



The Joy of Francis

Together for the Gospel!

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Saint Elizabeth of Hungary VIII Centenary

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"I am pleased to inform you that, in its last meeting of April 2006, the CIOFS Presidency decided that the Secular Franciscan Order will celebrate the 800th anniversary of the birth of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, from November 17, 2006 to November 17, 2008.

Yes, you read correctly – we will dedicate two years to our Patron so that we can get to know her well and live her Franciscan and secular spirituality of a young spouse and mother, who did not hesitate to take on heavy government responsibilities in her "reign", achieving, through love and dedication (in a very difficult

St. Elizabeth, cont. page 15



ŚW. ELŻBIETA KRÓLOWA



To my Franciscan Family: The Future of Spiritual Assistants

by Rock DeSpain, Regional Minister

After spending a year and a half in classes, visitations and elections, I was certified as a Lay Spiritual Assistant on July 1, 2006. I knew this was not an end but a beginning

and had the usual feelings most of us get when we undertake something new. Fortunately there was an internship in my future.

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This was a comforting feeling as I pondered my future as a Lay Spiritual Assistant. We had spent so many hours studying our books, but what was even more important, we spent a lot of discussion time on typical problems that arose in a fraternity and how to solve the problems from a pastoral point of view.

Vision over structure became our battle cry and it made so much sense. But what did the future hold for me and the other 15 Lay Spiritual Assistants in St. Francis Region? I was sure the Holy Spirit would reveal what was supposed to happen, but I still thought about it.

As we Lay Spiritual Assistants started out internship, I heard about the forthcoming annual Conference of National Spiritual Assistants gathering in Easton, PA. and asked if I could attend. The answer was yes and I asked if Larry Frasor, our Regional Vice Minister and also a Lay Spiritual Assistant could attend with me and I was told yes. So Larry and I went and spent 4 days with National, Provincial and Regional Spiritual Assistants.

It was an excellent experience for Larry and me. We listened to the Friars talk about their Journey. It was a special blessing to spend one of the days working on discussion questions about

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Initial Formation Seminars

Larry Frasor, Regional Vice-Minister

*At the St. Francis Regional Gathering held on October 21, 2006, an announcement was made that a new opportunity for Formation is being offered by the Region. All of those persons in initial formation will be required to attend and **everyone** in our Fraternities is invited. These seminars are designed to supplement and not to replace the one-to-one and small group formation already going on in each Fraternity.*

“In our travels around the region, Fraternities are doing different things, having different Formation processes. How can we be on Order if we are going in different directions? Soon we will begin a series of four one-day seminars. These seminars will be held in each District and they will be repeated in each District once every eighteen months. The topics covered will be the SFO Rule, the SFO Constitution and Statutes, SFO History, and SFO Prayer and Spiritual Life. We hope that on Profession Day, all Candidates will be professing to the same basic Formation. Does this take away from the Formation responsibilities of the Fraternities?

Absolutely not!

We hope these seminars will give each Fraternity all the time they need to do one-on-one Formation, get to know their Candidates better, allow each person to share their faith with other members of the Fraternity, allow time for Apostolic endeavors, extend prayer, scriptural study etc., and by Profession that we may be more closely united with each other. By Profession we are bonded and bound to work together to rebuild the Church. In other words, our goal is one Doctrine, one Church,

one Order, one Formation, one Franciscan secular life.

The Lay Spiritual Assistants and the Certified Formation Members will conduct these seminars, in each District. In March of 2006, Cardinal Stanislaus Ryalko, President of the Papal Commission on the Laity, speaking to ecclesial groups such as ours, made a mind boggling statement. He said,

‘Christain families are no longer able to pass on the faith to the next generation, and neither are the parishes, although they must continue.’

We must bind together in the New Crusade to Rebuild the Church. We must consecrate and dedicate our lives to this pursuit. Francis showed us the way. It is our turn to follow. God be with us!”

