



Studying the Rule of the OFS



Chapter 2 The Form of Life

7. Since they have chosen the specific vocation of ‘brothers and sisters of penance’ *11 who are impelled by the dynamic of the gospel, let them conform their way of thinking and acting to that of Christ through a radical inner change which the gospel itself calls ‘conversion’. Because of human frailty, this needs to be put into effect every single day. *12

On this journey of renewal, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a privileged sign of the Father’s mercy and also a source of grace. *13

Footnotes:

*11 Memoriale propositi

*12 Lumen Gentium 8; Unitatis Redintegratio 4; Paenitemini, Pream.

*13 Presbyterorum Ordinis 18

Cf. General Constitutions:

Art 8.2; 13.1-3; 14.1

ENDNOTES:

In addition, let us produce worthy **fruits of penance**. And let us love our neighbours as ourselves. And if anyone does not want to love them as himself, let him at least not do any harm, but let him do good. Let whosoever has received the power of judging others pass judgment with **mercy**, as they wish to receive mercy from the Lord. For judgment will be without mercy for those who have not shown mercy. Let us, therefore, have charity and humility and give alms because it washes the stains of sins from our souls. For although people lose everything they leave behind in this world, they, nevertheless, carry with them the **rewards of charity and the alms they have given** for which they will receive a reward and a fitting repayment from the Lord. We must also fast and abstain from vices and sins and from an excess of food and drink to be **Catholics**.

I FA:ED Later Admonition and Exhortation 25-32 [p 47]

Q. What is meant by ‘fruits of penance’ here?

[Helpful might be: ‘the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.’ Gal 5.22-23]

Q. Why is the word ‘mercy’ so central to the Christian life?

[For example, see how often ‘thy mercy’ appears in the Psalms. Here is just a selection: 5.7; 6.4; 13.5; 25.7; 31.7; 33.22; 36.5; 44.26; 57.10; 59.16; 69.13; 85.7; 86.13; 90.14; 94.18; 108.4; 109.21; 115.1; 119.64; 138.8; 143.12]

Q. ‘be Catholics’ is used by Francis because here and in succeeding verses he is addressing some of the abuses found in the Cathars and the Waldensians. Who were these people? Why were they such a matter for concern to the 4th Lateran Council (1215)?

Q. Why is the word ‘reconciliation’ preferred to the word ‘penance’ for the Sacrament?

[The structure of the Sacrament is: ‘contrition, confession, satisfaction/penance’. Is the change of term {from Sacrament of Penance to Sacrament of Reconciliation} to emphasise what is done for us rather than what we do? See, II Cor 5.20 ‘be reconciled to God’]