

A Franciscan World View ?

What is a worldview?

According to Loretta Abbott she states that, 'Every person has a worldview. Here's how some have defined it:

"How we view the world. Our ideas about the world that determine how we live, decisions we make, and our response to others.

The ideas we have that determine our thoughts, decisions, and actions." (Rewired Worldview Curriculum by Chuck Colson and Teen Mania) "A worldview is your belief system - a total way of looking at the world, the way you understand reality, or what the world is all about.

A worldview is the 'Big Picture' of life, and it is a coherent view that gives meaning to the individual pieces of your life." (Worldviews in Focus: Thinking Like a Christian by David Nobel and Chuck Edwards) In other words, your worldview is what you believe, which in turn affects your value system which then determines your behaviour and actions.'

Jesus is the basis of a Christian worldview.

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." Colossians 2:6-8

Saint Francis is the basis of a Franciscan Interfaith Worldview.

The updated Franciscan worldview may be perceived by many Catholic Christians who are 'set in their religious belief,' as nothing more than an over indulgence in a New Age philosophy that has no relevance for followers of Saint Francis.

To adopt the Franciscan worldview, the soul needs to be open and receptive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit of Divine Love that enriches the soul with 'regular updates' using modern technology such as the Internet Highway, to convey the word of God to those who have 'ears to hear and receive God's Truth.'

I believe that at the very heart of Franciscan Spirituality there is an acceptance that our Creator God has both male and female energy as evident by the reference to, 'Our Holy Father Mother God.' Saint Francis approached God through simplicity and humility and his spiritual life was greatly inspired by His Master Jesus.

This selfless, reverent spiritual love affair that both men shared on a purely spiritual level became the sole driving force behind many of the teachings that Saint Francis wrote for his

followers to adopt in their search for God through simplicity and humility. The intense spiritual life affair that engulfed the soul of Saint Francis became so intense that finally he was given the stigmata, or same hallmarks of his crucified Lord, Jesus Christ.

In his personal faith journey, Saint Francis acknowledged against the teachings of his Church, the presence of both the Divine Feminine, Mary Magdalene as well as the Masculine energies of Jesus.

Yes, he had a devotion to Mother Mary but he knew that as Magdalene was the 'Beloved Disciple, whom Jesus loved,' he restored allegiance to balancing both energies and avoided the route of adherence to the traditional doctrines imposed by the Catholic Church.

Franciscan spirituality embraces a new concept of balance, harmony and divine connectedness by not only acknowledging the presence of the Divine Feminine but also shows a great reverence to Mother Earth and all creation as noted in the respected 'Canticle of the Creatures.'

The spirituality of Saint Francis embraced a 'New World Order' of four important ecologies that would challenge the entire Christian world of that era to the present day. Instead of adhering to the Roman Catholic view point, Saint Francis adopted the Catholic or Universal view that as children of the same loving God/dess, we are all one in the eyes of God.

Here we have the birth of interfaith dialogue between Saint Francis and Jesus seeking reconciliation for all mankind to be as one, just as Jesus is with His Father Mother God. Franciscan Spirituality takes the cry of Jesus from the cross to his heart, 'Father, I pray that they will be one as You and I are One.'

The wearing of the Tau symbol is a daily reminder of God's cry for the unity and reconciliation of all faiths and none to unite as one spiritual family in God for God. The Tau symbol represents our arms outstretched in prayerful supplication to God for that unity.

Franciscan Spirituality is an Ecology for Soul Seekers Everywhere.

Francis of Assisi, in his living the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the full, gives us an example of 'Four Ecologies:

- an environmental ecology, living in harmony with creation and Mother Nature and the Elements.
- a social ecology, embracing all people as brothers and sisters regardless of colour, race or status.
- a spiritual ecology, in praise of the Father Mother God as Creator of all things.
- an interfaith ecology, inviting all soul seekers of truth enter a new concept of living practical spirituality in the modern world regardless of one's religious persuasions.