Synopsis of Seminar Topics:

A SECULAR FRANCISCAN WHERE DO WE COME FROM ?

(St Francis and the Third Order: Raphael Pazzalli T.O.R.)

BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE

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Region Receives 11 New Lay Spiritual Assistants



SFO Lay Spiritual Assistants, Left to right : *Peter Hanh Nguyen, Rock DeSpain, Catalina Tan, Joachim Nguyen Van Du, Sylvia Paoli, Mary Lynn, Kim Tong, (Rev. Stephen R. Gross, OFM Conv.), Anthony Hoang Van Le, Robert Herbelin, Larry Frasar, Armando Lomeli, and Joseph Bui*

As of July 1, 2006, Saint Francis Region #52 has 11 new Lay Spiritual Assistants.

Members of the Region gathered at St. Gregory the Great parish to attend Mass and welcome these new Assistants into our hearts. The diversity of their backgrounds is well matched with the many cultures and ethnicities represented in the Region. In his homily, Fr. Steve said that it is no coincidence that as fewer Friars are available to act as Spiritual Assistants, that this development in Lay Spirituality would happen.

It is definitely the Will of the Holy Spirit that we have these workers in the vineyard. They are not imitation priests, but rather a truly Lay force enlivening the spiritual life of the Secular Franciscan Order. They are not “spiritual superiors” to their brethren, but are pastoral guides working to foster a deeper insight into Franciscan spirituality and formation of the

Secular Franciscans. Fr. Steve said that it is important that they be “credible examples in today’s world of Christian living in a Franciscan way.”

The new Lay Spiritual Assistants will not be assigned to particular SFO Fraternities, but they will instead be sent where they are needed as the need arises.

According to the revised Rule of 1978, the Friars supporting the Secular Fraternities are “Spiritual Assistants,” not directors. They do not run the meeting nor the Fraternity. Their task became communicating Franciscan Spirituality and assisting in Formation. All Spiritual Assistants, including our new Lay Spiritual Assistants, represent the Friars. The First Orders have been very clear that the SFO is OUR Order and that we must maintain and enliven it. At present there are 43 groups in the Region and 16 Lay Spiritual Assistants.

Regional Minister, Rock deSpain, reminded us that as a result of their specialized training, the Lay Spiritual Assistants have a better grasp of the needs of the SFO than many of the First Order.

After Mass, there was the traditional “no one goes hungry” meal with a bit of a twist. In a bitter-sweet double event, the Region also said good-bye to Fr. Steven Gross, OFM Conv., who has been part of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants and was assigned to St. Francis Region, and is now being reassigned to Assisi.

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The Call to the Lay Faithful

From Co-Workers in the Vineyards of the Lord, A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry, by the Committee on the Laity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2005.

I've been here for about two months now and I continue to learn so much from the experience of taking pilgrims and tourists through the Basilica of St. Francis - sharing commentary about history, franciscan spirituality, art-history and so much more. As I continue to read the long history of this place, I am growing more and more convinced that it was the intention of the Church leadership, working the friars and the many artisans, to make sure that the place was NOT about St. Francis as much as it is about Jesus and how like Francis, we too can be transformed by the love of God for us in Christ!

The Basilica with its three-tiered churches, speaks eloquently to the fact that Francis himself invites us to discover what it is that we can do to better serve the Lord in our lives. His response was particularly heroic. Our response will be the same if we genuinely desire to be moved by the grace of on-going conversion to progress in virtue!! And, of course, that will NOT make us more like Francis, but rather more like the very best God has made US capable of becoming!! Francis 'proved' it is possible, can we do the same? Is transformation your desire? Well then, what are you waiting for?? +Blessings!

fr. steve, ofm conv.

Lay men and women hear and answer the universal call to holiness primarily and uniquely in the secular realm. They are found "in each and every one of the world's occupations and callings and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, form the context of their existence. There they are called by God to contribute to the sanctification of the world from within, like leaven, in the spirit of the Gospel, by fulfilling their own particular duties."

