The Covenant of In His Image

A Catholic men's household at Franciscan University of Steubenville · Est. 1978

We, the brothers of In His Image household, desire to be more fully formed in the image and likeness of God. Recognizing our call, as individuals and as a body, to live out this goal, we commit ourselves to Christ and to one another in the Holy Spirit to be men truly formed In His Image. Being filled with a holy zeal, we seek to grow in Christian maturity through a common life of worship, study, service, and recreation. From this desire flows the spirit and structure of In His Image.

The Spirit of In His Image

Out of a love for Christ, we desire to grow in the love we have for each other. Therefore we seek to support, serve, and honor one another as brothers in Christ. We desire to conduct our relationships in the fruit of the Holy Spirit. In a special way, the fruit of "joy" has always played a major role in our household and we desire to continue this fine tradition.

We desire to allow Christian joy to flow among us, for with joy we can accomplish any task. We realize true joy is our response to the real good in things around us and Christ is the reason for our joy.

> *I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want. But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we*

> *live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit. Let us not be conceited, provoking one another, envious of one another.*
> GALATIANS 5:16–26

In addition, we strive to follow the whole Word of God, especially in the areas of:

1. Encouragement

Here we use our strength, our gifts, and how we have been encouraged to help our brothers to grow or to overcome trials. As Barnabas in Acts, we give of ourselves to each other.

> *Thus Joseph, also named by the apostles Barnabas (which is translated "son of encouragement"), a Levite, a Cypriot by birth, sold a piece of property that he owned, then brought the money and put it at the feet of the apostles.*
> ACTS 4:36–37

2. Reconciliation

We seek to forgive and to seek forgiveness in the spirit of Matthew 18.

> *Then Peter approaching asked him, 'Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.'*
> MATTHEW 18:21–22

> *Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come offer your gift.*
> MATTHEW 5:23–24

3. Admonishment

We desire to hold one another accountable for our lives in Christ. Thus, out of love for each other we want to address areas needing change within us. We will never condemn a brother; change comes only through conviction in the heart. We will always love the brother being admonished while dealing with any area hurting him or the household.

> *We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all.*
> 1 THESSALONIANS 5:14

> *I am writing you this not to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.*
> 1 CORINTHIANS 4:14

4. Respect & Submission

We see the importance of deferring to our brothers out of reverence for Christ. Respecting one another means submitting to our brothers' needs, desires, and requests. It also means making requests that do not manipulate or take advantage of our brothers. This is a major way to show love. Especially, the coordinator and assistants require respect because of their responsibility for the household and its life.

> *Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation.*
>
> ROMANS 12:9–10, 13–16

5. Speech

We desire to edify with our speech and speak the truth at all times. Thus we realize that negative humor, abusive language, argumentative speech, and profanity have no place among us.

> *With the tongue we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. This need not be so, my brothers. Does a spring gush forth from the same opening both pure and brackish water?*
>
> JAMES 3:9–11

The Structure of In His Image

Flowing from the spirit of our household, we desire to develop a structure personally and corporately that typifies our identity as mature Christian men. This structure flows from our love for Christ above all else.

1. Personally

A · PRAYER

We want to set aside a significant amount of time each day for personal prayer. We will also pray with one another for our needs.

B · STUDY

In addition to developing academically, we want to study Scripture and books that will aid in our spiritual development.

C · SERVICE

We desire to use our God-given gifts, personal and spiritual, at the service of God and one another.

D · STEWARDSHIP

As servants we are called to be stewards of what God has given us. Therefore, we strive to use the blessings around us properly, without abusing them. We are stewards, for example, of our time, possessions, and friendships.

2. Corporately

A · HOUSEHOLD MEETINGS

We recognize the importance of being present at all of the household meetings (including share groups) and agree not to be absent or late without prior approval of the coordinator or his assistant.

B · HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES

We will strive to attend, as our time allows, all extra household activities since they are ways for us to grow individually and as a brotherhood. Especially, we see the need to share a sacramental life together. Eucharist and Penance services are the most important of all our extra-household activities, and regular household attendance will be stressed.

C · AUTHORITY

We agree to recognize and respond to the authority and guidance of the advisor, coordinator, and assistant, to encourage them and support them in prayer, word, and deed.

D · SERVICE

As a household we will seek ways to serve others.

In Closing

We, the brothers of In His Image, recognize the value of this household agreement as a means of attaining our goal of mature manhood in Christ. We also recognize the goal of our household as one preparing us for heaven and of providing us with gifts by which we will contribute and minister to those around us here on earth. Thus we will receive our inheritance in heaven, by being truly In His Image.

Scripture texts in this document are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved.