Franciscan Journey

Chapter 23 – Justice and the Franciscan Life

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Rule 15: Be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their lives

- Public Life – collaborate for passage of just laws & ordinances
- Fraternities should engage in courageous initiatives...in field of human development & justice
- Take clear positions whenever human dignity is attacked
- Offer fraternal service to victims of injustice
Renounce Violence, Not Action

- Take care that interventions are inspired by Christian love
- Respect Human Life
- Look upon neighbor as another self
- Make ourselves the neighbor of every individual without exception

“Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars... Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”

Martin Luther King Jr.
“As you did to one of the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you did it to me”. Mt. 25:40

Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?

“He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.

“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Matthew 25:31-46
Crimes against Human Dignity and the Honor of Creation

- Violations against life itself:
  - Murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, willful suicide,
- Violations of the integrity of the human person:
  - Mutilations, psychological & physical torture, undue psychological pressures
- Violations against human dignity:
  - Subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, working conditions where people are treated as tools for profit
Trinitarian Spirituality – Relationships

- Practices that fail to support relationships
- Create injustice, create animosity, frustration, fear, hatred, even death
- Fracture relationships - develop separation – seek revenge and reprisals
- Violence can be even “silent treatment” – does nothing to strengthen relationship
- Killing words – that degrade and diminish people
It’s All About Relationships

- Rich & Poor
- Men & Women
- Friends
- Parents & Children
- Spouses
- Family

In this World some People will always throw stones in your path. It depends on you what you make from them...

A WALL or a BRIDGE!
Franciscans, Be in forefront - Promote justice by our lives & courageous actions

- Positive Franciscan Spirit
- Use positive words & attitudes help us build positive relationships
- Our lives words & actions should develop community
- We should not be a “one issue” people
- We support action for justice
- Strengthen your RELATIONSHIP with God
Challenges to Justice – Keep in Line with Gospel

- Use of force – always leads to some destruction – separation, harms relationships
  - Often means violence, even death, or reputation or livelihood – both innocent and guilty suffer
  - Property is destroyed, lives shattered –
  - Sometimes necessary in some situations
  - Must have voices of Gospel People
  - Silence is not an option for Franciscans
Being Comfortable

- Temptations – manipulating accounting, depriving others of living wages, using economic tools to keep others “in their place”
- Fear tactics – intimidation to keep people from protesting
- Employers & employees must be certain that their actions lead to justice for all concerned
“Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for when I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me”.

- Matthew 25:34-40
Franciscan Organizations that Address Peace & Justice

- Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC)
  - World wide – both Catholic & non-Catholic
  - Collaborates with other organizations on issues of human dignity & care for creation

Franciscan Action Network (FAN)

- Network of US based ministries, institutions & persons
- Seek to amplify our public voice for humble advocate and act for inclusive and transformed social policy & social structures arising out of the US Government & related US agencies