For lay persons, this call, given in the Sacraments of Initiation, is rightly described as having a "secular character" that is properly theirs as laity. The secular nature of their calling refers to the fact that God "has handed over the world to women and men, so that they may participate in the work of creation, free creation from the influence of sin and sanctify themselves in marriage or the celibate life, in a family, in a profession and in the various activities of society." This task is itself a participation in the mission of the Church.

All of the baptized are called to work toward the transformation of the world. Most do this by working in the secular realm; some do this by working in the Church and focusing on the building of ecclesial

communion, which has among its purposes the transformation of the world.

Working in the Church is a path of Christian discipleship to be encouraged by the hierarchy. The possibility that lay persons undertake Church ministries can be grounded in Scripture and the teachings of the Church, from St. Paul to the Second Vatican Council and in more recent documents. "Sharing in the function of Christ, priest, prophet and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and activity of the church. Their activity within the church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to obtain its full effect."

From Fr. Benet

A whole series of ministries for Secular Franciscans do not appear specifically in the Revised Rule: the ecclesial or "churchy" ministries like lector, auxiliary ministers of the Eucharist, sacristan, usher, server at the altar, catechist, parish council member, choir member, and so forth. I think such were omitted from the text of the rule not because they are not pertinent to Secular Franciscans (*They certainly are! Just look at how many active lay leaders in parishes are Secular Franciscans!*), but rather because these ministries are the expected norm and presumed involvement of all committed Christians. The Revised Rule details those ministries which are over and above the call to usual Christian life and are special and particular to the Secular Franciscan Commitment.

- Fr. Benet Fonck, OFM





Kata Tan, SFO
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Senators, Congressmen, Cabinet Members!

There were angry discussions among those present, “This is total nonsense!!!” Someone else said, “Impossible!” Another said, “No way!”

Then someone asked, “Wait a minute, I thought I was going to be a member of his cabinet!” Another joined in, “I’ve been getting my family and myself all psyched up about the position I will be occupying in the Senate...and aren’t you going to be one of the congressmen?” he asked a colleague.

There was commotion! Before anyone realized it, all the prospective senators, congressmen, cabinet members, and advisors were gone! They’ve deserted their CEO!

Gosh, it must have been difficult to be so disillusioned as the early disciples were! They had expectations but Jesus had a totally different plan for them! Nowhere near what they had in mind.

But if they had stayed awhile, they would have been given the necessary **information**, and they would have gone through some **formation** with the Master, and journeyed with him towards **transFORMATION!**

But that’s the very essence of it all!

Are we here to become senators, congressmen, and cabinet members? But that will make us **associational** members only... members who are present at events and activities when such involvements do not **conflict** with ‘other’ ‘busy-ness’ and activities...or activities that are convenient for us to attend or activities that are **agreeable** to us. Otherwise, we would have other busy-ness to attend to. No one is willing to be the servant.

On the other hand, an **intentional** member is someone who is not looking to be a star, but someone who is willing to be a disciple...willing to make **sacrifices** for the fraternity and the Order. THAT is what our **profession** is all about. Committing to make sacrifices for the good of the Order. The sacrifices may make one infamous because, although they may be according to our Rule of Life or Constitution, they may not be agreeable to what some or many members may perceive membership in the Order is all about. So looks like being an intentional member means doing the “dirty” job that no one else is willing to do.

Sister Doris Gottemueller, President of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas touched on this in one of her talks: *“Who are we? We are ordinary people called to live extraordinary lives.”* Even business people challenge us not to be satisfied with being mediocre. Although it is not an easy call, it is not impossible. What makes it difficult is when there are only a few who are willing to be intentional members doing the dirty job.

