

INTERRELIGIOUS Insight

October, 2005 Edition

A Franciscan “Thank You” (a Christian insight)

GEORGENE L. WILSON, OSF

For the past 50 years my life of prayer has been informed by the spirituality of Francis and Clare of Assisi, two 12th-13th century Italian Christians. Engagement with all of creation was their “way of life” and their spiritual practices evolved in relationship to their lived experiences.

I live as a neighborhood anchoress, dedicated to intentional contemplative practices for the first three hours of each day. Then I open the door of my home and heart to serving others in their spiritual growth. I do this through spiritual direction, teaching, writing, painting and conversation.

My prayer and meditation as a Franciscan has moved over the years from a head knowledge of their way of life into a heart practice of solitude, silence, service and contemplation. My ministry practices are likewise as varied as my contemplative practices. All of life is included with open arms as I embrace whatever life presents and return only blessing. The Wisdom of Christ as Light is the center of my heart. I practice seeing its shining in all encounters with creation....all cultures and diversities of folk. The goodness and peace of heart that returns to me is absolute abundance and my constant praise to God, whom I call “You”, is “Thank You.”



Georgene Ecks, original art, Katherine Aze

Central to the spirituality of Clare and Francis was a heart-filled consciousness of the Gospels of Jesus, the Christ. They each lived this revelation of the Christian Scriptures by practices that included, embraced and enclosed all relationship in the circle of solitude, silence, peace, joy, reconciliation and a rooted trust of God to be their ALL. They invited others to live this way of life.

Francis of Assisi is recorded as saying to his followers, “Preach always and if necessary use words.”

Clare of Assisi wrote letters with these wisdom teachings:

- Place your mind before the mirror of eternity.
- Place your soul in the brilliance of glory.
- Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance.

Teach the women how to pray:
Teach them to gaze,
To consider *that upon which they have gazed*,
To contemplate *that which they have considered and*
To imitate, *become that which they have contemplated.*
(Italics are my adaptation.)

This wisdom has formed what I call the “B”eing Practices for Spiritual Consciousness:

Practice:

Being here now as living presence.

Being aware that all life is connected, one kinship.

Being still, silence the mind’s constant chatting and the bodies busyness.

Breathing consciously with ONE BREATH, a holy exchange that humans name life!

Blessing all with beauty by affirmation, graciousness, compassion and harmony.

I think of all of life as an icon, a window into the holy. As soon as one glimpses the holy the window turns into a mirror – and reflects back to us our holiness and goodness and freedom.

Georgene L. Wilson is a Franciscan sister and author, living as a neighbourhood anchoress in ?????