

NEWS & VIEWS

TAU-USA



Lester Bach OFM Cap
Provincial Spiritual Assistant
Province of St Joseph of the Capuchin Order

The Franciscan family, as one among many spiritual families raised up by the Holy Spirit in the Church, unites all members of the people of God - laity, religious, and priests - who recognize that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.

In various ways and forms, but in life-giving union with each other, they intend to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church. OFS Rule #1.

Reading the TAU-USA helps increase our awareness of important Franciscan issues. The TAU articles both support and challenge us. Individually we are limited. But prompted by the Holy Spirit and practicing good dialogue, Franciscan fraternities can accomplish much.

We Franciscans face decisions that need gospel reflection. We initiate programs and changes that flow from the gospel-spirit of St Francis of Assisi. We have many choices. Personal gospel experiences, shared with one another, offer opportunities and practical decisions to implement Franciscan values and practices. The OFS Rule and Constitutions point out ways to bring about changes - slowly but surely.

Religious, political and economic skills help us deal with many issues, whether personal or social. Positions, power and money push many people to act like gods - (Don't!). The gospel goal of loving one another, forgiving self and others etc, requires that we engage in *ongoing formation* (conversion) in our Franciscan way of life.

We deal with many physical or psychological issues; normal daily living and accidents bring problems. Destructive attitudes isolate people. Addictions plus health-care expenses require more than we can afford. Many social issues create hopelessness or separation. As Franciscans we choose to be people who show compassion and concern for people in need.

A reasonable income is required for life in the USA. Marriage and the birth of babies bring a need for new love as well as expenses that are not always easy to pay. Practical help can be sought through our Franciscan community. When old age arrives or Sister Death shows up, we offer help through concern and compassion. Our ongoing faith-growth can be helped by Michael Carsten's recommendation of the 3-volume series called: Vatican II in Plain English by Bill Huebsch - Ave Maria Press. (Cf: Page 24 of TAU-USA - Winter 2018-19) * *It is good reading for ongoing faith-formation.* *

Human needs are all around us. Some needs develop from a lack of skills. Our skills do not always fit present needs. Folks who retire find that costs don't go away and bills keep coming to their home address. Politics often create programs that are more destructive than loving, and which ignore gospel values - something we cannot ignore!

Franciscans need nourishment. Franciscans invest time, skills, prayer and/or money (Often all four) when called upon for assistance. We place our personal gifts at the disposal of people in need and in the development of a vibrant fraternal life. Sharing time, personal presence or skills are important. Sometimes we listen or share time with people who feel trapped and need a listening ear. A solution for issues may take time to find. We may need to find people who can help. As Franciscans we feel free to seek each others' help. People skills offer help in dealing with problem issues within and beyond fraternity life.

We recognize our personal need for help to understand and deal with specific problems. Sharing our skills helps us deal with many issues. Living the Gospel, loving neighbors, trying to love enemies, getting help when I don't know what to do, is part of our community love-in-action.

"In various ways and forms, but in life-giving union with each other, they intend to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father (Francis of Assisi) in the life and mission of the Church." OFS Rule -Article #1

Dialogue teaches us and moves us in a good direction. We initiate *ongoing formation when we're together* at fraternity gatherings or at other times when we dialogue with one another. Our common spirit brings deepened relationships, plus a concerned, loving spirit to situations of need -OR- we celebrate our joyful times together - strengthening our bonds of love.

Secular Franciscans, ... are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the Kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. OFS Rule #14

We who claim to be the Church, we who claim to be the Body of Christ, must resemble Christ as much as possible. We must take the part of the poor whenever we can; we must defend those without power; we must avoid seeking our own glory and act with humility and self-sacrifice for the good of all. ... The Church itself, like its members, is always in need of being renewed and forgiven, purified for its mission, ...
Vatican II in Plain English - Vol 2 - Page 30

The Trinity

The Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
- Their nature is to Love -
Their precious gift is to love all of creation,
especially the human creation.
It flows from their nature
as Trinity - which is 'LOVE.'

The "Word" is made flesh
in a silent night. His name is 'Jesus.'
Jesus teaches us about
love in action,
touching us through his human nature.
His divine nature gives him
a Trinitarian focus -
one with the Trinity - which is Love.

The Trinity shares
words, actions, healing,
forgiveness, compassion,
actions and words that flow from love
as lived and taught by Jesus
through his humanity.

Jesus tells us that he shares
with us what he hears from the Father.
Dealing with
the human family,
the Trinity knows the importance
of the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit is sent
to enable us to live the life
and spirit that Jesus shares with us.

The Holy Spirit helps us
to love everyone - family, neighbors,
enemies, strangers, rich and poor people,
friends, soldiers, mean people, people who
do not believe in God, sinners of all kinds
(Who may even be us or people in our family.)
or politicians, employers and employees,
power people, media people, children,
cowards, bullies, and many people who
either don't know Jesus or ignore him,
or the people who are called to
follow Jesus' words and actions -
in the footsteps of St. Francis
and St. Clare.

As Jesus puts it, the Father
sends the Holy Spirit:
*"but the advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the
Father will send in my name, will teach you
everything and remind you of all that
I have told you."*
John 14:26 (REB)

Sometimes we find it difficult to live
according to the Trinitarian tradition.
But fear not! Jesus, his Father
and the Holy Spirit
enable us to follow the path
that Jesus reveals to us
in the Gospel.

Jesus teaches, by word and example,
how to walk through daily life,
learning how to love one another.

The Trinity relates to us
in all kinds of situations.
They were with me
when cutting hay on the farm,
through people I meet,
through cabinets I made,
through talks I have given,
or books I have written,
or ministries I engaged in,
or letters I have written,
through surgeries, or raking leaves,
or driving a bulldozer
or taking quiet reflective time.

*"This faith becomes clearer,
more meaningful, more
believable to others
when believers practice it
in every aspect of their daily lives.
The same Spirit likewise sanctifies
the whole world, which means
that through the Spirit
every aspect of the world
will eventually be brought
to goodness and holiness.
This will happen because the Spirit
gives gifts to each person and assists
each in using them well."*

Vatican II in Plain English - Vol 2 - Page 35

The Trinity always loves us,
asking us to pray and work so that:
*"Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven" (Mathew 6:10)*
(And we work to make it happen)

Jesus, heal our human weakness,
open us to your love and light.
Make us prayerful people
who find ways to thank you
and follow Jesus' example
in our personal lives.

We accomplish this by following the
spirit and example of St. Francis
and St. Clare of Assisi.

AMEN