

CAPUCHIN CONSTITUTIONS CHAPTER ONE

“Let us *lovingly* dedicate ourselves to study the **Rule**, the **Testament** and the **Constitutions** so that we may become *deeply imbued with their spirit.*” (Constitutions, Chapter one, no. 9.4)

Our constitutions claim to be a **spiritual** document, calling us to live our lives fully and freely in the world, wherever we might be. These constitutions do not ask us to live our lives uniformly, but in fraternal communion, each in our own ways.

Notice how often the Holy Spirit is mentioned in this first chapter!!!!

Our Constitutions call us to be faithful and to understand deeply the GOSPELS and our CAPUCHIN FRANCISCAN TRADITION. These are our life-sources.

Our Constitutions place special emphasis on the poverty and humility of Christ.(Article 1, no 2.), on the humility and compassion of GOD (Article 2, no. 14.2) and the poverty and humility of St. Francis (nos. 3-4) AWESOME!

They also identify BROTHERHOOD and MINORITY as original aspects of the charism which the holy Spirit has given us. (no. 4.2) Moreover, our “brotherhood” is seen not simply as something FOR OURSELVES, but rather, as the key to our ministry in the world and among the poor. Our internal relationships foster and nourish our external relationships, especially among the poor, and call us to work for their human and Christian development. (Article 2, no. 14.2-5)

Our Constitutions call us to a life of prayer, especially contemplative prayer.

Note the PRIMARY MARKS OF OUR LIFE raised up in this initial Article.

Article 2 addresses our Capuchin Franciscan Fraternal life within the Sacrament of the Church (great Vatican II theology) and as leaven (through our fraternal brotherhood) in the Church’s ministry to spread the Gospel news of Jesus.

The Constitutions describe our ministry as “apostolic work,” and our life as “apostolic” as well, that is, in communion with the founding apostles of the Church, always based in a life of prayer and contemplation. (Article 2, no, 15)

Here they are, the key points of our way of life, which will be “opened up for us” in the chapters to follow.

Some of us get caught up in the little points and don’t see the big picture. Chapter one gives us the BIG PICTURE!

Hopes this helps initiate discussion.

Bill Cieslak, Capuchin Franciscan