

April 4

Blessed William Cufitella

Good day, good people! May the Lord give you peace!

In these reflections on Franciscan saints we may sometimes wonder about their motivations. Some of their spiritual practices border on the extreme!

Our company today gives us an opportunity to look more closely at what some call “pure motives.” Sometimes our motivations are not pure hearted, spotless and without blemish. This is not cynicism. Truth told, our motives are often mixed.

Considering the life of Blessed William, his story tells us that motives can change. Circumstance, events, or insights can inspire one to change the direction of his/her life. What is of particular interest is that today’s company surrendered his privilege. This is exceptional. Usually it is sacrificed only by force.

William Cufitella was a nobleman at the King’s court in Sicily. They were hunting one day when a boar attacked the king. Coming to the king’s aid, the boar then attacked William, seriously wounding him. Though the king acknowledged William for his altruism by offering him more wealth, power and privilege, the experience deeply affected him. He asked to leave the king’s court and live the life of a hermit. This is when he met, Conrad of Piacenza, who later was also declared a saint. Eventually, he moved to an isolated forest and served as sacristan in the nearby village of Scicli, till ninety-five years of age. People often visited him for spiritual direction and guidance.

This story illustrates a couple of important things. First, it is possible to move away from privilege when God becomes one’s focus. Second, it also shows that the motives for living a Christian life must be for the love of God. Wrong motives lead to burnout, disappoint and disillusionment. Good motives, intentionally focused on Christ, direct us along the path of abundant life.

Franciscan spirituality places Christ in the center of everything. It is why our motto is “My God and my all”. What other motivation is there for giving up the good things of life or our privilege?

Let us pray.

Lord, give me the wisdom to examine my life. Give me the insight necessary to examine my motives, intentions and privilege. Guide me in my efforts to center my life in Christ and set me on the true path of life, you who live forever and ever. Amen.

Blessed William Cufitella is a friend of God and the company we keep today.

