

Testament Reflections

Introduction:

Br. John : Francis has gone to his eternal reward. **Now** what are we to do?

During the last two years of his life, in addition to preaching and living with the crosses of his various health issues, Francis wrote a *Testament* to his brothers. Over the years there have been a variety of explanations of the word “Testament” – a few were “last will”, simply “a letter”, “final admonitions”. In an article in 1966 *Franciscan Herald Press*, Auspicius von Corstanje suggested a biblical interpretation of the word – “an expression of God’s covenant (*testament*) with the Poor Francis & his brothers”. So, it is a letter from St. Francis admonishing (*reminding and encouraging*) his brothers to be faithful to the covenant they had made with God. St. Francis advises them, “it is not a new Rule, but a remembrance, an admonition, an exhortation, my *Testament*; keep it with you next to the Rule”.

Penance:

Who are **my** lepers? Those whom **I** try to avoid?
When someone “pushes my buttons”, do I respond with harsh words or derogatory remarks?

Faith in Churches

How attentive am I to the readings & prayers during Mass?

Do I “chitchat” with the persons near me before, during or right after Mass?

Do I find time to “adore” our LORD, outside of Mass?

Respect for priests

How reverently do I approach our Lord in the Holy Eucharist?

How do I respond to the weaknesses & failures of priests?

Do I continue to respect them & maintain a relationship with them?

Do they become some of my “lepers”?

Brotherhood/Fraternity

Do I have more than a superficial relationship with my Fraternity members?

Do I use my God-given gifts to support & encourage our members & the projects the fraternity plans?

Do I try to be loving & compassionate to family members, neighbors, co-workers & others when they are difficult to be around?

Can I collaborate with them even when they are difficult?

Do I find it difficult to relate to non-human creation as “brothers & sisters” as Francis did?

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Live the Gospel

*Do I find it difficult to have Jesus as my role model?
Do I find time to read/pray with Sacred Scripture –
the Divine Office?*

*Is my Prayer Life almost totally filled with a pattern
of ritual prayers?*

*Do I make time for “conversational” or “reflective”
prayer?*

*Do I make time to listen for God’s wisdom &
guidance?*

***(Prayer is the lifting of one’s mind & heart to
God.)***

Work

*Work is doing anything that uses my time, my
energy & my attentiveness. From a spiritual
perspective, when done with love, work is/can be an
act of creation, an easing of the pain of loneliness, of
no longer being able to do the things I did when
younger, etc.*

Do I trust God to supply for my needs?

Minority

*One may accept privileges & rewards that are
offered – just don’t seek them.*

*Recall Jesus’ parable about the wedding feast & the
guest who chose a higher place at the table!*

Poverty

*For Francis & his early followers, material poverty
was a greater challenge than spiritual poverty. For
those of us in the First World, spiritual poverty is
the greater challenge. For a large percentage of us,
advancement, success & power are our primary
concerns; many of us “don’t have time for prayer –
for God”.*

*Are prayer and/or God on the bottom of my “to-do”
list.*

*Do I share my God-given gifts/talents as well as my
“material goods” with others?*

*Do I “reduce, re-use, re-purpose & recycle”? Do I
limit my waste?*

Obedience to superiors and Superiors be faithful to one’s duties

Do I listen to & respect civil & ecclesial leaders.

*When I am called to be a leader, do I fulfill my
duties faithfully with love & respect for those being
led?*

*Am I a “Good Shepherd” – do I tend to my
responsibilities but also tend to the needs of those
outside of the leadership circle?*