

Peace and good to all of you!

Well, Summer is a distant memory - although we have been teased into thinking that it lingers still with some days of warmth. Autumn has been spectacular - at least here in New Jersey. Everyone agrees that the foliage has been somewhat muted this year - but the hints of cooler weather and the appearances of sweaters ease us into the inevitable Winter.

We here in the Northeast are content to take part in the progressive seasonal changes. We anticipate them and welcome the memories they bring of family customs, holidays, special foods, etc. Even our liturgy is taking on some changes as we ready ourselves for some of the changes in translation which will make our experience of Mass even more meaningful. Even the readings are beginning to get us to think about the end times. As we say good-bye to green leaves then leaves altogether and also to the familiar formulae of our liturgical prayers, we begin to think of our own passing. Before you know it, we will celebrate All Souls Day and ask ourselves how it is we are making our journey to the eternal kingdom.

As Franciscans, this is not a seasonal question. As Penitents, Secular Franciscans ask that question often - or should. Our Profession (consecration and oblation ... gift of self to the Lord) has set the pace for letting go. Consecration - the setting aside of something or someone for God's exclusive use, is an ongoing transformation from seeing this world as the place which gives us all we need to be happy, to seeing the doing of God's will and eternal life as the be all and end of of all we do and are.

By the time you read this, NaFRA, the National Fraternity, will have met in California. The Chapter will begin with a Mass of Remembrance. This is perhaps a strange way to call brothers and sisters together for a fraternal week, but it makes absolute sense when you think about it. Calling to mind our deceased sisters and brothers is more than just giving thanks for what they accomplished for the Order and who they were for us. It is the moment of looking at our destiny squarely in the face and setting goals that set us in the direction of the Kingdom to come and also to re-order Franciscan lives that will benefit the Kingdom among us.

Let us use this season to take stock spiritually of our lives. Where are we going? How are we announcing the Good News of the Kingdom and how, as Franciscan women and men, are we bring others along in that radical, joyful and hope filled manner of St. Francis? May he continue to intercede for us in answering our prayers to be faithful to our Professions and to be good signs of the presence of Christ in our world.

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