

Reflecting on the Words of Francis of Assisi

I have done what is mine; may Christ teach you what is yours!

(The final words of Francis).

THIS MATERIAL CAN BE USED IN REFLECTION SESSIONS WHEN FOCUS ON THE WORDS OF FRANCIS WOULD HELP PARTICIPANTS EXAMINE SOME OF THE CORE ELEMENTS OF A FRANCISCAN WAY OF LIVING.

You could use these quotes in group discussion asking: how does this advice from Francis apply to the contemporary world? How might the rules underpin a Franciscan way of operating in communities? The following extracts are taken from the Rule written by Francis in 1221. They were written for friars but have a wider scope for all people seeking to embed Franciscanism in the everyday.

Power Structures

None of the friars is to have any power or dominion... (5:9).

Prayer and Outreach

The servants of God must always be engaged in prayer or in some good work (7:12).

Inclusion of All

And they should rejoice when they live among poor persons who are lowly and despised, among the poor and the weak and sick and the lepers and beggars by the wayside (9:2).

Joy and celebration

And let them take care not to appear outwardly as sad and gloomy hypocrites, but show they are joyful in the Lord (7:16).

Hospitality

And whoever may come to them, friend or foe, thief or robber, let them be received with kindness (7:14).

Care for the sick

If any of the brothers should fall sick, wherever he may be, the other friars are not to leave him unless one of the brothers ... is chosen who will serve him... (10:1).

Deeds not words

And by their works let them show the love they have for one another (11:6).

Catholic Identity

No brother is to preach in a manner contrary to the laws of the Church... (17:1).

Humility

... not to glory or rejoice in themselves or inwardly to pride themselves by reason of the good words and works ... which God sometimes does or says or works in them and through them... (17:6).

A NOTE ON QUOTES FROM ST FRANCIS.

Any search of the internet will surface a number of sayings attributed to Francis which are not officially accepted as his work. Over the eight centuries since his death, it is natural that words are attributed to Francis have become part of popular culture at various times and that sayings have arisen that he may have said or are paraphrases of other writings. It is recommended that when using quotes from Francis from unofficial sources, the words attributed to Francis be used to indicate their status.

Some of these quotes include:

- The deeds you do may be the only sermon some persons will hear today...
- A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows ...
- All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish a single candle...
- Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible ...
- Lord make me a channel of your peace. Where there is hatred let me sow love ...

