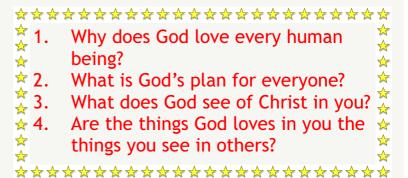
- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -



Part 4: Building the Kingdom of God on Earth

6. Seeing Christ in Others

As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the first born of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ. Rule 13





Jesus said, 'the poor you have always with you'. In every village, town and city, you will find the poor. The reasons for poverty differ, but there are poor people in our society...The person of faith should bear in min the words of Christ...Faith invites us to see all these people in their glorified condition, when on the Last Day they will be made like unto the glorified Christ. But now they are in a lowly condition, and many of them, like Christ at the time of his Passion, are scorned and rejected of men. But what can the individual Secular Franciscan do?...More can be done by a group than by an individual. And in each Fraternity there ought to be a group effort, to cope with some particular social need...Today a more radical and imaginative approach is needed, to rid some sections of society of structures which keep [people] enslaved to a substandard level of existence. Barriers that militate against proper housing conditions...should be removed...Structures which allow the rich to become richer and condemn the poor to become poorer should be done away with; everything that makes for a just society should be tried and promoted.

Peter O'Grady Rebuild My Church 41-42

"...it is perfectly true and it is vitally important that Christ was the pattern on which St Francis sought to fashion himself; and that at many points their human and historical lives were seen curiously coincident; and above all, that compared to most of us at least, St Francis is a most sublime approximation to his Master, and, even in being an intermediary and a reflection, is a splendid and yet merciful Mirror of Christ...It may give a shock if I say here, what most of us have forgotten, that if St Francis was like Christ, Christ was to that extent like St Francis...What I mean is this: that if men find certain riddles hard in the sayings in the story of Galilee, and if they find the answers to those riddles in the story of Assisi, it really does show that a secret has been handed down in one religious tradition and no other. It shows that the casket that was locked in Palestine can be unlocked in Umbria..."

G K Chesterton St Francis of Assisi p 134

Scripture—

Matt 25. 31-46

'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I as in prison and you visited me. " Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. " Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you? "Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. " And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. '