

### **God is Love (*Deus Caritas Est*) – Pope Benedict XVI – Paragraph 15**

15. This principle is the starting-point for understanding the great parables of Jesus. The rich man (cf. Lk 16:19-31) begs from his place of torment that his brothers be informed about what happens to those who simply ignore the poor man in need. Jesus takes up this cry for help as a warning to help us return to the right path. The parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:25-37) offers two particularly important clarifications. Until that time, the concept of “neighbour” was understood as referring essentially to one's countrymen and to foreigners who had settled in the land of Israel; in other words, to the closely-knit community of a single country or people. This limit is now abolished. Anyone who needs me, and whom I can help, is my neighbour. The concept of “neighbour” is now universalized, yet it remains concrete. Despite being extended to all mankind, it is not reduced to a generic, abstract and undemanding expression of love, but calls for my own practical commitment here and now. The Church has the duty to interpret ever anew this relationship between near and far with regard to the actual daily life of her members. Lastly, we should especially mention the great parable of the Last Judgement (cf. Mt 25:31-46), in which love becomes the criterion for the definitive decision about a human life's worth or lack thereof. Jesus identifies himself with those in need, with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison. “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). Love of God and love of neighbour have become one: in the least of the brethren we find Jesus himself, and in Jesus we find God.

### **SFO Constitutions – Article 9.1 / 14.1**

Article 9.1 *Rule 5* The spirituality of the secular Franciscan is a plan of life centered on the person and on the following of Christ, rather than a detailed program to be put into practice.

Article 14.1 Aware that God wanted to make of us all a single people and that he made his Church the universal sacrament of salvation, the brothers

and sisters should commit themselves to a faith-inspired reflection on the Church, its mission in today's world and the role of the Franciscan laity within it. They should take up the challenges and accept the responsibilities that this reflection will lead them to discover.

### **U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults – Doctrinal Statements/Meditation – pp. 17-18**

#### **Doctrinal Statements:**

- Revelation is the self-disclosure of the living God and his plan to save us. Revelation shows us that God desires to have an intimate and loving relationship with everyone.
- The process of Revelation took centuries to unfold. God gradually communicated the divine mystery by words and deeds.
- From the beginning, God established a personal relationship with our first parents. After the Fall, he encouraged them with the hope of Salvation by promising them Redemption.
- God's Revelation resulted in a relationship with people that is called a *covenant* in Scripture. Scripture tells us that God entered into a covenant with Noah and all living beings (Gn 9:16).
- Revelation is an act by which God speaks to and forms a covenant people beginning with Abraham. He then chose Moses through whom the divine law was given to the covenant people.
- Through the prophets God prepared the covenant people to look forward to the coming of the Messiah who would bring the salvation destined for all people.
- Revelation reached its fullness in God's Son, Jesus Christ. The Son is the Father's definitive Word. No new public revelation will occur before the final, glorious manifestation of Jesus Christ.
- God's Revelation is transmitted to us by Apostolic Tradition and Scripture. This is the topic of our next chapter.

#### **Meditation:**

Jesus Christ is the definitive revelation of God:

Christ, the Son of God made man, is the Father's one, perfect and unsurpassable Word. In him he has said everything; there will be no other word than this one. St. John of the Cross, among others, commented strikingly on Hebrews 1:1-2; "In giving us his Son, his only Word (for he possesses no other), he spoke everything to us at once in this sole Word – and he has no more to say.....because what he spoke before to the prophets in parts, he has now spoken all at once by giving us the All Who is His Son. Any person questioning God or desiring some vision or revelation would be guilty not only of foolish behavior but also of offending him, by not fixing his eyes entirely upon Christ and by living with the desire for some other novelty.

--CCC, #65, citing St. John of the Cross  
*The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, 2, 22, 2-5

### **Scripture Reflection: Hosea 2:6-20**

<sup>6</sup> I will have no pity on her children, for they are children of prostitution. <sup>7</sup> Yes, their mother has prostituted herself; she who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, "I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink."

<sup>8</sup> Therefore, I will hedge in her way with thorns and erect a wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths. <sup>9</sup> If she runs after her lovers, she will not overtake them; if she seeks them she will not find them. Then she will say, "I will go back to my first husband, for I was better off then than now." <sup>10</sup> She did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, I who lavished upon her silver, and gold, which they used for Baal, <sup>11</sup> therefore I will take back my grain in its time, and my wine in its season; I will snatch away my wool and my flax, which were to cover her nakedness. <sup>12</sup> Now I will lay bare her

shame in full view of her lovers, and no one can deliver her out of my hand. <sup>13</sup> I will put an end to all her joy, her festivals, her new moons, her sabbaths—all her seasonal feasts. <sup>14</sup> I will lay waste her vines and fig trees, of which she said, "These are the fees my lovers have given me"; I will turn them into rank growth and wild animals shall devour them. <sup>15</sup> I will punish her for the days of the Baals, for whom she burnt incense, when she decked herself out with her rings and her jewelry, and went after her lovers—but me she forgot—oracle of the LORD. <sup>16</sup> Therefore, I will allure her now; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak persuasively to her. <sup>17</sup> Then I will give her the vineyards she had, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. There she will respond as in the days of her youth, as on the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. <sup>18</sup> On that day—oracle of the LORD—you shall call me "my husband," and you shall never again call me "my baal." <sup>19</sup> I will remove from her mouth the names of the Baals; they shall no longer be mentioned by their name. <sup>20</sup> I will make a covenant for them on that day, with the wild animals, with the birds of the air, and with the things that crawl on the ground. Bow and sword and warfare I will destroy from the land, and I will give them rest in safety.