

MEDITATIONS FOR HOLY HOUR
BEFORE
LITURGY OF COMMITMENT

1. Vocation

"If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. " (Lk. 9:23-24).

"Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me" (In. 6:37-38).

"The Franciscan Missionaries of Jesus Crucified (FMJC) is a community of lay women and men who respond to a special call from the Lord. Members live lives of total consecration to God, in the spirit of the beatitudes, to fulfill a mission in the world." (Constitution, Article 1)

"The FMJC charism is to help Jesus carry his cross through professing the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience, with the promise of the apostolate of service to the Catholic Church and to those who suffer in any way, according to the spirit of St. Francis, in a completely secular condition of life, in order to effect a Gospel leaven in the world." (Constitution, Article 1)

2. Gospel Life

"The Most High Himself revealed to me that I must live according to the norms of the Holy Gospel" (Testament of St. Francis).

“the essence of the way of life of Franciscan Missionaries of Jesus Crucified

is this: 'to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, in poverty and in chastity' (Second Rule of S10 Francis, Chapter I). The counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience are three aspects of the one mystery of charity which has Love as its source." (Constitution, Article 11)

3. Chastity

"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (In. 13:34-35).

"By committing themselves in consecrated chastity, Missionaries answer the call of grace and give themselves to God with total and undivided love. In and with Jesus Christ they love, without distinctions or conditions, all members of the human family.

"Aware that God's gift of consecrated chastity is given for the common good, Missionaries place themselves at the complete disposal of the Father, conforming themselves to Christ and being open to the love which the Holy Spirit infuses in their hearts. In this way they acquire that interior freedom which begets spiritual fruitfulness. They appear in the world as a prophetic sign of the reign of God." (Constitution, Article 12)

4. Poverty

"If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Mt. 19:21)

"In response to the gift of poverty and in imitation of S10 Francis, Missionaries bind themselves to live in conformity to Christ who was poor. They value created goods as gifts of the Father and oblige themselves to use

them with detachment and freedom of heart. In this way created goods become steps which lead the Missionaries to God, the Supreme Good (8t. Bonaventure, Life of Francis, IX, 1).

"Missionaries accept their status as creatures subject to the consequences of sin. They see the limitations imposed by disability, family responsibilities and social condition as means of practicing poverty. Missionaries regard as gifts the assistance they receive from others and accept help graciously and with gratitude and humility. In providing assistance they keep in mind that what they do for others, they do for Jesus Crucified (Mt. 25 :40).

"Though Missionaries retain their property and the use of their goods, they consider themselves merely the stewards of possessions which in reality belong to God. They seek occasions to share generously with others their energies, work, time, money and resources. They seek a life of simplicity and moderation as a sign of charity and justice among all people.

"Through their vow of poverty, Missionaries oblige themselves to present each year to their Local Minister a Stewardship Accounting and to receive approval for their expenditures. Local Ministers, as servants of their sisters and brothers, should assist them to be as independent as possible." (Constitution, Article 13)

5. OBEDIENCE

"Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ... " (Heb. 5:8-9).

"In conformity to Christ who "became obedient unto death" (Phil. 2:8), Missionaries together with Christ make their entire lives a single oblation to the Father.

"Docile to the Spirit and attentive to the call of grace, Missionaries, accept in faith the will of God expressed by those who represent him. They participate in the life of the ecclesial community with a lively sense of coresponsibility and of fidelity to the teaching authority of the Church. They are attentive constantly to the call of God expressed in the various situations of life, particularly in their relations with their fellow human beings.

"In a lifestyle requiring them to face with full personal responsibility situations ever new and often difficult, Missionaries prove their true missionary character.

"By the vow of obedience, Missionaries accept the obligation to be faithful to the Constitution and the Rule of Life (Particular Norms of the present Constitution) and within these limits to be obedient to the superiors of the Institute in a spirit of openness and of dialogue. At all times they seek to know and do the will of God rather than their own will." (Constitution, Article 14)

6. PRAYER

"With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones ... " (Eph. 6:18).

"It was his custom to divide up the time given him to merit grace, and, as seemed necessary to him, to give part of it to working for the good of his neighbors and the rest to the blessed retirement of contemplation" (1 Celano, 91).

