



**Shaping the Franciscan Footprint**  
**Five Important Spiritual Thoughts from the Liturgy of the Word**  
**...and follow up for the Secular Franciscan**  
**July 21-27**

**1 – They have dug themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that hold no water. (Jeremiah 2:13)**

...We tend to dig broken cisterns that hold no water, that is, we tend to look at solutions which are really not solutions. Do I turn to God enough as I seek solutions to the problems I have?

**2 – Mary Magdalene “saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been.” (Jn 20:12)**

...There are people in my life who are “my” angels. Who are they and have I thanked them for what they have done?

*Extended meditation*

*It’s interesting to study the “empty tomb” as theologians call the beginning of the Resurrection experience in the various evangelists. Each one gives a different rendition of the empty tomb. In John’s Gospel, there are two angels who make the announcement to Mary Magdalen.*

*We can only prove the existence of angels by reading the Scriptures and in every instance, they are presented as workers or messengers of God. But there are many instances of angels in human form.*

*Chloe needed an angel that night, and the angel came in the guise of a rather large African American man by the name of Donovan. She had lost her husband because of what her neighbors called “The Chicago Violence,”—a drive-by shooting that happened all too often in her neighborhood, and her husband was a victim. Chloe was completely distraught.*

*At the hospital while she was awaiting the horrible news, Pastor Donovan who called himself a “street pastor” came to her and prayed with her. He prayed for love and peace and unity. And he came back to her home a couple times the following month. He was the angel she needed.*

*Pastor Donovan is a real person who has made it his mission to care for the survivors of gun violence around the troubled spots of Chicago. NBC News heard about him, and followed him around one evening. “I’ve been blessed to be loved,” he said in the interview, “it’s important that I love now.” He said that he has cared for over a thousand different survivors of families that had a homicide due to gun violence.*



*One of the frequent names that is given Francis of Assisi in the stories known as "The Little Flowers of Francis of Assisi" is that of an "angel." He spoke like an angel, he helped like an angel, and so forth.*

*A follower of Francis must take note of that calling. There are people all around us who need an angel who will deliver the message of God to them. Maybe we can find a mission in helping those people.*

### **3 – "What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg?" (Lk 11:11-12)**

...God knows more than I do. In my prayer of petition, I may be asking for things that would have been harmful to me.

### **4 – "...the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you." (Mt 20:25-26)**

...How strong is my self-pride?

#### *Extended meditation*

*According to St. Thomas Aquinas, a capital sin is that which has an exceedingly desirable end so that in one's desire for it, the person goes on to the commission of many sins, all of which are said to originate in that sin as their chief source. And first and foremost among the capital sins is the sin of pride or vainglory. It was the sin which transformed Lucifer into Satan, and is called the sin of sins.*

*And so, Jesus calls attention to it often. Here, Jesus's disciples suddenly had power that they never expected to have, and their human natures wanted to exercise that power. Quite naturally, they wanted to exploit their authority. Human nature has been predictable since the day God created humankind: we always want more than others. Here, quite directly, the Lord says to them and to us: "It shall not be so among you."*

*In our history, American historians have ranked the 1960's in the southern United States to be one of the most painful moments in American history. Black Americans found themselves in a state of desiring freedom from the oppression that had been accepted behavior up to that time in that part of the world. (see Movie: "The Help")*

*Part of that moment in history resonates with the sin of pride because the American white person probably without knowing what he/she was doing thought themselves to be more than the black servants who were employed in various jobs. Did they know what they were doing? After all, a College Study had recently stated that blacks were inferior to whites.*

*A recent song described that pride to be "noise." Singing of a person who is taken up with self, and therefore a victim of pride, the person who*



*feels less than another says, "You don't know the way that you look when [your] steps make that much noise." (Song: "Cooler Than Me")*

*If we want to be truly Christian, that is a member of a group who are called to be "Christianity squared," we must face the feeling of always wanting more. We naturally try to be better and better at what we do, but too often we find ourselves judging others to be "less." We feel superior over others who don't do as well as we do. It is but a short step then to make them "slaves."*

*The noise of pride is loud. It tends to drown out any attempt to do good.*

### **5 – "...sells all that he has..." (Mt 13:44, 46)**

..."Sells all that he has" is central to Jesus's stories here. Obviously it cannot be taken literally because I need things to live. But as a Franciscan, what things in my life should I give up to show my dedication to the Lord in a better way?