

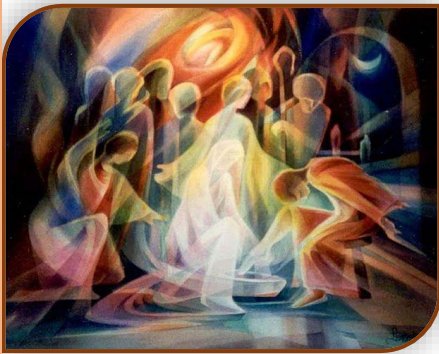
800th Jubilee Celebration of the SECOND LETTER TO THE FAITHFUL (1221) St. Francis of Assisi

"Instead, let the one to whom obedience has been entrusted and who is considered the greater be the lesser and the servant of the other brothers. And let him have and show mercy to each of his brothers as he would want them to do to him where he is in a similar position. .⁴⁴Let him not become angry at the fault of a brother but, with all patience and humility, let him admonish and support him. We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh, but, instead, we must be simple, humble and pure."

Second Letter to the Faithful #42-45

Today Francis directs our gaze to the obedience of the greater, who as lesser, as servant, is to be a servant of all.

Obedience begins with love for one's own soul. It keeps God present in us. Our deepest impulses to love live in it, and there we ponder God's Word and the inspirations of His Spirit. Out of the soul our life is formed.



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When sisters/brothers are entrusted to us in obedience, we are called to be lovers of their souls. There it is necessary to trace their divine origin, the beauty of their uniqueness and vocation, as well as the source of their energy of love. There, mercy wants to be given where someone suffers from transgression or being lost. There we want to exhort patiently at "eye level" and with kindness, to develop and support new beginnings together. There we can be a place of refuge and a confidant who listens without prejudice and condemnation, aware of our own weakness and dependence, and who does not regard self more highly, but respectfully tries to provide what is necessary for life and to grant what is fulfilling for life. In doing so, we give God's loving care a face and entrust the brother/sister with a creative space for co-creation in self-responsibility.

Following the example of Jesus, we serve from below, from the "foot level". Not from above, seemingly knowing everything, powerfully exalted and exposed to the temptation of abuse of power, but humbly tracing with the sister/brother the longing of God, seeking co-lovers for God's creation. Obedient to the inspirations of our souls, we make love present, prayerfully present everyone and everything to God, noticing those in need and excluding nothing and no one from our love.

We remember our own brokenness, limitation, and inclination to sin, and we feel anew the need for mercy and healing. We may perceive within us hidden anger of experienced powerlessness, but anger and confusion prevent love. Thus, we do not allow ourselves to be determined by it. From within we swing in to welcome each one like God again without reservation. In doing so, we attentively perceive the respective situation of the one entrusted to us, which can remind us of similar situations in our own life. In this way, we open ourselves to a fraternal encounter that brings about peace, gives greater vitality and awakens new readiness for the mission of God entrusted to us.

- ✚ What might a domination-free space of listening to one another look like among us?
- ✚ How can we live authority characterized by love and mercy, discarding rigorous determination, solitary decision-making, or fear-led action?
- ✚ How can everyone be nurtured, and their gifts integrated into the overall mission of our community?

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Original in deutscher Sprache