

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Happy and joyous Easter!

By the time you read this, Easter Sunday will have come and gone, but our Lord and brother, Jesus Christ, is always with us.

The great love that Jesus showed through his death and resurrection is given to us and resides in us every day of the year through the gift of Holy Spirit, *the Breath of God*.

Some friends from the National Formation Commission and I have started a weekly email "book club." We have been reading **Breath of God: Living a Life Led by the Holy Spirit** by Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR. In our reading and sharing, we have been reminded of the **gifts** of the Holy Spirit (*wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord*) and whether or not we invite the Spirit into our lives.

We have also been discussing the **FRUITS** of the Holy Spirit [*joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*] (Gal 5:22–23). We tend to overlook these, but they are very important to our lives as Franciscans. When we are blessed by the Spirit and are transformed by His love, His fruits become apparent in our lives.

As we meditate on these fruits of the Spirit, we come to realize that the gifts we have been given by the Spirit, by the Gospel, by our formation and by profession of our Rule are meant to **CHANGE** us. They are meant to **TRANSFORM** us. This is what happened to St. Francis...this is what must happen to us! Striving to **nourish** these wonderful traits, the seeds of which already live in us, is what daily **conversion** is all about.

May we prepare for the Feast of Pentecost by taking a close look at the **FRUIT we are producing**. Will others know us as followers of Christ by our joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control? How wonderful it would be if others said, "She is so kind, gentle, patient and joyful! She must be a Franciscan."

Peace and blessings,



PS: **This would be a great book for ongoing formation.** Easy reading but it provides tremendous depth for discussion.