

“Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord God, for up until now we have done less or nothing.” St. Francis of Assisi.

St. Francis of Assisi reminds us that every day is an opportunity to start fresh and to renew our response to the call of the Lord. St. Francis never felt that he had attained or completed his goal. He always looked for holiness in his life and newness in his living. Each day was his new beginning. Therefore, I believe we should begin each day with this thought and spirit; ***let us begin again***. The spirit to learn, relearn and unlearn is very critical in order to serve the fast-changing world. The signs of the time are such that we got to be on our feet to counter witness the changes.

Brothers and Sisters of the Secular Franciscan family, your vocation and service to world makes a difference. Your evangelical way of life and witness in this present world is immense and extraordinary. Just a reminder, in order to be true to our vocation, to serve the world and to go forward in our mission, we need to go back to our roots (origin). That, for sure will provide energy, spirit and guidance to face the challenges this fast-changing world places before us. Going back to our roots enables us to prophetically grasp the signs and words that God is addressing to us today, in this world of ours, without contenting ourselves with wearily repeating the past. Reality changes but the Gospel always remains the same. The Gospel invites us to conversion and penance, which we so badly need, asking for the grace of practical choices that will transform and renew whatever in us, in our fraternities and our environments, allows itself to be dominated by the “spirit of the flesh”.

Let us be rooted in the Gospel and passionately spread the Good News of Jesus in our world, wounded by war, injustice and division. The Gospel invites us to embrace our future, the one the Lord is giving us, not the one we desire, in the certainty that God’s dreams are better than ours. His plans bring full life and peace, that peace which Francis proclaimed and which sometimes, by grace, we also experience in our lives. St. Francis of Assisi sends us forth as brothers and sisters to the whole world, to bear witness to Jesus in word and deed, so as to draw everyone to the love of God. ***Brothers and Sisters, let us begin again.***

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