



is being Franciscan

“The Lord gave me brothers, may God be praised.” I never get tired of saying and using this quote in my reflections. I truly believe that I did not choose brothers to live with me in a community but they are given to me by the Lord. Same way, I did not choose the people to work with but they are given to me by the Lord. For all this, I give praise to God always.

I am sure we have heard this phrase “Joy is being Franciscan.” I have heard it many times since I joined the Franciscans and have seen many posters hanging in our friaries. I have experienced a great joy being with my OFM brothers. Also, it has been a great joy to serve as the Regional Spiritual Assistant to you my brothers and sisters in St. Francis of Assisi. So far, I have been to all the fraternities of BC Coastal and I have experienced as Franciscans you radiate a joy that is unique. I am grateful to meet so many joyful Franciscans and the world needs more of it.

The true JOY of being Franciscan is when...

Jesus comes first in our life. Jesus was the first person in the life of St. Francis of Assisi. He followed Jesus from the core of his heart. For St. Francis, Jesus was the ultimate reason for his being. He was so much in love with Jesus that he was imprinted the marks of the wounds of Jesus (the Stigmata) on his feeble body. We must give Jesus the first place in our life and make Him the center of our life, all that we are, all that we do and pleasing him all in things at all times and in all places. “Prayer” (Pillar of Lent) helps us to strengthen our relationship with Him.

Others come second after Jesus. Our family, friends and neighbours, they form the second circle. We must love, serve, and care for them. Joy is therefore a by-product. We get it when we give it. St. Francis of Assisi says, “It’s in giving that we receive.” Giving of your ‘Time, Talent and Treasure’ for the growth of your fraternity members and fraternity has to come out of love and not out of obligation. “Almsgiving” (Pillar of Lent) helps us to strengthen our relationship with the other. We sacrifice something for the good of our brothers and sisters and that becomes an acceptable offering to God.

You think of yourselves last, you experience joy. When we recall and remember the times we experienced joy we will realise that it was when we thought of ourselves last. Parents are the best example for this; they always think of their family, their children before themselves and go all the way to give them their best that they can. “Fasting” (Pillar of Lent) helps us to curb our own will and desires in order to make a way for others. It helps us strengthen ourselves inwardly.

As we enter the season of Advent to celebrate the LOVE (Jesus) which is the reason for the season, let us be reminded to live the Christian JOY in our life. And as a Franciscan bear witness and give this JOY to the world... so never forget **Jesus-Others-You= JOY**.