

ST. BERNARDO OF QUINTAVALLA
FEAST DAY: DEC.10

Presented during the year proclaimed by Pope Francis of St. Joseph. There is little written about both these saints, so we have to try to take what we have and meditate on the fullness of what we do have.

THE TIME OF FRANCIS AND BERNARD WERE MUCH LIKE OUR OWN: There are social issues that abound during the time Bernard and Francis lived. The clergy is abusing its power. The disadvantaged are being taken advantage of and economic struggles are everywhere.

- Bernard and Francis were acquaintances growing up. They knew each other probably because of the economic status their families shared. Both were well off. Bernard was respected as a learned man. He had degrees in both civil and canon law. He was also a student of Scripture.

THE "GOOD LIFE" vs EMBRACING "POVERTY"(THE BEST LIFE!?): Bernard wanted to know the reason for everything. Thus he observed Francis and his growth in embracing the "poverty" lifestyle. He was perplexed, he thought Francis either crazy or a saint. He wanted to examine his life to see if he was authentic. Bernard searched for something that would satisfy his nagging inner desires.

INITIAL FORMATION: Bernard learns from Francis as Francis displays the effects of poverty. Each of us should have a living witness of our Franciscan formation. This should be part of what we share in whatever formation stage we are in. I believe this is what drew Bernard to be a Franciscan and I believe it is what the seekers who come to inquire of us are seeking.

- Bernard wanted to know God's will for him. As he observed the changes in Francis, God's will for him was made clear.

- Both men had a vision for a changed world that they would be a part of.

THIS SHOULD BE THE GOAL FOR OUR EFFORTS IN FORMATION.

LIFE- A MIRROR OF THE GOSPEL. (MATT. 21:20-22): Bernard did not see the Franciscan life as something he could not do. He just did it! I am reading a book by Peter Kreeft that is talking about all of what is expected of us in the Christian life. He explains that often we respond to God's demands with a "yes, but." When we think we can't do something, we respond "yes, but!" Kreeft sums up this section by saying, "we have to stop thinking with our butts!" In the verse mentioned above we are told that we can expect to do great things.

- Bernard is the first of an original 12 disciples who possessed nothing but poverty. (Jesus' 12!)

- One of the original 12 hung himself. This will set anyone thinking. (Judas) It did not deter Bernard.

- Bernard was a contemplative, often taken up to God as St. Paul in 2 Cor. 12:1-7.

- Bernard and Francis were carried across a body of water by an angel. (Jesus/Peter)

- Bernard mind was set on heaven for 15 years. He never walked away from a meal full.

- He was totally detached from things through contemplation.

THE SIMPLE RULE: He lived by the simple rule, 1) If you seek perfection, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor. 2) Take nothing on the way. 3) "If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self."

- The first three disciples of Francis were Bernardo, Pietro, and Giles. They radically followed the Lord through poverty.

- In 1210 Bernardo led the group to see Pope Innocent III to have the Apostolate recognized by the Church. "The Disciples of Poverty" were born consisting of 12 men.

FRUIT: He rubbed off on others. While in Bologna in 1211 he recruited Nicolo Guglielmo di Pepoli who became a Franciscan Minor with a reputation of great holiness.

- His greatest happiness was experiencing mystical ecstasies of solitary prayer. He compared this experience to the joys of marriage.

THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED ABOVE REGARDING FORMATION ARE SOLELY MY OWN!

REFERENCES:

FRANCIS OF ASSISI BY ARNALDO FORTINI

THE LITTLE FLOWERS OF ST. FRANCIS

SURROUNDED BY LOVE BY MURRY BODO, OFM