

Francis and Clare: Symbols of a liberating Church

Many years ago, Dom Helder Camara declared St. Francis as the symbol of the liberating Church and the patron saint of the poor. It is not without good reason that frequently Francis-can sisters and brothers were the ones who identified themselves with the praxis of liberation and with the reflection that deals with this liberation. Not only in Latin America, but also in other continents of the world, have they contributed to the realization of the objectives of liberation theology and have lived them. The Franciscan Charism promotes creativity and a conscious participation. As Leonardo Boff stated, the members of the Franciscan Family need not decide on the option for the poor in order to live what Liberation Theology preaches; it is enough, if they live their Franciscan Charism in a radical way.

Liberation Theology also received a strong impulse from Franciscan sisters and brothers: it was inspired by their work, by the way of living and thinking of those who had chosen the life style of St Francis and St Clare and therefore had committed themselves to the poor. One can even speak of a Franciscan way of living Liberation Theology, of putting it into practice. It may be good to remember that some of the most outstanding representatives of Liberation Theology are members of the Franciscan Family. The sisters and brothers of the Franciscan communities are familiar with the ideas of Liberation Theology and are actively involved in applying them.

The strength of Liberation Theology does not lie in the books that were written by its theologians, but rather in the daily spirituality of many people and communities.

CCFMC, Lesson Unit 20, C 2.1