**Prayer, Contemplation, Sacraments (Rule 8)**

***Rule 8*** *As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do.*

 *Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.*

Sr. Ilia Delio, ofs, writes, “no person is too ordinary to contemplate God…..everyone is called to contemplation….If we have been following the path of Franciscan prayer all along, we realize that this path of prayer is a contemplative one.” One of the most natural ways of contemplating God is highlighted for us by Francis in his “Canticle of Brother Sun”. Lester Bach, wrote, “St Francis unveils the whole of creation as the place of revelation of a loving God.” Francis saw the image of God in all of creation and the canticle expresses this joy of all things created. When we take time to look at creation be it the tiniest flower, the majestic trees, the birds or gaze at the canopy of night stars, we can’t help but be struck at wonder of these. If we go to a quiet outdoor place and sit in silence we begin to experience the awesomeness of creation, God’s creation. That is contemplation; that is prayer.

But what about you and I? For Franciscans contemplating creation is just the beginning. Sr. Ilia says that progression of prayer that leads to contemplation begins with the gaze on the crucified Christ and continues to penetrate our soul until we begin to see the charity hidden in the heart of Christ. This contemplation brings us to a deepening of love, of transformation (of change). This *love* helps us to feel and taste the hidden sweeten of God. “It exposes oneself to the joys and sorrows of being human, the joy of God’s all-embracing love and the sorrow of the cross – heart mind and soul – to transform to our whole being….”.

Clare saw the face as disclosing “the person in a particular way and therefore reflects one’s personal identity or self-expression. To study one’s face in the (mirror of) the cross means to question the form and shape of one’s life. To come to the knowledge of who we are is to discover the treasure within each of us, the image of God in which we are created and by which we are in relationship with God. **I must find God within myself if I am to enjoy the fullness of my humanity**.

The Eucharist is central to Church life, it is center to the life of fraternity and it means Jesus is the center of fraternity life. Eucharist is the sacrament of the life of Jesus…but also the resurrection of Jesus…the good news! Eucharist deepens our faith in the Lord’s presences. In turn this fuels our prayer life as by participating in the other sacraments.

Material taken from *Franciscan Prayer* by Sr. Ilia Delio, osf and *Called to Rebuild the Church* by Lester Bach, OFMcap.

**Questions:** What can I do to enhance my prayer life?

How will this help me live my Franciscan life?

Be prepared to share your thoughts?