Br. James Reiter, OFM-Conv., refers

to an article in *America* magazine written by Fr. Albert Dilanni, the former vicar general of the Society of Mary. Fr. Dilanni wrote that: Refounding can be exhilarating, challenging, and **threatening**. But it is of utmost importance if we are going to continue to be a viable witness within the Church. The Second Vatican Council calls us to rediscover the charism, the gift of the founder. The challenge of refounding is whether or not we can make that charism as alive today as it was during the time of the founder. In his article, Fr. Dilanni quotes Sister Joan Chistister of the Erie, PA Benedictines: *“What do you stand for? Who knows what you stand for? **Because if no one knows what you stand for, you don’t stand for it.**”*

Now that sounds scary: I guess this is a true challenge. The universal call to holiness in the Second Vatican Council is a call to be an intentional member, not just an associational member. A call not just for the Religious and the Clergy, but for all people, especially the laity... us!

Fr. Dilanni goes on to describe these two types of members: *“**Both types of members are drawn to and believe in what the community or organization stands for... The healthy and vibrant future of the community is dependent upon the number of intentional members out-numbering the associational members. If the opposite occurs, the vibrancy and vision of the community could be greatly affected to the extent that it could lose its identity all together.**”*

So which one am I then ????



Advent: Bethlehem, Greccio, and Last Judgement

Brother John, Byzantine Brothers of St. Francis, Calimesa, CA.

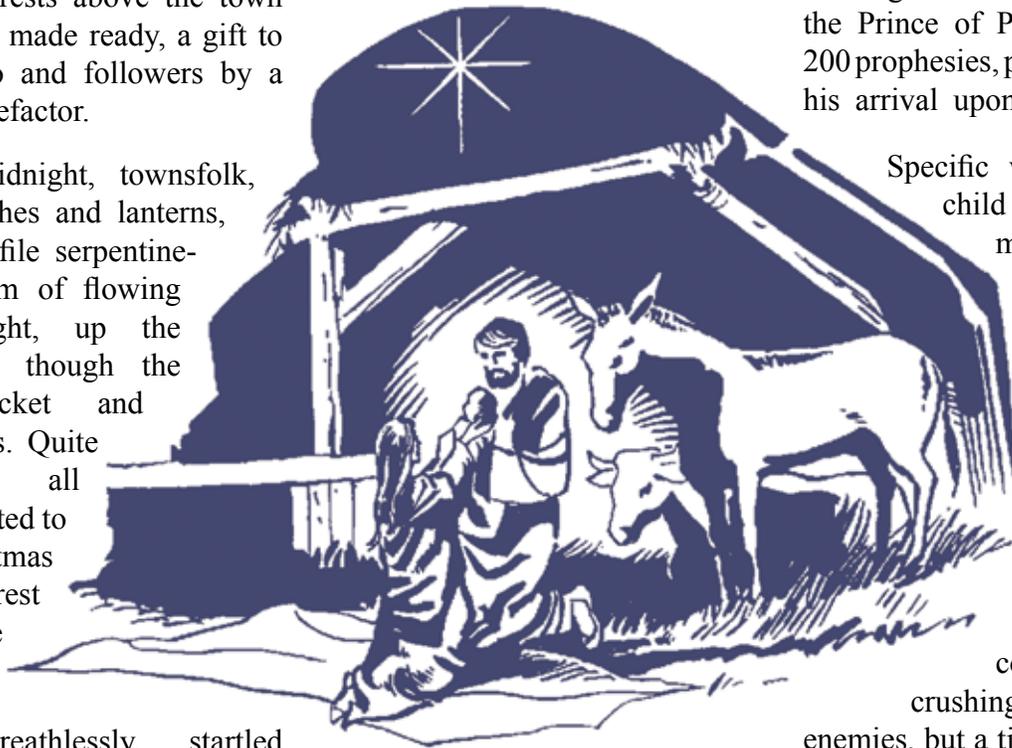
Crisp night breezes rush through aged sycamores and gnarled oaks as thousands of starlit flecks glitter multicolored in heaven's vast cobalt blue. Nearby, an overhanging cliff nestled in forests above the town of Greccio is made ready, a gift to the Poverello and followers by a generous benefactor.

