



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 4: Building the Kingdom of God on Earth

2. Repair my Church

They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.

Called like St Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.

Rule 6

Q. 1 How are we to understand "the Church is always in a state of reformation"?

Q. 2 Who are the Church "repairers" today?

Q. 3 How are you responding to the command given to St Francis?



The little church of San Damiano outside the old Assisi walls, was derelict and neglected. Masonry was loose, there were holes in the roof. But the old crucifix was hanging, in Byzantine style, above the altar, and an old priest still said mass there. The Christ-figure was not an agonized victim but the inviting Saviour with arms outstretched, as if he were saying, 'Come to me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest' [Matt 11.28]. It was to such a place that Francis came, inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit, and disillusioned with the knightly ambitions which had fired him earlier, he felt an inner voice telling him to go in and pray...



As he knelt before the crucifix he heard a tender and compassionate voice speaking to him: 'Francis, do you not see that my house is falling into ruin? Go and repair it for me.' Trembling and amazed, Francis replied, 'Gladly I will do so, O Lord.' As he began to obey, he realised that a work which began with building stones and manual labour led to the building up of the lives of men, women and children into the living temple of God, inhabited by the Holy Spirit. There was a long journey ahead, and **this moment of call was only the beginning of his conversion. His true conversion continued throughout his life...**

Brother Ramon SSF *A Month with Saint Francis*, Day Six 'The Call of Christ' (p 26)

Christ is the great prophet who proclaimed the kingdom of the Father both by the testimony of his life and the power of his word...he fulfils this prophetic office not only by the hierarchy..., but also by the laity. He accordingly both establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the appreciation of the faith and the grace of the word so that the power of the gospel may shine out in daily family and social life...Let them not hide this their hope then, in the depths of their hearts, but rather express it through the structure of their secular lives in continual conversion....

Vatican II *Lumen Gentium* 35



Scripture—

Isa 61. 1-4

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.