The Tau Community of Saint Francis is a ‘Virtual Interfaith Spiritual Community of ordinary men and women who have heard the call of Saint Francis speaking to their hearts about how they can be of service to the same loving God as they seek to express and share this ‘integrated spiritual vision/ecology’ for the sake of and out of love for God’s world by providing the following:

- ⊗ a vehicle whereby mankind can embrace religious diversity without compromising one’s spiritual values as they search for lasting peace and reconciliation of all Faiths to unite as ‘One Spiritual Family’ sharing God’s love for all and to all
- ⊗ a unique concept of sharing God’s Love through a common sensed approach of putting practical religious/spirituality into positive action for all who are seeking peace where mutual respect is essential for the integration of all faiths/beliefs.
- ⊗ a spiritual monastic community, (a monastery without walls) based on the core values of Franciscan Spirituality, where the Creator God is Love and by inviting all to come and share that love as brothers and sisters by embracing a ‘spiritual way life,’ from the comforts of their own home.
- ⊗ an online network providing spiritual support for those in need of spiritual guidance and daily prayer.
- ⊗ An online network providing spiritual information for those who are guided by God to advance their spiritual life further.

The Franciscan worldview of entering a ‘Franciscan spiritual retreat’ for personal soul development, entails a spiritual journey of re-treating from the world for a closer personal relationship with one’s God/Dess.

The teachings of Saint Francis are rooted in both the ancient and modern concepts of God as demonstrated by the Essenes, Druids, Celts, to name but a few. Though the Catholic/Christian Churches down through the centuries have added their own perception of how they perceived the soul’s journey for a ‘religious/mystical’ experience, it would suggest that they have focused to a great extent more on the individual/s adopting their dogmatic teachings as emphasized in Canon Law.

On the other hand, it is regrettable that the New Age Movement have liberalized and apparently trivialized the simplicity and integrity of the 12th century man of God, Saint Francis of Assisi.

In every generation God summons ordinary men and women to take on the might of the ‘Religious and Civil Authorities’ who shackle God’s people with their agendas to coerce and default on offering to God what is rightfully Gods’.

I believe that Saint Francis was chosen by God to repair the damage caused to by His chosen representatives in the 12th century. Who could have imagined that a group of ordinary men and women disguised as a peasants under the leadership of Saint Francis could effectively change the course of spirituality.

Because of the imposing threat from their reverence for God, their humility and fellowship soon began to spread from the fields and valleys of the Italian landscapes to the very heart of the Catholic Church in Rome itself. Clearly, it was never the intention for Saint Francis to establish a monastic community, God had other plans for this vibrant breath of Divine Love that was attracting thousands and millions of followers away from the corrupt Church to serving God by embracing the ordinariness and simplicity of a fulfilled life in union with Mother Earth, the animal kingdom as demonstrated by the Canticle of the Creatures and the love that Saint Francis afforded to his beloved Brother Sun and Sister Moon.

In this age of religious disquiet and public unrest, mankind it would seem has lost its way and has become ‘spiritually impoverished’ whilst desperately seeking clarity to the mayhem and confusion perpetrated by the many false prophets of gloom and doom who sell their wares and whose sole aim is to enslave the innocent and vulnerable into their schools of false ideology that denies the very existence of God or a Supreme Being that is known by many other different names.

Saint Francis is perceived by many who are involved in the ‘Interfaith Arena’ as the Founding Father of Peace and Unity of all faiths and none. He demonstrated a way of life as opposed to standing in a pulpit and screaming at God’s children to live in fear of a loving God. Instead, Saint Francis opened his arms to everyone regardless of their status in the local community.

His intense love for God was a hand’s on love as demonstrated by his active care and support of lepers. His wisdom spread far afield and soon he was seen as a ‘man of God’ who reflected the face of His Master Jesus. His spirituality was soon labelled ‘Franciscan Spirituality’ and has attracted many thousands of men and women to forsake the worldly pleasures for the cloistered life. Why?

Today, the spirit of Saint Francis is alive not just at his birthplace of Assisi, but has found a new spiritual watering hole ‘The Celtic Assisi of the South Lakes. At the Monastery of Saint Francis, we not only honour and respect the 12th century traditional teachings of Saint Francis as well as all other Faith traditions that lives to the spirit of embracing God/Dess through the Natural World- The Franciscan Soul of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity and Simplicity which unites our hearts as lay monastic’s of the Tau Community of Interfaith Franciscans.

www.interfaithfranciscans.com