Close to midnight, townfolk, carrying torches and lanterns, move single-file serpentine-like, a stream of flowing speckled light, up the mountainside though the woods, thicket and rocky ravines. Quite mysteriously, all had been invited to attend Christmas Mass in a forest - a thing quite unheard of.

Arriving breathlessly, startled citizens froze in astonishment, beholding a temporary sanctuary set in a cave's loft, - altar, flickering candles, chalice, with vested priests and devout deacon, Brother Francis. Below, a striking stable tableau with ox and donkey, sheep and shepherds stood silently, except for the bleating of lambs. A Joseph and Mary gazed downward at a wood-carved Christ-Child resting in straw, looking pensive with clasped hands.

Mass began with choir softly

chanting, joined by nightingales, as deer and rabbits watched in awe, and white birch trees holding clusters of birds bowed reverently in the wind. Preparation always precedes the ADVENT of spectacular events in life - a child's birth, arrival



of dignitaries, approaching destinations after prolonged journeying. ADVENT SEASON which celebrates the glorious birth of Jesus Christ, anticipates his final return in power, and alerts Christians to their ultimate mortality. Advent's four weeks of churches arrayed in violet, recall four thousand years of awaiting the promised Messiah, filling man's history with expectant exultation, contrasting Lent's somber penitential theme.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, ancient prophets from over thousands of years past had revelations of a coming Savior, with particular facts surrounding his conception, lineage, birth, life, all recorded throughout Hebrew Scripture.

Proving his credentialed legitimacy, the Prince of Peace fulfilled over 200 prophecies, portents announcing his arrival upon the global scene.

Specific writings portray a child born of a virgin, mystically called Emmanuel (God with us), living, teaching, curing, feeding, suffering, dying, and rising from death. This infant-prodigy was not to have been their longed-for conquering Messiah,

crushing Israel's oppressive enemies, but a tiny humble child of poor means. Thus, Christ was born! Mass continued as Old and New Testament readings were completed. Francis approached a delighted congregation, and speaking of Christ's birth, at the mention of his beatific name, "the fire of his love overcame him, and called the child, "the poor babe of Bethlehem," his tongue gently rolling each syllable.

The future world's climatic end shall welcome a Redeemer's monumental arrival, in great power and glory



radiating in all directions amidst colossal fulminating storm clouds, and dazzling legions of angels.

Eternity replaces transient time as irrevocable judgment is passed on mankind, the faithful living and the spiritually dead.

Towering over Greccio's liturgy, like Gothic arches, massive trees offer a canopy against inclement weather. A small bell rings announcing the Epiclesis prayer asking the Holy Spirit's descent upon bread and wine, prelude to their becoming Christ's Body and Blood. With the suddenness of all miracles, God returns to earth once more, appearing on the altar with the simplicity of a child born in a stable-cave. Christ has come again.

**All praise be yours,
my Lord, through
Sister Death, from
whose embrace no
mortal can escape.**

*Canticle of Brother Sun,
St. Francis.*

Life's journey is without guarantees of another day, month or year. It ceases, occasionally without warning, following a brief illness, accident, aging or violence.

In four weeks, three Magi-like gifts might be offered to the little "babe in straw."

1. *God, pleased with our every effort to improve, is honored by our struggle to remove sin, bad habits,*



and faults. Additional prayers allow us to ascend to spiritual realms, gaining increased insights. We offer thanks for all he has given is appreciated by a generous Father.

2. *For fellow life travelers: family, friends, co-workers, we offer improved patience, ready forgiveness, visits to the sick/shut-ins, money to the needy, and offering a sympathetic ear is valued.*

3. *The soul thrives on Scripture reflection, additional Masses, rosaries, and a more kindly spirit. It is in giving that we receive.*

Evening Mass concludes as the faithful prepare to depart. Suddenly, Francis lifts the Christ-Child image. Witnesses claim the figure came to life, smiled, and touched the saint's beard and robe. Love for God had grown cold, and was rekindled by the Seraphic Father's devotion.

