

# FRANCIS OF ASSISI AND MARY

## SHE WHO MADE THE LORD OF MAJESTY OUR BROTHER



### FRANCIS OF ASSISI & MARY : SESSION AIM

To reflect on our relationship with Mary in light of what we know of Francis's relationship with Our Lady.

### FRANCIS OF ASSISI & MARY : SESSION OBJECTIVES

- 1) To see, hear, listen, consider and understand audiovisual and written material that represents the relationship Francis had with Mary and encouraged others to have.
- 2) To reflect and discern our own relationship with Mary, in light of Francis's writings, the writings of other Franciscans and through facilitated group discussion.

### SCRIPTURE READING - JOHN 19:25-27

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother.' And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home.'

Extract from the Prologue to *The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order (Handbook of the Secular Franciscan Order p19)*, (See also Bodo, 1989, p56, *The Simple Way: Meditations on the Words of Saint Francis*).

'...they [those who do penance] are spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Mt. 12:50)

We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brothers to Him when we do the will of the Father who is in heaven. (Mt. 12:50) We are mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body (1 Cor. 6:20) through a divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and give birth to Him through a holy activity which must shine as an example before others (Mt. 5:16).

## THOMAS CELANO - SECOND LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS (2CEL 198)

'Toward the Mother of Jesus he was filled with an inexpressible love, because it was she who made the Lord of majesty our brother. He sang special praises to her, poured out prayers to her, offered his affections, so many and so great that the tongue of man cannot recount them. But what delights us most, he made her the advocate of the order and placed under her wings the sons he was about to leave that she might cherish them and protect them to the end. - Hail, advocate of the poor! Fulfill towards us your office of protectress until the time set by the Father.'

From the Rule of our own Secular Franciscan Order - (9 p20)

'The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to His every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.'

### QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON:

- Mary like us lived in the world as a lay disciple. How can her example help us?
- What can we learn from Francis' relationship with Mary that can help us develop our relationship with Mary and Jesus?

### GROUP DISCUSSION FOLLOWING VIDEO

Q1: What did you see that connects with your own feelings towards Mary?

Q2: What did you think or sense that you could learn from Francis?

Q3: How do the artists portray Mary and Francis's relationship with her?

### FURTHER ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

from Vetter, J., [Ed] (2016) *Franciscan Virtues Through The Year: 52 Steps to Conversion from St. Francis of Assisi* pp92-93:

- ▶ Do I think of, or ask for, or reflect on the assistance of Mary in daily life?
- ▶ Have there been situations where I have succumbed to abruptness, impatience, lack of attentiveness or devotion and could have asked Mary to show me a better way?
- ▶ Has my relationship with Mary become routine or cooled because of distractedness or concerns?
- ▶ Am I consecrated to the Blessed Mother? If so do I renew my consecration yearly through thirty-three days of preparation?
- ▶ Why is devotion to the Blessed Mother key to being a Catholic?
- ▶ Is it possible to have excessive devotion to the Blessed Mother? Why or why not?
- ▶ Do I take time to thank Mary for all the graces received through her protection and intercession?
  
- ▶ Find another section in Scripture which illustrates the Virtue of Marian Devotion. Find a statement of Jesus or an incident in His life that deals with the Virtue of Marian Devotion. Write these into your journal.
  
- ▶ If you are a member of a Religious (or Lay) Order, find one place in your rule or Constitutions that deals with the Virtue of Marian Devotion. Explain why you chose this section.

- ▶ Practice the Virtue of Marian Devotion this week. Record in your journal any memorable insights or happenings.
- ▶ Each evening, examine the day for the times you practiced devotion to the Blessed Mother. If you had none of these times, ask yourself why not?  
Pray, Lord, help me to develop a properly ordered devotion to Your Mother. Give me the love for her that You had. Help me to trust in her powerful intercession for my needs and the needs of the world. Give me the grace to be a devoted child of hers. Amen
- ▶ At the end of the week, record in your journal what you have learned from this exercise.

## 12:00 ANGELUS

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary  
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit. *Hail Mary*

Behold the handmaid of the Lord  
Be it done to me according to your word. *Hail Mary*

And the Word was made flesh  
And dwelt among us. *Hail Mary*

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, Your  
Grace into our hearts, so that we, to whom the  
Incarnation of Christ, Your Son was made  
known by the message of an angel, may be brought by His Passion and Cross to the glory  
of His Resurrection. Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.