

Prayer of Franciscan Solitude by André Cirino OFM and Josef Raischl OFS is a collection of articles by various authors on the study of the *Document on Solitude* written by Francis of Assisi. The present work brings together studies, meditations and examples of groups of people who have made the spirit of this *Document* the foundation of their Franciscan way of life. This latest investigation brings to light that the message of the *Document* is “fraternity in prayerful solitude” or “prayerful solitude in fraternity.” André Cirino provides a number of reasons for his conclusion.

André Cirino makes a systematic study and concludes that *Document on Solitude* would be the most appropriate title for this writing that was earlier titled as *A Rule for Hermitages*. This conclusion was arrived at through careful consideration of the spirit of Francis, the inner semantic textual dynamics (relation between various units of meaning within the text), and its relation to other texts written by Francis. The title is important since it has the function of capturing and conveying the essential message of the *Document* to the reader right at the beginning.

The extensive research done by Frances Teresa Downing informs us that the *Document on Solitude* has possibly determined the form of life of St. Clare and her sisters. The author provides a great number of pieces of evidence as well as arguments to prove the point.

Some wonderful meditations on prayerful solitude presented from the Franciscan perspective by some of our Franciscan scholars really take the reader to the depth of the meaning and usefulness of silence in the context of our contemporary, noisy, fast-moving, and commercially-minded world. Murray Bodo pays special attention to the theme of “guarding the silence of the other” in his meditation. According to him, Francis needed others to guard his silence just as he guarded their silence. Prayerful silence is the fertile space in which the moral quality of thought, speech and actions is elevated.

Further, there is input on some Franciscan groups of our time that have built their unique form of life on the foundations of the spirit of the *Document on Solitude*. These articles show us not only how the spirit of this *Document* could be relevant for building up our life today on firm and lasting foundations, but they also share with us practical experiences of how the spirit of this *Document* can anchor us firmly in our ministries in a Franciscan manner.

In conclusion, prayerful silence creates in us the space for the Word of God to take root, grow and bear fruit. This is a book that describes the way to experience the inexhaustible and re-creative freshness that God gifts to those who are eager to experience it.

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