As you receive Holy Communion this coming Christ's Mass, you hold the infant Jesus of Bethlehem, the Lord of the Second Coming, and a Father who will one day bring you home. Held within each others' embrace, God and man are one!



The birth of Christ is already total gift

- from **A Christmas Message**
From Friar Jack Wintz, O.F.M.
www.americancatholic.org/

One of the great insights we draw from those words is that already with the Incarnation and birth of Christ—many years before Jesus' death and Resurrection—we have received God's total self-gift...

When Pope John Paul II came to Bethlehem's Manger Square, during his great Jubilee visit to the Holy Land, March 22, 2000, he affirmed in a similar vein that both Jesus' Incarnation as well as his Passion express this same great mystery of God's all-out, unconditional love for us. **"The silence and poverty of the birth in Bethlehem are one with the darkness and pain of the death of Calvary,"** the pope said in an address at Bethlehem. **"The Crib and the Cross are the same mystery of redemptive love; the body which Mary laid in a manger is the same body offered up on the Cross."** All of us, I can only suspect, need to upgrade our appreciation of the enormous gift that God offered to us that first Christmas.

To the Birth of Christ and the Death/Resurrection of Christ, we can add a third mystery or event which offers to us that same supreme gift. I am speaking of the Holy Eucharist, the gift that Christ left us on the eve of his death, and a gift that commemorates and truly embodies the same loving and total self-gift of God. The point is that God is always giving himself totally for us.



The Visitor St. Padre Pio Fraternity & St. Francis and Clare Satellite/ Moreno Valley/Hemet Minister: Dixie Marshall SFO Editor: Gerri Merchant, SFO

NEWS: St. Padre Pio Fraternity is meeting each first Saturday at 10:15 a.m., to pray the rosary for the unborn in front of Planned Parenthood in Moreno Valley. We will not block the sidewalk. If we are asked to move by authorities, we will move peacefully. We will not attempt to interfere with any persons. We will be there to pray and not to demonstrate or display violence. To paraphrase what Brother Francis was purported to have said, we will not need to use words. Our words will go to Our Lady. We will be there to pray come rain or come shine.



Sts. Francis & Jude Fraternity – Joint Profession: St. Francis Fraternity hosted a joint profession at the March 19th, 11:00 a.m. Mass, at Sts. Simon and Jude Church in Huntington Beach. Candidates from three fraternities made a lifelong commitment into the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO):

Gwen Booth, John Boozan, Elizabeth Derkowski, Gail Judkins, and Jim Tessmar of *St. Francis Fraternity in Huntington Beach*; Anne Killian, Shirley Prisk, and Thomas Prisk of *St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity in Los Alamitos*; and Ron Wakefield of *Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Habra*.

We welcome the newly professed! A special thank you to everyone who helped prepare for and carry out the profession and potluck afterwards. Colman Hall was filled to capacity with family, friends, and well wishers.

April 20, 2006 – Twentieth Anniversary of Profession: Three members who were professed at Sts. Simon and Jude twenty years ago celebrated recently. Linda M. Nelson, SFO, is currently Minister of St. Francis Fraternity in Huntington Beach. Two other members have moved to St. Maximilian Kolbe in Los Alamitos – Carol Werdin, SFO, and Stellamarie Nadeau, SFO.



Share the Joy: Holy Spirit Fraternity, Claremont, CA Minister: Bill Mussatto SFO Editor: Jackie



NEWS: As of September 10th we have a new council: William Mussatto, Minister; Claudia Good, Vice-miniter; Mirna Kildare, Secretary; Randy Rohrer, Treasurer; Alma Jiminez, Formation; Godwin Milner and Claudia Thompson, Councilors.

