



INTERNATIONAL FRANCISCAN CONFERENCE of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Pax et Bonum!

The holiest week of the year is upon us as we journey with Christ through His day of glory and praise into Jerusalem, celebrate with Him at the commemoration of the First Eucharist, suffer with Him at Golgotha, wait with Him in the tomb and rise with Him in Hope for a better life on Easter Sunday.

As we look at our world today, it is sometimes easy to forget that God is with us and it is even easier to lose hope. Yet this Holy Year of Jubilee encourages us to be “Pilgrims of Hope” and the Year of the 800th commemoration of the Canticle of Creation reminds us that we are called to be the countercultural signs of Gratitude, Hope and Joy today. We are called to see the little signs of hope and joy around us and to gratefully spread the good news. Most of us will never experience a “major” miracle to renew our hope, but is not the sign of a tree that looks dead in winter budding forth with leaves and blossoms in spring a “minor” miracle? If you ever held a newborn infant and examined the tiny fingers and toes and eyes and smile, is not that a “minor” miracle? Are not these reasons to renew our hope? As we read the Canticle of Creation, does not each phrase call us again to look at the world anew and give thanks for the minor miracles around us?



As we reflect on the life of Christ throughout this Holy Week and how Christ’s body was transformed through suffering and death to a new glorified body, may God grant us the wisdom to see how we can help our world, our Church, our earth be transformed from the darkness of despair to a new life of hope and peace. The theme of our upcoming Assembly “Franciscans, Repair my World” calls us to the same commitment. How can we, small as we are, perhaps not even very influential, make a difference? Alone, we probably cannot make much of a difference BUT together we are many and quite strong. Together, we can make a difference.

Francis was a poor man of Assisi, yet what a difference he and his followers have made in the world throughout history. Called to be countercultural, we too can be the heralds of hope in a world so much in need of hope. Called to be peacemakers, we too can lobby for peace in a world engulfed in hatred and so many wars. Called to embrace the leper, we too can be the voice for immigrants and refugees in a world focused on turning them away.

In this Year of Jubilee, may the message of hope, given to us by the Resurrection inflame within us the burning desire to be Pilgrims of Hope to the world.

In this Year of the Cantic, may the experience of new life in the Resurrection call us to Repair the World and bring new life to all its People.



Have a Blessed Holy Week and Easter!



Sister Frances Marie Duncan and the Councilors of IFC-TOR