

800th Jubilee Celebration of the SECOND LETTER TO THE FAITHFUL (1221) St. Francis of Assisi

We must hate our bodies with their vices and sins because the Lord says in the Gospel:

All evils, vices and sins come from the heart.

We must love our enemies and do good to those who hate us.

We must observe the commands and counsels of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must also deny ourselves and place our bodies under the yoke of servitude and holy obedience as each one has promised to the Lord.

And let no one be bound to obey another in anything in which crime or sin would be committed.

Second Letter to the Faithful, 37-41

God called St. Francis and inspired him to pass the Gospel message to the people of his time, just as He does to us in the present moment. Where evil, vices and sin were and are the order of the day, God is calling us to leave sin behind and work for a world of innocence of heart, seeking good in all, where peace and love are a sign of God's love.

The charism does not die with the founder or the foundress but is kept alive in the lives of the followers. The Franciscan charism is the Gospel message which Francis lived and which guided him up to the end of his life. "A clean heart create for me, God; renew within me a steadfast spirit." (Ps 51:12). As followers of St. Francis, we are in the present world, where greed, prestige, wealth, knowledge, social media are "virtues" that destroy all the good contained in the Gospel. Our challenge is: Does our pursuit of wealth and status lead to our neglect of our relationship with God and neighbor?



In this century we experience cultural, racial, color, religion and political differences which prevent us from being the family of God. But to the wicked God says, "Why do you recite my commandments and profess my covenant with your lips. You hate discipline, you cast my words behind you." (Ps 50:16-17) Jesus said to us, "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." (Jn 13: 34-35). St. Francis is inviting us to live our Gospel calling to the full as Franciscans. The misuse of personal rights has made it difficult for the religious to listen to the voice of Christ through dialogue with superiors where one wants to have his/her way instead of listening to the voice of Christ through the superior. Abandoning prayer life is also a danger to our commitment to God. "Do not be led astray, bad companions corrupt good morals." (1 Cor 15:33). Each one is called to review his/her intentions of living the charism of St. Francis.

Francis of Assisi, lead us to the Lord. Amen.

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