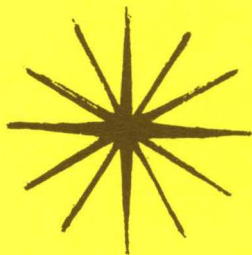


Order of
Franciscans
and
Franciscan Brothers



ORDER OF
FRANSISTERS AND FRANBROTHERS

By

Laurel Elizabeth Keyes

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*Gentle Living Publications
2168 South Lafayette St.
Denver, Colorado 80210
U.S.A.*

ORDER OF FRANSISTERS AND FRANBROTHERS

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring love,
Where there is doubt let me bring faith,
Where there is darkness let me bring light,
Where there is sadness let me bring joy.

Oh, Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console,
To be understood, as to understand
To be loved, as to love

for

It is in giving that we receive,
It is in forgiving that we are pardoned
and

It is in loving that we find eternal joy.

The Order was founded in 1963 upon this prayer. The purpose of the Order is to help people become aware of their inner potentialities, to find peace and live a joyous life, free from most of the problems which, through ignorance, we impose upon ourselves, and to feel that our living has made a beneficial contribution to the whole of humanity.

The Order is inter-religious. In the philosophies and religions of the world we find more similarities than differences. "As silver thread seen through crystal beads," there is a theme of love running through them, binding them into one Ideal.

As spokes in a wheel are joined at the hub, even though they appear to be widely separated or in opposition at the rim, so all religious concepts spread from a central core of one Truth. When traced back to the hub we find that they have been inspired by the same Source.

Usually religious ideals represent the best in a person or a people and influence behavior, culture, government and progress more than any other factors. If we do not respect another's "best" we deny ourselves the opportunity of accepting his best in our presence.

Until we can understand and respect this best in others, as well as ourselves, we can do little to achieve world peace.

We adopted the familiar prayer of St. Francis, "Lord, make me an instrument—"because of its simplicity and all encompassing love-in-action.

If it seems to differ from other Franciscan Orders it is that we embrace all religions and we focus not so much upon the life of St. Francis as upon the ideal which caused him to be unique. That ideal was identity.

We become that with which we identify. St. Francis identified himself with the life of Jesus so completely that he was called the Imitator, the "Little Jesus."

When we identify with the highest and best that we know, our lives improve constantly.

It is this daily, hourly identity with our Ideal which gives us the freedom and joyousness which all people seek.

"Until man begins to make order in his own soul he will always be an easily led and helpless victim, blindly obedient to the mass, and can never become a free mem-

ber of the community," *nor at peace with himself.

GENERAL INTENTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE ORDER

To be a Franbrother or Fransister is to accept and feel that whatever one does is worthy of being an offering of love and that it is important to do one's best because it is important to Life to know that one of Its extensions is coming closer to its source, and freedom, through these intentions:

I. To be joyous, kind and grateful, these three aspects of a whole which is love.

II. To have reverence for all life—human, animal and plant.

III. To accept all people as children of God and all forms of worship as acceptable for those using them; if in acting upon them the devotee grows more helpful, more forgiving and more loving, then his form of worship is right for him. He is bringing out his "imprisoned splendor."

IV. To make Free Time each day in which to communicate with the Ideal and wait upon It for an answer in one's heart. "Each of us has a cloister in his or her own heart. If we do not learn how to dwell there happily, to take our mental rest and some of our mental nourishment there, we are untrue to ourselves." When we rest in that silence, "problems

* (Psychology of C. G. Jung, by Jolande Jacobi, p. XIV)

become surprisingly simplified and life gloriously enriched."*

V. To accept the Poverty of Indulgence. Living in the world it would be difficult and impractical to renounce possessions. But we can renounce things as being our possessions (and being possessed by them) and instead consider ourselves custodians of whatever comes into our lives and to use them rightfully, without waste or greed. We can renounce harmful and destructive thoughts, emotions and words, and inclinations to habits of weakness and compulsion.

VI. To live out of the conviction that "The main purpose of living is to find and know God, for without that there can be no happiness and life without happiness is futile."**

VII. To offer one's self, the day, every task, problem and joy to God to use, "For the glory of Life, the benefit of all mankind and the fulfillment of my own divine nature."

* "Spaces for Silence" by Mother Mary Francis, Abbess of Poor Clare Monastery.

** Quotation from Rama-Krishna, a saint of the last century.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY

We would not recognize our physical appearance if we had never seen our reflection in a mirror. We do not recognize our Real Self unless we see it reflected through the lives of people who have influenced the world for lasting benefits.

As the snowflake has a pattern, and every seed has a pattern for growth, blooming and fruition, so do we have within us a pattern of perfection. It waits for our recognition and acceptance of it to manifest outwardly in our lives. In our daily Free Time it begins to emerge and live.

