcile sinners with God

Perpetuate Christ's sacrifice

Mass – memorial of life, death and resurrection

*Evangelization in the Modern World –
(Evangelii Nuntiandi) Pope Paul IV –
Paragraph 14*



Church is an Evangelizer

- Begins by being evangelized herself
- Community of believers, hope communicated and live Brotherly love
- Needs to listen, must believe her reasons for hoping to a new commandment of love
- People are emerged in the world – often tempted by idols
- Church must proclaim the might work of God
- The Church has a constant need of being evangelized, if she wishes to retain freshness, vigor and strength in order to proclaim the Gospel

■ *One Evangelization in the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi) Pope Paul IV – paragraph 15*



OFS Rule – Freedom Directed by Rule



- What to choose – to reject
- What to do - leave undone
- How to deal with one another
- When to support others in finding their way
- How to move to contemplative prayfulness
- Discovering the need to change in order to promote relationships

Profession – Free Response to Holy Spirit

- Freely choose to live within the framework of Franciscanism
- To follow Francis' spirit
- Becomes part of our personal identify
- Trust and Love for God continues to grow – bring PEACE & JOY
- Love one another like Jesus loved us





Franciscan Revolution

We hold
nothing back

Share whatever
gifts God has
given us

Joy is in our lives

Love for Jesus,
Father and Holy
Spirit

Spills over to the
love of all
creation

Blessed are the pure of Heart – for they shall see God

FRANCISCANS - PURITY OF HEART

- ▶ Cleanse our mind, heart, emotions and actions of anything that hinders the love of God
- ▶ DEVELOP THE SENSE OF GOD in people whose lives we touch, even if they are far from God
- ▶ Discover God's presence and see into the heart of the "other"



Purity of Heart - Excuses

- ▶ Do we hide our real self?
- ▶ Make excuses for refusing to change
- ▶ Attitudes that keep people that keep people from getting close
- ▶ Rationalize behavior that has little or no connection to Gospel Life
- ▶ Silently bare hurts and grief that ought to be verbalized and addressed



Purity of Heart



- When we respond to the Spirit's call to follow Francis many decisions and choices are already made.
- We show the Franciscan spirit by the life we live.
- Following guidelines of the OFS Rule become our life.
- Formation of a Franciscan is ongoing and never ends.

