

REFLECTIONS ON THE VIRTUES OF MOTHER FRANCES STREITEL

POVERTY





REFLECTIONS

COMMUNITY QUESTION:

As you reflect on the spirit of St. Francis' life of poverty and the needs of God's people in your local area, what are two actions you can take as a local house to imitate Mother Frances in living out a more simple and detached lifestyle that would enable you to better serve the needs of your local area as Mother Frances would?

PERSONAL QUESTION:

Reflect on your lifestyle and ministerial service and name how it truly reflects Mother Frances' vision of poverty – "delicate humbleness".



TESTIMONIALS ... of today ...

Mother Frances' humility and poverty serve as a mirror for me in my everyday life.

Sr. Sarah (Tanzania)



In the life of mother Frances through her life of humility is good teaching in my life and also for the way when she live poverty life and to care those in need especially the poor for charity and love is good example for my life also through her prayer.

Sr. Doris (Tanzania)



Mother Frances Streitl was and is a woman of great and admirable virtues. However, one aspect of her life that influences me and makes me seek prayer in order to achieve this virtue is abandonment to Christ, letting go of everything in order to give everything to Christ.

Only a person of great humility and unshakeable faith knows how to be faithful to God and recognize her human limitations, as Mother Frances Streitl did. She sought refuge in the Lord with many hours of prayer, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Holy Mass to face the challenges that she experienced.

Another aspect that also influences me is poverty, as this virtue was dear to her, and she mentions in one of her letters that it is the mother of all virtues. Every day, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, I hope to grow in poverty and abandonment to Christ.

Nov. Nayara (Brazil)



The life of Mother Frances is a school in itself; the more we get to know her, the deeper we delve into a world of spiritual and human characteristics. One of these characteristics is living in simplicity, the beauty of poverty. It caught my attention because we know that her mother cultivated detachment from external things from an early age. "Go, sell what you have and follow me" also reminds us of St. Francis of Assisi.



Detachment from the body (external things) and the soul (one's own desires), all in order to do God's will. When we look at the humility of Jesus Christ, at his crucifixion and death on the cross, we learn to be sensitive to the needs of our brothers and sisters. Mother Frances tells us that people should not go from our presence without having been offered our best. This is what it means to live the mission by being Christ for others.

I want to let go of my human miseries, selfishness, my own ideas and frustrations in order to live community life better. I want to grow ever more humble and seek to do the will of the One who called me and wanted me to be here.

Sr. Elissandra (Brazil)



WORDS OF MOTHER FRANCES THAT I TREASURE

In my experience, on several occasions in ministry and during moments of discouragement, fatigue and feelings of failure, I have found encouragement in these words from Norms 109. They remind me that serving the poor is a privilege and an opportunity to encounter the Bridegroom.

1. Humanity conceals two jewels in its midst and so seldom appreciates their value. If we mercifully assist them and strive to alleviate their hard and painful lot by love and kindness, in imitation of our divine Savior, who conceals Himself in the one as in the other.
2. May the poor always enjoy the friendship of our Sisters; and if they cannot always be helped as their situation requires, oh, then, may a friendly glance, a sympathetic expression on the part of the Sisters help them to forget their hard lot for a few moments.

Sr. Cinzia (Tanzania)



For a long time, I had difficulty grasping the spiritual benefits Mother Frances brought to my life. Perhaps this was because the language she used to express her faith in her writings belongs to another era. I believe that to fully appreciate its great spiritual power, it needs to be translated for today's times. Currently, I am particularly moved by the realization that she was a true Franciscan—a woman who, despite the vast cultural differences between her and Francis, understood and shared the essence of his experience of God. Like him, she loved and followed a God who

chose to deny himself and become poor to love and stand in solidarity with all of us. What she called: “...*the chief virtue of holy poverty. ... not in extraordinary penitential practices – no, but in foregoing all right to possessions, even the smallest items*” [Letter to Fr. Jordan #4(3)]. Today, I discover a renewed sense of sympathy for her because of this shared fundamental direction of the heart that the Lord has clearly shown us.

Sr. Elena (Italy)



Indeed, caring for the poor is part of the Church's great Tradition, a beacon as it were of evangelical light to illumine the hearts and guide the decisions of Christians in every age.

That is why we must feel bound to invite everyone to share in the light and life born of recognizing Christ in the faces of the suffering and those in need.

Love for the poor is an essential element of the history of God's dealings with us; it rises up from the heart of the Church as a constant appeal to the hearts of the faithful, both individually and in our communities.

Pope Leo XIV,

Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te*,

October 4, 2025, Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