"Like St. Francis, "the man who became prayer," (Celano, 2nd life, 95) Missionaries strive to realize constant union with God through an intense life of prayer.

"Missionaries are to be open to the Spirit who "intercedes with inexpressible groanings" (Rom. 8:26). At all times and in every encounter with others, they tend to grow in the spirit of faith which reveals God as the origin, center and end of all created reality and leads to praise and thanksgiving.

"In union with the whole Church, in order to respond faithfully to their vocation, and in order that their apostolic action spring forth from their union . with Christ, the Missionaries are assiduous in prayer, listening and meditating upon the Word; they observe the annual retreats and monthly days of recollection as set by the Institute; when possible, they attend the daily celebration of the Eucharist, the source and strength of their entire consecrated life; they receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently; they avail themselves of a spiritual director and may seek, outside the relationship of obedience and if so desired, spiritual counsel from the Ministers of the Institute.

"United to Christ in their prayer life, Missionaries are motivated by that great love with which Jesus Crucified has loved us and give their lives for the service of others (see In. 15: 13). In prayer the Missionaries offer to God the joys and sufferings, the aspirations and pleas of all humanity and return from prayer with renewed love for all people. (Constitution, Article 17)

7. AUTHORITY

" ... Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master, ' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If L therefore, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it. "(In. 13: 12-17).

"Authority in the Institute shall be exercised as a ministry of service. Missionaries shall be chosen for positions of authority without regard to disability and as directed by this Constitution. The Institute, in so far as possible, should assist Missionaries with disabilities to obtain whatever assistive devices are necessary to allow them to carry out the obligations of administration. Missionaries should be willing to share whatever they have with the Institute." (Constitution, Article 26)

8. CHURCH MISSION

"To be in the world, that is, to be engaged in secular values, is your way of being Church, and of making her present, of saving yourselves and of announcing salvation. Your existence and sociological condition become your theological reality, it is your way to realize and testify to salvation" (Paul VI to Directors General of Secular Institutes, 20 Sept. 1972)

"... your consecrated life, in the spirit of the evangelical counsels, is the expression of your undivided loyalty to Christ and to the Church, of the permanent and radical striving toward holiness, and the awareness that, in the last analysis, it is only Christ who, with his grace, carries out the work of redemption and transformation in the world. It is deep in your hearts that the world is consecrated to God" (Paul VI, 25th anniversary of *Provida Mater*, 2 Feb. 1972).

"Missionaries collaborate in spreading the reign of God. They become an original sign of the mission of the Church in the world. Missionaries bear witness to the dignity of the person and the sanctity of human life. They direct human values to God while living authentically their secular condition, assuming its duties and bearing its responsibilities." (Constitution, Article 2)

"He filled the whole earth with the Gospel of Christ ... preaching the kingdom of God to everyone; and edifying his hearers not less by his example than by his word, he made a tongue out of his whole body" (I Celano, 97).

"Through Baptism Missionaries are incorporated into Christ. As a result they share in the priestly, prophetic and royal mission of the people of God. By means of the evangelical counsels they assume the obligation of living in a radical manner their union with Christ and the Church, and of being totally at the service of their neighbors. Their entire life as members of the Institute is apostolate and mission.

"Missionaries are called to live exemplary Christian lives in the ordinary circumstances of every day. They give witness to Gospel values in their family, church, work, civic and social environments. In addition, those graced with the special vocation of suffering, or of serving the suffering, can make a positive contribution within and to the Church. Like Jesus they strive always "to serve and not to be served" and to permeate their environment with the spirit and love of Jesus Christ." (Constitution, Article 7)

"Missionaries live the spirit of the beatitudes in the world. In every situation they are to act as salt, light and leaven to promote Christian values and to sanctify the world." (Constitution, Article 8)

"In keeping with the Franciscan spirit, Missionaries combine in every situation humility and simplicity with their sense of responsibility. At all times and in all circumstances they strive to establish justice and peace.?" (Constitution, Article 9)

9. PERSEVERANCE

"...Jesus said, 'No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God'" (Lk. 9:62)