Franciscan Journey
Chapter 12

A Focus on Christ – SFO Rule

by Lester Bach OFM Cap
“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life”
~ Jesus Christ

Trinity

- Jesus Teaches – How to Live God’s Will
- Jesus – Servant of the Father
  - Brings conversion & sacrifice his own Life
- Justice & Love Conquer
  - Injustice
  - Hatred
- Through Jesus, know Trinity
  - Jesus brings Holy Sprit – wisdom, forgiveness
  - community founded on Love
- Through Jesus, know Trinity
  - Jesus brings Holy Sprit – wisdom, forgiveness
  - community founded on Love
Incarnation
Christ Comes Among Us – Result of God’s Love

Christ came to earth to live in human society to show our divine calling.

Communitarian character of Franciscans is fulfilled in perfected in work of Jesus Christ in ordinary life - humanity ties us together.

Highest form of human ties is the family – the basis of social structures.

Franciscans are obligated to treat each other as Brothers & Sisters, as in a family!
LOVE is the Reason for the INCARNATION ~ Duns Scotus’ philosophy

- Incarnation shows us what Love can accomplish

- Love, the heart of the Trinity is the reason for God sending Jesus to earth

- God brings ways to bring the Gospel way of acting, if we sin

- Gods looks for ways to free us from sin & experience the joy of unity with the Trinity
Francis recognized God’s Love in everything that Jesus said and did

- The Cross is a clear sign of God’s Love for us
- The Gospels teach us how to live-
- SFO Rule calls for careful reading of the Gospels
- Lack of knowledge of the Gospels – we can easily lose our way
Gospels – Teach how to Live – On Going Formation – Share Good News – Build Relationships with Listeners

Ignorance of Scriptures is ignorance of Christ  
– St. Jerome

Careful reading and sensitivity to the community of the Church – Francis sought approval of Rule from Pope Innocent III

Discuss the Gospels – Conversations – Listen with an open heart
The Holy Bible

Catholic Bible
- **Old Testament** (Sometimes called the Hebrew Testament) – 46 books
- **New Testament** – 27 books
- **Total books = 73**

Protestant Bible
- **Old Testament** – 39 books
  - Rejected 7 books:
    - Tobit
    - Judith
    - 1st & 2nd Maccabees
    - Wisdom
    - Sirach
    - Baruch (apocrypha)
- **New Testament** – 27 books
- **Total Books = 66**
Sacred Scriptures – God’s truth in language accommodating our nature

Franciscans face the task of linking scriptures & the life and words of Jesus Christ to their own lives.

**Rule**

Points the way to fulfill God’s plan for us

**Constitution**

Points out the importance of Gospel study

SFO must personally & assiduously study the Gospel and Sacred Scripture

Fraternity & its leaders should foster love for the word of the Gospel
Building of the Kingdom takes; planning, faith, courage, gentleness, understanding and compassion – need Scriptures & the Holy Spirit

**Jesus**
- Welcomes Sinners
- Man’s laws did not interfere with Father’s mission
- Advised disciplines not to get bogged down with “things”
- Preached forgiveness of enemies
- Went to quiet places to pray
- Strong in the face of authorities who abused God’s plan
- His death & resurrection – hope that new life is possible
- The Cross was example of Radical Love

**Francis**
- Welcomed sinners
- Moved ahead when human laws tried to confine him
- Made choice for poverty “Lady Poverty”
- Told followers to forgive enemies
- Francis went to La Verna & to caves to pray
- Invited his beloved Church to show a Gospel face
- Francis gave example with his spirit that welcomed Sister Death