

Franciscan Federation - Annual Conference 2013
Minutes - July 21, 2013 - morning

Franciscan Life in Evolution

Lynn Lavin began with a few announcements.

Opening Prayer JPIC

Members of the JPIC led the assembly in the opening prayer. *Look Beneath the Surface* was the theme of the prayer, based on human trafficking. The focus this year is on forced mining for minerals. The last two years focused on other areas of human trafficking. How do we eat, touch and wear tainted materials? Through PowerPoint, Scripture quotes and specific examples of those being trafficked were intermingled to highlight the plight of the victims.

Lynn introduced today's keynote speaker, Keith Warner, OFM, who will continue our look at Franciscan life and evolution.

Keynote Presentation: Keith Warner, OFM

Social praxis in light of Christogenesis is the theme. He explained the key words in the title.

Social - Franciscans live the gospel in public, the common good is important to us,
Praxis - we are action oriented, learning and study are in service of action, rooted in the Incarnation, practice spirituality of social engagement, dynamic wisdom - the use of knowledge for the good, bring together wisdom and action

Christogenesis - the incarnation of Christ depends on the evolution of Christ in the universe,

We have a pattern of discernment to lead us in action through wisdom, we can generate positive proposals

Franciscan wisdom to live Christogenesis: primacy of Christ, dynamic of catholicity, creation as family

- How we can apply them for our present needs: novelty, creativity and future-focus
- Franciscan wisdom tradition is evangelical-action praxis, share action for the common good
- Franciscans have an open system: a paradigm of dialog with others, draw in others, share ideas; it is for animating dialog in all areas of Nature and Scripture;
- Aim our wisdom to global climate crisis, Christogenesis and Franciscan spirituality have something to say to this
- False dualisms are false choices - emerge from denial of the Incarnation; it is a root folly
- People are the cause of the global climate crisis, due to greed, lack of social ethics...
- Climate disruption is a global issue that can only be solved by wholemaking, dialog
- Ways to eliminate climate disruption: tax carbon, innovative and sustainable energy, and redress economic inequities

- We have the means to address the issue but do we have the wisdom? Franciscans have the tools to address this

New paradigms of social praxis

- Franciscans invite frugal technologists and social entrepreneurs to dialog; they work to help by creating a novel, future-oriented praxis to fight the climate crisis. Several story examples were given of entrepreneurs who are making a great impact in this area of helping the extreme poor - it is economic inclusion - that serves people, not profit
- Re-aligned, re-designed capitalism can serve the common good. This is a social-business concept.
- Technology - disruptive innovation- looks at ways that technology can upset the status quo of the social and environmental injustices of those being excluded. Keith again gave specific examples of people/organizations who address the needs of the excluded through the use of technology
- How can we apply these innovations? *Energy-poverty* is the term used to describe those "out of the grid," mostly in the tropical areas; Distribute sustainable , renewable energy sources such as solar energy panels. Several companies/organizations were highlighted.

Franciscan partnerships for global social praxis

- Franciscans have traditionally provided health care and education to women and children, north of the equator. The global reality for us now is to focus south of the equator.
- Three words to open us up to the new: SHARE Franciscan awareness with the global south by helping with formation programs; INVEST in innovated social enterprises, social impact investment; measure the value of the return with how it impacts those socially in need in the global south; LEARN FROM manners of "holy exchanges" and use them in the US, watch how those in the south get their messages across re social-poverty issues, energy in particular - how do they do it and copy it

Next year is the 35th anniversary of St. Francis being named as patron of ecological spirituality. He suggests celebrating it with participating in social-energy efforts, sustainable social praxis, and disruptive innovation.

Break

Response: Iliia Delio, OSF

- We live in the world, not alone; we are with the Incarnation. How do we move to a new world in Christogenesis?
- We are in a world that is co-creative; we are the arrow of evolution and have the capacity to create and invent.
- Technology can help create a new world for us and we create the technology. Technology has shrunk the world and gives us a more global consciousness.
- Where is the Church and the role of religious life in creating this new world of exponential change?

- Transhumanism - use of artificial intelligence to create new beings; will fulfill what religion cannot; Age of cyborg: aided by a mechanical devices - artificial knees, lens implants...
- There are several very new sciences that will affect life and living; some involve reverse aging, downloading brains and more.
- Religious life - what are we becoming? Our energies are focused inward, hesitant about changing; we change as our awareness changes, evolution, a shift in consciousness; Francis was conscious of the poor being excluded - he was evolutionary. We must be also.
- The problems of the world are mirrored in religious life itself and in the Church, We need to come to a new level of consciousness. We must re-invent ourselves and use our gifts to form the life for the future. But instead we keep tweaking the old, not letting it go.
- Christogenesis - birthing of the Christ, union in love, mutuality and respect;
- How do we create a new pattern that leads to a form that is all inclusive; we need a new field, the gathering of those left out is the strange attractor that will create a newness;
- Ultrahumanism - religions will have to join together for the Christ to emerge, spirituality can fulfill the deepest needs of humans, not science alone
- What are we becoming in our Franciscan lives? Church life? The way forward is the way inward - becoming more contemplative. Imagine a new way for a Franciscan life - calling together all people.

The participants had time to reflect quietly on both presentations. Then from the result of table discussion, each table was invited to submit one question or comment to the presenters.

Following are comments/responses to the participants' questions:

Keith:

There were recurring themes on a number of cards: institutions and imagination

Re imagination - Catholic imagination - about creating goodness; religious life can contribute the imagination of new responses; mystical and prophetic dimensions are the future of religious life; this is visionary and incarnational;

Re institutions - pace and nature of change in modern society is lightening fast, we are not; we might find ourselves to be irrelevant if we don't open ourselves to change; we have to have something to say to the world or we will be seen as unnecessary to be active members of a global society

Ilia:

Religious life in the eyes of God is not seen as static so we can change and not infuriate God

Re creating a religious life for the future - younger people are so different from us, technology is a part of their life; religion is not important to them; they do want to create a new world - through technology

Re institutions - the role of authority now comes from social media, not from institutions such as Rome; problem with having social media as the authority is that we can no longer think without technology;

Religious life gets caught up in technology too; don't want to face people so we use email; we can get caught up in a virtual life than a real life

Impact on religious life: prayer does not become old; it is basis of new life where the richness of possibilities lay;

Religious life is still living in a way it did 1500 years ago with some tweaking; what do we think of a new form of patterns? 1- so many types of Franciscans - lots of little tribes - so, we are in the 21 century of tech but in the 1800s of religious life as Franciscans; what could we imagine by using the best of who we are as "tribes" and move into a new field of shared vision and energy; 2 - re the laity - every person is called to holiness so every person is called to religious life; the boundaries need to go; institutions are meant to empower members, not squelch them; we are invited to widen religious life

Lynn thanked Keith and Ilia on behalf of all the participants. She asked everyone, "how can we ever be the same after hearing these invitations to imagine a new future?"

Several announcements were made regarding lunch time and other matters for the rest of the day.

Respectfully submitted,
Sr. Jean M. Cherry, FSSJ
Recording Secretary