We also celebrated the 25th Anniversary of our founding as a Fraternity on October 7, 2006. Mass at Our Lady of the Assumption was said by Fr. Victor, our first Spiritual Assistant. Afterwards we had a reception



The Dove, San Juan Capistrano Fraternity, Laguna Niguel, CA Minister: Bill Lynn SFO, Editor: Tom Cooney, SFO

NEWS: San Juan Capistrano Fraternity elected a new Council for the next three-year term at its 6/17/06 Fraternity Elections. Left to right: Gloria Albamonte Council Member-At-Large; Bill Lynn, Minister; Anita Albamonte, Treasurer; Joan Fessenden, Secretary; Deacon David Sire, Vice Minister (kneeling); and Dan Abalos, Formation Director.



which included present and past members and family.

On Saturday, November 4 we will attend the 8:15 Mass at OLA, following which we will pray the Franciscan Crown Rosary in memory of those members of our Fraternity

St. Joseph's Staff, St. Joseph's SFO Fraternity, Los Angeles; Minister: Michael Sanchez, SFO, Editor: Mike Sanchez, SFO

NEWS: We are beginning to launch our *Bridges* program to create human bridges between various members of our Franciscan Fraternity - our Franciscan community. We are forming several small groups who will be in regular contact with each other on a weekly basis, and will support, encourage and assist each other in the pursuit of a holy life in a Franciscan way, in that area where those particular members live. This program is open to *all* Franciscans who are associated/members of our fraternity.

L.A. TRANSITUS: Our brothers and sisters gathered at St. Francis of Assisi Church in L.A. to celebrate the triumphant passing of our father Francis into glory on October 3rd. What a blessing! Father Francis, because of his great faith in God, asked and received this grace - that on the day of his passing he

would be permitted by God to visit purgatory and deliver from there any Franciscan (or lover of Francis

readings, scripture, singing and the company was fantastic. In ways it was a strange gathering: somber and reverential but with hints of joy and true familial intimacy! What a joy to belong to this Order. What heavenly graces our Father from Heaven rains down upon us!



Transitus of Our Seraphic Father Francis held at Mission San Luis Rey, Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2006

and his way of life) and translate them into the Kingdom of Heaven! The evening began with song and a procession: a candle = the Light of the World; a habit = indicating Francis, his order (of which we are a part!) and his holy rule; the San Damiano cross (which we all know and love); and the book of the Gospels (the great promises that bring us life and that on which our rule is based!); and finally, a first-grade relic of St. Francis, a symbol of his very real presence with us on that powerful night! The

The bells tolled at 7:00 p.m. Assembled in the back of the Church were the members of the procession representing the Fraternities. A Friar carried the Light of the World. Mike Sanchez followed with a Franciscan robe. Daniel Lee processed with the Gospels. Two members of the Korean Fraternity bore the Cross of San Damiano. Mary Rose Garon, SFO, presented the relic of the body of St. Francis of Assisi. Mass was said by Fr. Richard Juzix, OFM. 

St Mary of the Angels, Portiuncula; Emerging Fraternity, Woodland Hills, CA; Editor: Bob Garon, SFO

NEWS: **TRANSITUS;** OCT 3: It was a time of celebration from all over Los Angeles turned out to honor the Transitus of our Seraphic Father, St. Francis of Assisi at the Los Angeles Church bearing his name. The multicultural atmosphere was enhanced by the dual-language Liturgy of Spanish and English.



San Lorenzo Ruiz Fraternity had its First Profession!

San Lorenzo Ruiz Fraternity

Minister: Manuel Graciano:

NEWS: On Saturday, August 5, 2006, at Santa Barbara's Friary Chapel, Father William Brand celebrated a Profession Mass for Jehan Tubola and Pacita Bongat. It was a beautiful Mass and of course Frather William gave a magnificent and moving sermon. There was a representative from St. Bonaventure Fraternity and from St. Louis Fraternity present.

