

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A TAU COMMUNITY INTERFAITH FRANCISCAN

Love one another with God's love dear Fathers, Mothers, Brothers and Sisters. Love God's people equally and without reservation. For all are in God. All have God in them, not just you. All we are with now, and will eternally be with.

"Theosis" i.e. union with God, does not separate you from people even when you are alone in the hermitage of your heart. For the closer we come to union with the Divine within us, the closer we come to every man and woman regardless of religion. Regardless of sexuality, marital status, education, position in society, and all the other things that separate and divide the children of God.

All hearts meet in God's heart, and become intimately "One". Not separate beating hearts but yes *one* heart. One beating heart that takes us and all beat by beat, movement by movement into the presence of love, into the Divine to which all paths, all the many good and holy paths, lead to this one destination.

This is, in my humble opinion, what is at the heart of our spiritual searching. What is at the heart of belonging to no religion or church, but belonging to all religions and all churches. What is at the heart of being a Tau Interfaith Franciscan. If one child of God were to be lost or sent in to some kind of exile our Franciscan love would move us to tears to embrace them, and go in to exile with them.

Our path, the path of all true spiritual seekers is not to believe the hearsay of a God who creates some for an eternal Paradise, and equally some to be condemned to an ultimate Hell whatever happens in their life time. Love does not do this. The love of Christ, the depths of Christ's love on that Holy Cross, that spoke to Saint Francis saying "Rebuild my Church", was a universal, all encompassing love.

For we are not holier than any man or woman in the world because we have come here and shut ourselves up within the walls of a monastery without walls. We are not more holy than any man or woman who has lived before us, or who will come after us .

We are simply what all have been, are, and will be. Children of the same source of life and love who are not separate beings, but intimately one at the heart of that source of all life.

If we are going to lift our hand and condemn any man or woman, any brother or sister, to a hell, then we had no reason to come to this monastery without walls. If we are to judge anyone it can only be ourselves. For we are responsible for ourselves, our lives, our spiritual journey.

And the longer we live and love within our monastery without walls the more we will become aware of this. And the more we become aware of this, the more we will pray for all our brother and sisters, and the more we will live and love for them.

For we know, somewhere in our deepest being, that every thought, word, action, all these things do not just have consequences for us personally, but can be a source of light and goodness, or a source of darkness to them also.

Because there is a golden thread that intimately connects us, and all men and women, all creatures and plants, yes all things, and makes them one above those storms and politics of a passing church and world.

This knowledge and ever deepening experience is the crown of our life in our monastery without walls. It is what it truly means to belong to no church, or religion, but to belong to all; and to be in all. It is what it means to become a love that is infinite, universal, and that knows no boundaries or divisions.

Father Richard TCOSF
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