If any thinks that his life is unimportant he should remember that Gandhi, who was a mighty instrument of peace, told us that "Everyone has a message for the world. His life is his message."

Another man in England said, "In the place where you are in life there is a work of the highest importance to be done and no one else can do your work. Life brought you to this place and time in order to carry out perfect laws. You are an important part of all life and the future of all life will be, in some manner, affected for better or worse by you and how you live today."

By your creative nature you hold a part of the future in your hands and heart. Mold it with your best.

Accept your Ideal and, as St. Francis did, identify yourself with it so that it can live in you and through you, and encourage others to find their joy.

Ancient Teachings and Scriptures indicate that the achievement of the goal is by choosing to live up to the

"highest and best" which one recognizes. Identity with the Ideal leads one to the Real.

"We become what we focus our attention upon."

"Act as a saint and you become a saint" are sayings which have been guides through the ages.

RESTORATION

Purposes of the Order

The first Purpose of the Order is to help its members realize their potentialities, to become acquainted with their Real Self and begin to function in it. To direct their lives to freedom and joyousness, here and now. The Daily Meditation and Communion booklets are designed to assist in this.

The second Purpose is to make Retreats possible. In every community there is a room or house, cabin in the mountains or by a lake, or a church, well-equipped with nursery, kitchen and Chapel (which can be used during the week) where Retreats for one day may be held. While longer Retreats are desirable, many people find it impossible to be away from their homes or work for more than one day. If the One-Day-Retreat is properly observed more benefit may be realized from it than from an average week's vacation. The keynote of all Retreats is, "Be Still and Know—"

A Retreat should be regarded as a Restoration of the whole being.

Few of us have had opportunity to be still and know ourselves in the daily encounter with noise, talking, duties

and intrusions and seldom have found even a few moments which could be called our own.

Everyone has a need to 'fill the cup from which so many come to drink.' We give of our time, our love and ourselves in serving, in making a living, studying and other activities. We long for time to become acquainted with the real person who seems buried and denied under the many demands and pressures.

In the daily Communion* with our Ideal, we feel whole again. We bring our attention from the scattered areas into focus and balance. We feel in command of our life and that we are able to meet the requirements made of us—and joyously.

The third Purpose is to establish Restoration Centers where people may go for longer periods of time, a week or a month, and "live the life" of peace and fulfillment, so that a pattern may be established which will sustain them when they return to their daily activities.

SPECIFIC INTENTIONS FOR FRANSISTERS

The intention of the Fransister is to identify herself with the Ideal. Then, to carry the peace and joy experienced in the quiet moments into all departments of her daily living.

She is a Fransister who holds womanhood at its highest expression.

*Not intended to replace church communion. This is a functioning meditation.

She is feminine, gentle and above all else, loving. Therefore, joyous.

She does not wish to smoke or drink or indulge in anything detrimental to the body or mind.

She does not wish to use vulgar or ugly language or let any speech wound another.

She does not wish to gossip, or to give form to destructive thoughts or feelings.

She considers herself custodian of whatever she has and spends money wisely.

She discerns the difference between needs and wants and lives an uncluttered life.

She uses the basis of cleanliness and simplicity in her dress and grooming, knowing that beauty is the result of inner peace and joy.

She makes her home an oasis for her loved ones, being concerned for their wellbeing and best interests, and spiritual growth. This is her trust and privilege.

She realizes the power of the magnetic force which causes her to be the molder and to give form to physical children, and manifestations of the best in religion, education, government, art and music through her inspiration.

She loves—as the sun gives its light, not asking in return for if she is a Fransister her cup is filled with God's love, and overflowing, so that she has an abundance to share with others. (Because of this she will be loved in return by all who know her!)

She upholds the Good wherever she finds it and always seeks ways to "transform through love." (This is not weak resignation, but embracing the problem with the convic-

tion that Love, through her, will change it from shadow to light.)

She is a Fransister who expresses the best of all of the spiritual concepts of the ages and lets this eternal Good live in her and pass on through her to bring light and joy to future lives.

SPECIFIC INTENTIONS FOR FRANBROTHERS

A Franbrother is responsible for directing his life in a manner befitting his highest ideals as a man. He is an example of what he knows deep in his heart and being is the image of excellence of the male positive principle. He strives to achieve the character of the Perfect Man in every area of his life: family, business, social and religious.

The Franbrother seeks to know his Self in all of its manifestations and to bring about a balance of the so-called "parts" of his being: Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual. He recognizes that knowledge without action leads only to further dis-harmony.

