

# TALKS WITH FRANCISCANS - 1965

Lectures 1-2  
Feringer notes  
Last edited: 11-98

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## Lecture 1

1.The primary point of these lectures is that while universals may work out "in heaven," the reality in which we live is always limited and therefore universals applied to our concrete world are limited in describing, or guiding our experience.

For example capitalism, is just as necessary as communism, and the Franciscans (representing day-to-day consciousness) are just as necessary as the Dominican order, which eulogizes long-range generalizations. "...our head can think universally, but our heart is of course attached to what we have to do, what we have to suffer for, what we have to stand for in the eyes of the world." (p.3)

2.To the Franciscans, the particular illuminates the whole; "...every day has its revelation....all your life you have kept the capacity, the power--the spirit you can say -- to look into the chalice of a flower as though you saw it for the first time." (p.6)

3.This raises the question, "What can be taught?" The answer is, of course, generalizations, and that is the division of labor for the Dominicans. To ignore generalizations is to invite anarchy!

4.ERH points out some detail of this unity of two (seeming) opposites. Capitalism was unheard-of before Adam Smith, and Marxism before Marx. What they saw was a world economy, and their solutions were in response to that revelation.

5.A question is raised as to the relationship between different "times" in history, between old and modern. "How can we relate to older times? Were they not different?" ERH replies that we are inheritors of the past, and of the present. The rule is that time cannot be fragmented, otherwise

we will not be successful in solving today's problems. Modern, is not better than old, and vice versa. "So new is not the criterion of history." (p.10) Marx and Smith saw something that others didn't. "Seeing" is important for us to remember today, because "...we are blind and deaf if it is in our interest to be blind and deaf." (p.12)

6.ERH goes from this question into original sin. Original sin is the attitude that if it has been done before, that is enough. The sins of grandfathers will be visited upon those of future generations.

This attitude, ERH asserts, is not enough; we must also impose our own judgment on the present and go from there, choosing between what is passed on to us and our own "heart," as representing our experience in the present.

7.Language is about following commands, about carrying out that which must be done, about that which is serious. We must therefore not speak to others, or think of them, in terms of labels like black-white, rich-poor. We must speak to them as human beings, so that they can respond in the highest sense, unbounded by labels, which must be broken out of.

## Lecture 2

1.This series seems to be addressing the unity of all mankind, that what is important for the individual or the partnership (two friends or man and wife) is valid for all mankind. Therefore in a viable society, persons practice hospitality. They accept the stranger into their house as if he were a king.

2.Hospitality is like a disarmament conference, it is not a natural act. It means you treat others not as an abstract category, as "public," but rather as "people." In this situation, to be hospitable is to help others achieve what they were meant to achieve. (p.5)

## Talks with Franciscans - 1965 - Review

In speaking with the Franciscans, Rosenstock-Huessy begins with reminding them of their philosophy, to live intensely each day, to maintain the ability "...to look into the chalice of a flower as though you saw it for the first time." But then he goes on to put this attitude in context by comparing them with the Dominicans, who eulogize the big picture, long time-spans, and seek the generalizations from experience. Of course, we need both attitudes, and in this article he gives vivid examples as to why. Generalizations represent order, but the revelations from each day are unpredictable.

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