

Chasing Francis – Ian Morgan Cron

Summary:

This book is written in a genre called Wisdom Literature, which is a balance between fiction and nonfiction. In this case, the author is focused on modern evangelical religious systems and the impact the philosophies of Catholic Saint Francis of Assisi from 800 years ago could have on contemporary issues of today, such as materialism, voluntary poverty, and experiences through the heart and not always the mind.

General Themes:

Going against our training and upbringing is a difficult task that requires an enormous desire to chart a different path.

Pursuing authenticity and happiness is not without great cost (personal, professional, financial, emotional).

Disturbing the foundation of others for your own growth will be met with challenges from those who remain within the in-group, and typically isolation occurs. However, integrating into other groups is the opposite reward that occurs.

Notable Quotes:

The word *pilgrimage* comes from the Latin word *peregrinus*, which means a person wandering the earth in exile, someone in search of a spiritual homeland. A pilgrimage is a way of praying with your feet. You go on a pilgrimage because you know there's something missing inside your soul, and the only way you can find it is to go to sacred places, places where God made himself known to others. In sacred places, something gets done to you that you've been unable to do for yourself. Ritual meets space. (43)

Agnostic means 'not knowing.' (55) The medieval Christian perspective got beaten up during the Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers saw the universe less as a mystery and more as a machine where you got hold of truth by using reason, not divine revelation. The Christian worldview that had never been challenged before, suddenly came under attack. Scientists replaced theologians, and the age of modernity was born. (56) In response, Christianity turned to history rather than stories. If they could make all their doctrines string together perfectly and logically, it would make the faith harder to discredit. But the Bible is less about ideas or doctrines than it is a story about people and their up-and-down relationship with God. It's more a painting than a photograph. Stop asking the painting to be a photograph. It's the story that makes sense of your life, and you don't need to apologize for choosing it. The Bible is the story of how God gets back what was always his in the first place. People are looking for a story that can explain the way the world is. (57)

Wisdom had placed her treasures in his soul for safekeeping. (63) True holiness is often swaddled in the simple. (66)

It's hard to sit in silence with someone you don't know very well. Instead, we turn to words to cover our inner nakedness. (69)

You'll never be able to speak into their souls unless you speak the truth about your own wounds. The *magna animi* is the open soul; the *pusilla animi* is the defended heart. (71)

Great Chain of Being, the whole is affected. Everything in the natural world is connected. If we destroy it, we destroy ourselves. (82)

The word work in Hebrew is *abad*, and it means ‘to serve.’ (81)

Richard Rohr: “All things are endowed with ‘this-ness’”. (85)

In the liturgy, every act is a metaphor or symbol. The word *liturgy* literally means ‘work of the people.’ The word *Eucharist* means ‘thanksgiving.’ Think of it as a homecoming celebration – it is the sacrament of love and joy. (99)

Gandhi: “The world is hungry for God that God could only come as a piece of bread. We so long for joy that God even risked coming into the world in the form of intoxication, that risky thing called wine.” (100)

All of us are meaning-seekers. Hearts long to find ultimate meaning, while at the same time their critical minds do not believe it exists. Art or beauty is not the destination; it is a signpost pointing toward our desired destination. (109)

The very people who pride themselves on being focused on the Word often come perilously close to practicing a form of Gnosticism that overvalues the spiritual and eschews the material. (113)

While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart. (135)

I’ve confused being a peace lover with being a peacemaker. A peace lover is someone who enjoys the absence of conflict, but a peacemaker is someone who is proactively engaged in works of reconciliation in every sphere of life, from the personal to the global. Much more than the mere absence of conflict, peace was to be the result and/or link to justice and love. (139)

Shalom is deep harmony with the universe. (150)

There is a law in physics that applies to the soul. No two objects can occupy the same space at the same time; one thing must displace another. (168)

Spiritual journey is so much about repeated departures. (182)

Truth doesn’t need defending. It is its own witness. (207)