



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 2: A Life of Penance and Daily Conversion

Chapter 9. Obedience to the Will of God



'obedience' =  
hearing intently

Obedience to the will of God makes everyone happy

Uniting themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed his will in the Father's hands, let them faithfully fulfil the duties proper to their various circumstances of life. Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witnessing to him even in difficulties and persecutions. Rule 10

QUESTIONS

What is the connection between 'obedience' & 'faith'? [see Heb 11.8f]

In what areas of your life is there need for greater obedience?

Is there such a thing as *Franciscan Obedience*?

Mary's obedience, Lk 1.26-38

Joseph's obedience, Matt 1.18-25;  
2.19-21

Jesus' obedience, Lk 22.39-47



Where can we find yours?

How St Francis describes on who truly obeys—three sorts of obedience

Another time, when he was sitting with his companions, blessed Francis let out a sigh: 'There is hardly a single religious in the whole world who obeys his prelate perfectly!' His companions, disturbed, said to him: 'Tell us, father, what is the perfect and highest obedience?' And he replied, describing someone truly obedient using the image of a dead body: 'Take a lifeless corpse and place it wherever you want. You will see that it does not resist being moved, does not complain about the location, or protest if left. Sit it on a throne, and it will look down, not up; dress it in purple and it will look twice as pale. This,' said he, 'is someone who really obeys: he doesn't argue about why he's being moved; he doesn't care where he is placed; he doesn't pester you to transfer him. When he's raised to an office, he keeps his usual humility, and the more he's honoured, the more he considers himself unworthy.'

On another occasion, speaking about the same matter, he said that things granted because of a request were really "permissions," but things that are ordered and not requested he called "holy obediences." He said that both were good, but the latter was safer. But he believed that the best of all, in which *flesh and blood* had no part, was the one by which one goes "among the non-believers, by divine inspiration" either for the good of one's neighbour or from a desire for martyrdom. He considered this request very *acceptable to God*.

Armstrong, Hellmann, Short *Francis of Assisi: early documents* Vol II Celano: The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul cap 112 (p 345)



## Scripture—

### Gen 22. 1-5, 9-

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, addled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.'

When they had come to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the place 'The Lord will provide', as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and he said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'