



“Who Goes There?”

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In the Winter Issue of TAU-USA, Jan, our National Minister, spoke of “*prophetic creativity*,” that necessary gift to achieve total renewal of the Order. She is inviting us all to reach back and retrieve from down deep the many gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. We embark on this journey of transformation, in wonder, humility, and possibility—the interior movement of the Spirit—Who accompanies us upward and outward. St Francis grew into the understanding “*Go, rebuild...*” as an *action call to rebuild and reinvigorate*, himself first, then for others, who will see in him a model pointing towards making the Kingdom of God a reality on earth.

With the advent of the Second Vatican Council (more than a half century ago!), the “*holy People of God are viewed as sharing in Christ’s prophetic office.*” They are “*...a living witness to Him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity.*” As a prophetic people, the People of God are expected to lead the way, to become prophets and leaders in the rebuilding process. And as Secular Franciscans, with the world as our cloister, there have never been any boundaries between the dimensions of Franciscan charism and any other aspect of our life. “What we have to be is what we already are” (*Thomas Merton, Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*).

I believe prophetic creativity began for St Francis as he knelt in silence before the Christ of the Cross of San Damiano. As a response to God’s self-communication, a personal relationship was borne in a steady conversion of heart as his life’s direction. It would flourish with communal concerns. Did he not ask a prayed-for gift of “insight”? Is not the gift of insight forged in the flame of Franciscan formation that we strive for and cherish?

Franciscans, seculars and religious, are immersed in social, economic, and political reality. We cannot sit by and remain passive to the needs, aspirations, movements, and accomplishments of society. It is here that God is revealed and where prophetic creativity is fashioned—giving us a spirit enlivened to be genuinely involved in the affairs of the world.

I believe prophetic creativity can be the solution to time and change in human relationships—respecting the “I-Thou” relationship—a communion-as-encounter, as Pope Francis teaches. If we are in communion with the other, and are present to the other—with trust, respect, attentiveness, patience, and humility—we become more present toward ourselves. Communion with others can give new meaning to experiences that otherwise would have been closed.

Prophetic insight. Prophetic creativity. Sisters and brothers, strive to let these be pathways for the sake of the Gospel. The Reign of God will always be challenged. The common good must deserve our attention and be a priority. The gift of loving concern will be for others.

Familiar as we are with the need for ongoing conversion, let it open us up anew to a variety of encounters and relationships. We will be capable to engage in dialogue with others who think and act differently than we. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis voices a clear calling for the recognition that all people are our brothers and sisters. Seeking forms of social friendship that include everyone, the Holy Father is inspiring us to move from the level of words to the realm of action—by accompanying, caring for, supporting, and developing a culture of belonging.

Let us, then, embark on this transformative journey of prophetic creativity. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, may we see the world as God sees it, and love the world as God does.

“What we have to be is what we already are.”

Thomas Merton