



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 4: Building the Kingdom of God on Earth

5. Being Christ to Others

Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more a man himself, let them exercise their responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service. Rule 14

A Letter to a Minister [Most probably written prior to the chapter of friars in 1223, in which they considered changes in the Rule in preparation for its papal confirmation. It was sent to an unknown provincial who was having difficulty with the brothers who sin and who desired to retire to a hermitage rather than continue in such a demanding ministry in the world. We should note Francis' compassion toward those who sin and those who minister to them.]

And if you have done this, I wish to know in this way if you love the Lord and me, his servant and yours: that there is not in the world any brother who has sinned—however much he could have sinned—who, after he has looked into your eyes, would ever depart without your mercy, if he is looking for mercy. And if he were not looking for mercy, you would ask him if he wants mercy. And if he would sin a thousand times before your eyes, love him more than me so that you may draw him to the Lord; and always be merciful with brothers such as these.

[Armstrong, Hellmann, *Short Francis of Assisi: early documents* Vol I 9–11 (p 97-98)]

The Word of God, reveals to us that 'God is love' and at the same time teaches that the fundamental law of human perfection, and consequently the transformation of the world, is the new commandment of love...This love is not something reserved for the important matters, but must be exercised above all in the ordinary circumstances of daily life. Christ's example in dying for us sinners teaches us that we must carry the cross, which the flesh and the world inflict on the shoulders of all who seek after peace and justice...Christ is now at work in the hearts of men...not only does he arouse in them a desire for the world to come but he quickens, purifies, and strengthens the generous aspirations of mankind to make life more human and conquer the earth for this purpose...the Spirit makes men free, who are ready to put aside love of self and integrate earthly resources into human life, in order to reach out to that future day when all mankind itself will become an offering accepted by God.

Vat II *Gaudium et Spes* 38



1. In II Cor 6.1-2 St Paul urges us not to accept grace in vain. Consider the urgency the apostle places on the Christian to act on behalf of others.
2. Consider the various characters mentioned in the parable of the Good Samaritan. What reactions to the needs of others are demonstrated by each of them?



Scripture—

Lk 10. 29-37

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'