A Franbrother may choose to imitate any great leader or teacher the world has known, but he also seeks to understand and emulate the highest qualities of the Order's namesake, St. Francis of Assisi.

If a Franbrother is married, he assumes his proper role as leader, authority and, as it were, "abbot" of his family community. He endeavors always to carry out the responsibility of directing discipline in his own life and in that of his family with a balance of Love and Compassion. He has the courage and understanding to listen carefully to the other members of his family in order better to

assist and direct them in their own self-realization and manifestation of the perfection within.

A Franbrother refrains from "recruiting" or advertising the Order in his social life. Rather, he provides an example of the ideals of the Order for those with whom he deals in his everyday life: his honesty serves as a provocative stimulant to others in their business, family and community dealings; his gentleness forcefully demands that the other men with whom he deals restrict their behavior to that of a Gentleman; his humility emphasizes the quality of his works rather than his personality; his courageous and loving attitudes inspire all he meets with the desire to live life as he does; his joyful face and manner excite all he knows to search within themselves for the source of joy and peace he has discovered; since he carries out any and every duty assigned him as though he were creating a great work of art, his manner sparks in his associates a new awareness of the importance of their own work; his moderation challenges the waste and excess perpetrated by many who meet and deal with him.

A Franbrother does not seek to do good in the world - he is good. All that he does he attempts to make a conscious expression of God.

The Franbrother's vestments are Light and Love; his cowl is Humility and Gentleness; his ring is authority and courageous leadership; his mantle is compassion and understanding, and his sandals are right desires and high inspiration. He was made in the image of the Father and attempts to fulfill that image.

The specific aim of the Order is to assist its members in

living in harmony with their inner spiritual guidance.
Regular meetings provide inspiration in areas of spiritual interest and concern.

The Franbrother's Self-Affirmation:

I am a Franbrother.

I manifest the Father, the Active Positive Principle
of the universe.

I am an instrument of Peace.

I am active Love which destroys Hate.

My wholeness heals where there is injury.

My knowing is the Faith which overcomes Doubt.

I am the Hope which saves those in despair.

I am the Joy which drowns out sorrow with warmth.

I beseech the Divine Master through me

To console those from whom I have sought
consolation,

To understand those whom I have asked to
understand me,

To love all that is in my world,

For

In giving I have received,

In forgiving I have been forgiven,

In loving I have found Eternal Joy.

—Franbrother Fred

Franbrothers and Fransisters can worship God in any church or temple, or in none. "God is one, where there is love there are no barriers."

Members of the Order never attempt to change another's religious concepts by argument or discussion. If their

attitude of love exemplifies more desirable traits, we acknowledge the right of others to see this for themselves and follow the example if they wish. By example one may have more influence than by all of the words one might speak.

For the unity of spirit among people it seems unnecessary to try to unify the churches or creeds any more than it would be desirable or practical for all people to live in one type of house or eat one food. Each denomination has grown to fill a need at a given time. As we enjoy visiting friends who live in houses of different architectural pattern, and eat different foods, we should enjoy the freedom of visiting in other religious architecture and taste various spiritual foods. This does not mean that we would wish to change from one to another, but we could have broader viewpoints, new appreciation and be inspired to improve our own. Since all spiritual paths have the same goal really, we can love one another as we move toward our goals.

If this seems a beautiful theory but impossible to practice, let us give assurance that it is being practiced "here and now."

The nucleus which formed in Denver has members of the Order who attend the following churches and temples: Episcopal, Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Christian Science, Church of Christ, Quaker, Religious Science, Unity, Jewish, Vedanta and others of which we do not know. And, some have no church affiliation. These outer garments of their inner spiritual natures are attractive rather than divisive.

We recognize that we do not live in a world common to all. Each of us lives in a private world which we have created with our convictions, opinions, reactions, values, memories and aspirations. We can not change the "outside" world but we can change our private worlds.

Living is a moment by moment process. We live one moment at a time, NOW. We have the power to choose how we shall live this one moment. As we decide the quality to give this moment, (hope or despair—love or hate—optimism or gloom) we make a pattern for the next moment, and all of our future! When we realize this we feel masters of our lives instead of slaves to circumstances. When we choose to live each one moment with the Ideal, the future can become ideal.

As we change ourselves by our attitudes, we may inspire others to do so and if everyone changes himself, we shall have that longed-for peace which all seek.

If you are interested in more information of the deeper meanings of the Order, or wish to send for any of our booklets, or know details about visiting the Restorium and Chapel in the Deer Creek Mountains near Denver, for a one-day-retreat or extended period, please write to:

Fransister Laurel
2168 South Lafayette St.

Denver, Colorado 80210

ISBN 978-0-9790861-1-3



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