

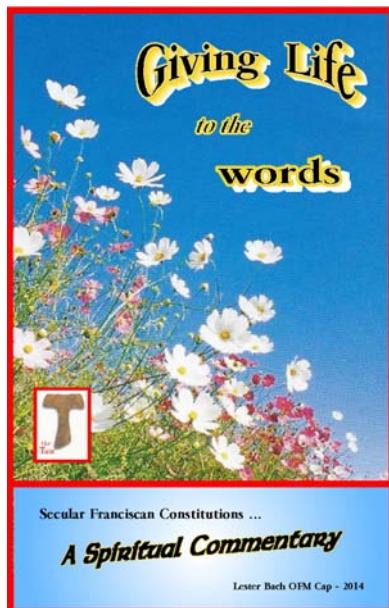
Giving Life to the words

Secular Franciscan Constitutions . . . A Spiritual Commentary
by Lester Bach OFM Cap.

Fr. Lester Bach, OFM, Cap. has released a new book, *Giving Life to the words*, a spiritual commentary on the OFS General Constitutions. The suggestion for this book came at the persuasion of certain Secular Franciscans who knew the value of his original work, *Called to Rebuild the Church*, based on the constitutions of 1990, and that it needed updating to reflect changes in the General Constitutions of 2000. All of us who know Fr. Lester, and have read his books or attended his retreats and workshops, owe him a debt of gratitude for his continuous loving service to the Secular Franciscans. Now he has given us another opportunity to grow –this time in spiritual understanding of the importance of this quite essential document.

As one of those who coaxed Fr. Lester to update his original book, I must say that the information contained in the General Constitutions, which is its subject, is essential if we are to live the nature, purpose and spirit of the Rule concretely in our lives and our fraternities. Thank you, Fr. Lester, for all you have given us.

Anne Mulqueen, OFS



Secular Franciscans have a rather short Rule of Life: three chapters and 26 articles. Yet the Constitutions written for and by Seculars contains 103 articles. As a member of the International Fraternity, I was one of those privileged to be present at the General Chapter in Madrid in October 1999. The six-year trial period of the Constitutions was discussed and voted on article by article and amendment by amendment. It was approved on December 8, 2000. I could not help wondering how the words of these Constitutions would become part of our way of being Franciscan. Fr. Lester Bach, OFM, Cap. grasps these words and gives them life.

Constitutions are defined as a system of fundamental principles according to which nation, state or the like is governed. The definition makes the words sound like legalistic "stuff." Government does require some legalistic words. However, Fr. Lester's book puts it in plain words so the Constitutions are not so much about governing but help the reader develop a better understanding of the Rule and the Constitutions that govern them. Through his words and many quotes from the documents of Popes, other authors and authentic texts, the articles of the Constitutions become life-giving.

If you want a good examination of your Franciscan conscience, read the last chapters on *Franciscan Theology* and the *Closing Remarks*. These are WORDS THAT CHALLENGE!

Marie Amore, OFS

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