

1 In the first reading it says: “I have called you by name: you are mine.” God called Francis by name and he was God’s. Francis was the first of the Goetz boys to be an altar server. This was at St. Bernard’s in Madison, WI. While there the priest took the servers on an outing to St. Lawrence Seminary at Mount Calvary during the summer. While there Francis went swimming with the other boys in the big outdoor pool, except that Francis did not know how to swim. He got out into the deep water and when he went down for the third time one of the other kids grabbed him by the hair and pulled him back up. Three things happened because of this: a) our parents enrolled Francis and John in swimming lessons; b) most likely his near death experience there brought him back to St. Lawrence Seminary for high school; and c) he became a really great swimmer. I am sure that Francis could talk much more eloquently about the whole concept of “naming”. “Naming” something or someone makes it yours. Francis was always researching things so that he could call them by name, the proper name because he had studied about them.

In the second reading we have: “I see that God shows no partiality. rather .. whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. This is also very true with regards to Francis. Following the wishes of the Jesuits he became a great linguist speaking several languages fluently and being able to read many more. But this was not what he felt was his real calling. So when the opportunity presented itself he turned to psychology and group dynamics which fascinated him. This is what brought him to St. Joseph Parish Center as the Parish Psychologist. After a few years of that it was determined that they did not need a Parish Psychologist as much as they needed a Business Manager, so the position was eliminated. He could have gone on and got certification and started his own practice, but he still liked St. Joseph Parish Center and Pat was running a day care in their home so he became the Parish maintenance man. It didn’t make any difference to Francis if he was a linguist, a Parish Psychologist, or a maintenance man. He was not partial to any of those, rather he needed to act uprightly and be all things to all people.

So we move on to the third reading where Jesus as a fellow traveler helped the disciples on the road to Emmaus understand things. The basic thing about Francis was the basic thing about Christ - he cared about people and wanted to help them. It didn't make any difference to Jesus that he was a carpenter, or a rabbi, or Savior of the world. He wanted to help people. And likewise it did not make any difference to Francis whether he was a linguist, a psychologist, or a maintenance man he too was always looking for ways to help people in whatever way they needed help. He kept reading and learning. He kept researching things to find answers, And he kept trying to fix things to make people happy. He was not interested in titles or positions. He was not interested in appearances - a pair of suspenders, baggy pants, unkempt hair, and beat-up shoes were fine. The end result was what counted: "We not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and explained things to us." Francis truly embodied "The Living Spirit" in the Eulogy Reading. May we follow in his footsteps as he followed in the footsteps of Christ.