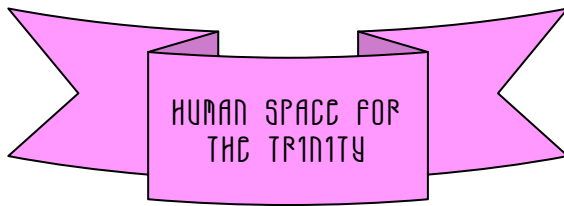


ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS
- Initial Formation for Candidates -

Module 6: "Fraternity & St Francis"
sheet 3

3. Human Space & Reciprocity



Fraternity, when authentically lived, presents itself as the human space in which the Trinity dwells.

i.e. when brothers and sisters love one another as a result of their letting the Holy Trinity dwell in them, they visibly manifest to the world the living presence of the Trinity.

Let us hear what the Apostolic Constitution on the consecrated life

[*Vita Consecrata*, 41] teaches—

‘Actually, the Church is essentially a mystery of communion, “a people made one by the unity of the **Father**, the **Son** and the **Holy Spirit**”.

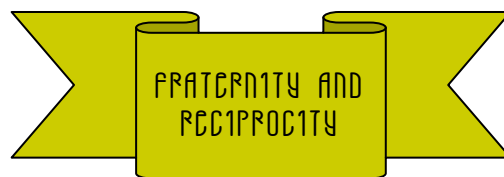
The fraternal life intends to reflect the depth and richness of this mystery, presenting itself as a human space inhabited by the Trinity,

[the Latin is: ‘veluti humanum spatium se praebens quod Trinitas occupant’ , literally: ‘**offering itself as the human space which the Trinity occupies**’]

which generates in history the gifts of communion proper to the three divine Persons.’

Fraternity exists only through the mutual relation of each individual with all the others, taken individually.

- Francis only uses 'fraternity' 10 times
- the preference is for 'frater' [brother] which appears in the Franciscan Sources 3143 times!
- reason—
FRATERNITY IS A RECIPROCALITY



I think I'm a bit confused here. What exactly...?

Well, this has an anthropological foundation which corresponds to the dialogic ['to speak across': Greek—dia {across} + logo {speak} = having a mutual cross relation of understanding and sharing] and community structure of human beings. 'Man' was 'thought' and created in the image of God; Jesus revealed this, and he has within himself a dialogic nature—three Persons who love each other and reciprocally donate themselves to each other.

Brothers—receive one another as gifts, and in fraternity learn the deep meaning of unselfish, self-offering, charitable love. Each gives to each; each receives from each. Reciprocity is firmly rooted in gratuitousness. This they learned from Jesus himself in the way he behaved towards them—

After washing their feet, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you...A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." [John 13.12-16, 34f]

The love of Jesus, the love that comes from above, from God to us, is entirely gratuitous. God's love does not appropriate us for himself, quite the contrary: it is a dynamism that drives man toward the others. And it is by loving our brothers and sisters that we return God's love.

Got it?



Got it!