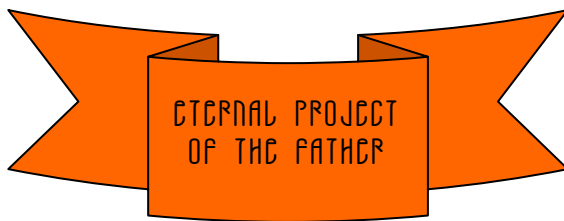


ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS
- Initial Formation for Candidates -

Module 6: "Francis & Fraternity"
sheet 2

2. Fraternity & the Father



Fraternity to achieve communion—an essential element to accomplish the eternal project of the Father.

- Christ's "High Priestly Prayer" [John 17.1-26]: Jesus speaks of 'unity' or 'communion'

In the Earlier Rule for the Friars we see the extent to which Francis uses John 17 to tell us that the words, life, doctrine and gospel of Christ are ultimately all condensed in Jesus' High Priestly Prayer—

Let us, therefore, hold onto the words, the life, and the teaching of the Holy Gospel of him who humbled himself to ask his Father for us and to make his name known to us, saying: 'Father, glorify your name and glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you [17.1]. Father, I have made your name known to the men whom you have given to me [17.6]. The words which you have given to me I have given to them; and they have accepted them and know truly that I came from you, and have believed that you sent me [17.8]. I pray for them, not for the world, but for those whom you have given me, because they belong to you and all I have is yours [17.9f]. Holy Father, protect those in your name whom you have given to me, so that they may be one as we are [17.11]. I say these things while still in the world that they may have joy within them. I gave them your word; and the world hated them because they do not belong to the world just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking that you remove them from the world, but that you protect them from the evil one [17.14f]. Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I sanctify myself, so that they may be sanctified in truth. I pray not only for these, but also for those who because of their words will believe in me [17.17-20], so that they may be completely one, and the world may know that you have sent me and that you have loved them as you have loved me [17.23]. And I shall make your name known to them, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I may be in them [17.26]. Father, I wish that where I am those whom you have given me may be with me, so that they may see your glory [17.24] in your kingdom.'



And in manifesting the eternal project of the Father for mankind, and believers in particular, Jesus resorts to increasingly engaging expressions in a crescendo reaching the deepest communion in loads of talk of ‘**ONENESS**’?

Exactly—especially in verses 11, 21-23, 26. Thus, involvement in the Trinitarian dialogue produces in believers a double communion with Father & Son, and among ourselves.

This ‘communion’ - invisible in its root, becomes visible in its manifestations: ‘that the world may know that you sent me, and you loved them even as you loved me.’ [17.23]

Jesus prays not only so that disciples may be united among themselves, but in order that their unity may be the visible prolongation of the communion of love [ἀγάπη] that is the ‘mystery of God’ himself.

Fraternity [as Francis perceives] is the prelude and essential premise to realise the **Eternal Project of the Father**: the communion of all creatures with himself, in the heart of the Holy Trinity.