Written Mediation Nov, 2017

Hi Friends,

How are you? Joyful? I hope so. Basically, it comes down does to this: When we look at things in union with the eyes of God, what we see is totally different because we aren’t seeing things in regard to the “me” in us. This changes everything and becomes very expansive seeing. Actually, this is what a true contemplative sees every day. Francis and Clare saw in this manner and they changed the world because they showed everyone by their own lives that it was humanly believable and beautiful.

To quote an example from Richard Rohr, “To do a highly moral things, such as caring for the earth, but with the wrong energy (in an angry, pushy, … way), is a kind of ugly morality and not the “aroma” and “incense” of Christ. It is formally right, but somehow terribly wrong, and we sense it. Perhaps that is why so many religious and formally moral people do not seem attractive or happy to us.”

In other words, our energy must come not from “all about us being right” but radiates from our inner selves, where God lives. Actually, this becomes the only message that folks hear. People respond to our inner energies, much more than they do to our words or actions. This is probably why we hear and see the message that is so often attributed to Francis, “Preach the Gospel. Use words when necessary.” I would add, preach the joy of the gospel.

Beauty and joy even shines forth from someone who does things imperfectly - if the inner energy of the person is filled with love for others and is not so concerned of the outcome or how it will make them appear. With St. Paul, let us say, “I live no longer, not I but it is Christ now living in me” (Galatians 2:20). Where a commitment to the common good is a reality, this communicates a joy and a quiet contentment. The person is not anxious and she/he is at home and does not need to prove himself/herself to anyone, nor does he/she have to be “right”. Francis and Clare rejoiced in this ordinariness and this is the true freedom and joy of the Gospel.

When I entered the Secular Franciscan Order and later was elected to the various positions, I naively thought that every member would be loving and joyful. Reality showed me that neither the good nor the bad is restricted to a single fraternity in our Order. Both are found on all levels. We shouldn’t be shocked or horrified, as I initially was, although I must admit, I may be often hurt. In other words, we must remind ourselves that everyone is human. However as long as evil is present, there is a chance of conversion. All of this means that every Secular Franciscan has an indispensable role to play as an instrument of God’s love and joy. Even this fact points to God because that is the only place perfection lies. We must stay focused on God because even at prayer, we fall short.

So much or our weakness comes from distractions, weariness, carelessness and so on. In a spirit of quiet prayer, we should simply be conscious of God’s presence. Erroneously we believe we must keep busy by verbalizing our thoughts or feelings. The Trinity is already within us doing all the work. We simply need to become aware of it.

Therefore, let us pray for each other so the Trinity would gift us with this awareness which brings love and joy, becomes a natural way of living for us as it did for Francis and Clare.

The material for this audio was inspired by “Eager to Love” by Richard Rohr O.F.M and wishing to share my love and joy with all of you. We hope this brief meditation helps us all reach our most important goal ~ to grow into a more loving and joyful intimate relationship with God so as to become one with Him in mind, heart, and actions.

The speaker in this audio is Marie Thomas, Regional Minister of the Five Franciscan Martyrs Region and the technical support was provided by G. Lamar Thomas.