



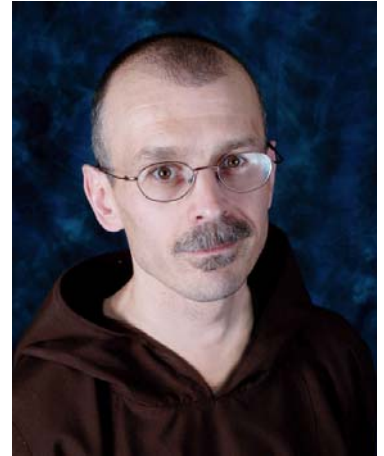
7 July 2009, #196

## **Twelve Dimensions of Capuchin-Franciscan Prayer**

*(John Celichowski is the Provincial Minister of the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph)*

In a recent circular letter to the friars, Fr. John Celichowski stated, “Earlier this month I was in Montana for a Provincial Council meeting and visitation with our brothers who have dedicated decades of their lives to ministry in Billings, Hardin and the Northern Cheyenne and Crow reservations. My week in “Big Sky Country” began and ended with two wonderful celebrations of the Eucharist at St. Xavier Mission and St. Labre Indian School, respectively.”

Those rich experiences of liturgy among the Cheyenne and Crow peoples brought John to reflect upon the action of prayer itself. He calls it, “an act of reaching out to God as well as being received by God.” After reading and reflecting upon Chapter three of the Capuchin Constitutions, *The Brothers’ Life of Prayer*, John discussed twelve dimensions of Capuchin-Franciscan prayer that emerged from the text.



### ***Twelve Dimensions of Capuchin-Franciscan Prayer***

**Dialogical**—Our prayer is a discourse between God and us. The Constitutions refer to prayer as a “filial conversation” with the Father (45:5).

**Primal**— Our prayer becomes so internalized and institutionalized in our lives as friars that it becomes a priority and part of who we are: “we move from our love of self and pass over into Christ, the God-Man, in communion with God and people” (45:3).

**Devotional**— We ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. Francis, St. Clare, Ven. Solanus and other holy ones to assist us with their prayers (54:3-5), and we include veneration of the Blessed Sacrament as part of our Eucharistic worship (48:4-5).

**Scriptural**— In addition to its use in our liturgies, “The reading of Sacred Scripture and other spiritual books is an effective means of nourishing true devotion and fostering the experience of God” (58.1).

**Liturgical**— Daily celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharist are the norm in our communities and the center of our life of communal prayer (Const. 47:1-2, 48:1-3, 50:2). Heeding the call of Vatican II these celebrations should be “living and vibrant,” and marked by our full, active and conscious participation (51:2, 48:1).

**Ecclesial**— We follow the liturgical and other norms of the Church in our celebrations, including those legitimate and appropriate adaptations that me better reflect the diversity and pastoral needs of the people of God (47:3-4, 46:4). In addition, we pray for the Church and other needs, and we invite brothers and sisters outside our fraternity to join in our prayer (49:1, 50:3).

**Personal**— Our prayer is an expression of who we are, individually and collectively. Our Constitutions exhort us to “offer people a witness of authentic prayer in such a way that they may see and sense in our faces and in the life of our fraternities the goodness and kindness of God present in the world” (45:8).

# Vocation Update

**Mental**– Meditation and contemplation, both individually and communally, is an essential part of our life (52:1-6). One hour per day is suggested (53:2), and an atmosphere of silence is strongly encouraged as “the faithful guardian of the interior spirit and required by charity” (57:1).

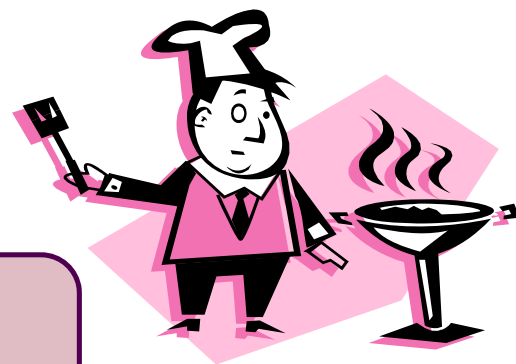
**Communal**– Our prayer is a rich expression of our communion with the Lord, with our brothers, and with the wider Church and the world: “conscious of the catholic sense of St. Francis, let us implore God for Holy Mother Church, for those who govern us, for all peoples, especially for the whole Franciscan family and for all our benefactors” (49:1).

**Cultural**– Our Province is especially blessed with a rich cultural diversity, especially in our ministries. We know the intimate prayer of the Native American sweat lodge, the soulful intensity of African American gospel music, the rhythm and sincerity of popular devotions in the Hispanic community; and we are coming to know the traditions of the Vietnamese and other Asian communities. These all contribute to the incarnational dimension of our Franciscan spirituality (46:4).

**Temporal**– Our prayer is rooted in the here-and-now as well as the eternal, in the world as it is and the world we hope for (id.). In doing so, it echoes the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: “The joys and the hopes, the grief and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the grief and anxieties of the followers of Christ” (*Gaudium et Spes* 1).

**Transformational**– There is an old saying that, “Prayer changes things.” It does so primarily because it changes us! Deeper commitment to prayer is both the means and the result of our conversion. Like Francis, we “become a prayer” (45, 7).

*Special thanks to Fr. John for his reflections and peaceful blessings to all our readers who are in discernment. May your journey with God and humanity be fruitful and sacred.*



## Candidate Rooftop Cookout! Saturday, July 11

4 P.M. Arrival  
4:30 P.M. Evening Prayer  
5 P.M. Meal  
**St. Clare Friary in Chicago**

If you would like to attend, please contact Fr. John Holly 920-915-4400  
[jholly1953@yahoo.com](mailto:jholly1953@yahoo.com) or  
Br. Jerry Johnson 773-322-6561  
[Vocation@capuchinfranciscans.org](mailto:Vocation@capuchinfranciscans.org)

For more information about the process to become a Capuchin:  
[www.CapuchinFranciscans.org](http://www.CapuchinFranciscans.org)  
and click on [<< How to Begin >>](#)