The celebration continued with a picnic at the beach. Fr. William joined us and we all had a wonderful time laughing, playing games, singing, eating, etc.

As Fr. William said, it was truly a "gala celebration."

We ended the day with a novena for St. Clare at the Poor Clare's



Monastery. Thank God for a very special, holy and fun day for all of us.



Seventeenth Quinquennial Congress

July 3-8, 2007

Franciscan University at
Steubenville, Ohio

*Without You, the family is
incomplete.*

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.
(SFO Rule, Article XIII)





Go Rebuild my House

Bro Larry Frasor, SFO

This is the message of Jesus to Francis, and thereby the message of Jesus to the Secular Franciscans. A year ago I was elected to the position of Advocate in the Knights of Columbus. The Secular Franciscans are cousins to the Knights of Columbus. Fr. McGivney chose Christopher Columbus, who by the way was a Secular Franciscan, because he brought the Catholic Faith along with the Franciscan 1st order to the Americas. He called them Knights because they were to be defenders of the Faith and the protectors of their families.

When I explained this to the Knights, they asked our emerging fraternity, the Companions of Francis to do a day of recollection for their council. This we did and it was a wonderful day for both groups.

After prayer and discernment, I recommended to our fraternity a program we could host for the Knights, and then presented it to the Knights. Both organizations agreed and we have begun a journey together to rebuild God's House.

We will begin a program to get Catholic television into every Catholic home. We will seek other Knights Councils in our area to combine and support a program to bring name, motivational speakers into our area to begin to educate us a families.

Four times a year we will gather our families together, bring our own food and drinks, pray together, eat together, listen to the talk together, discuss as families, what we learned and how we can bring the knowledge into our homes and live it and see it being lived by other families. Live and learn as families, not age groups.

This will allow each of us no matter our age to learn and share our faith and lives.

Each council will pick a specific Sunday each month and come to mass together as families to show other families it can be done. We will plan combined family outings and camping trips on an annual basis. In short we will begin living our Catholic Faith publicly, rebuilding the church.

Our Fraternity will act as Hosts for these events planning prayers, music, arranging for the speakers, in general acting as spiritual assistants to the Knights. A beginning, a seed, something real. We ask your prayers, and God's grace. It feels so good to think we might make a difference and bring to reality our solemn profession.

Praise God!



Fr. Christian Mondor, OFM blesses a rosary for Ginnie Guemo, SFO, from San Lorenzo Ruiz Fraternity, at the Annual Regional Gathering on October 21, 2006.





JoAnn Hardwick SFO

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Why is there War?

After watching the evening news filled with the horrors of the war in Iraq and the wars on the mean streets of Southern California, the terrorists in the Middle East and the domestic terrorists in Southern California, questions rose in my mind, "Why is there war?" "Why is there so much hatred in our world? Why are people so uncaring as to think that violence will solve our problems?"

The answer came from what I had read in the book, "An Interrupted Life" by Etty Hillesum. This is the diary of a young Dutch Jewish woman that was exterminated by the Nazis at Auschwitz in 1943. She was only 29 years old. The book is the diary she kept some two years before her death. It is filled with expressions of love for life, compassion for people, and devotion to God.

In one entry, she writes to a Jewish friend who is understandably embittered and hateful of the Germans.

"Kas, all I really want to say is this: We have so much work to do

on ourselves that we shouldn't even be thinking of hating our so-called enemies...

Each of us must turn inwards and destroy in himself all that he thinks he ought to destroy in others. And remember every atom of hate we add to this world makes it still more inhospitable"

In another entry she writes:

"All disasters stem from us. Why is there a war? Perhaps because now and then I might be inclined to snap at my neighbor. Because I and my neighbor and everyone else do not have enough love. Yet, we could fight war and all that grows out of it by releasing, each day, the love which is shackled inside us, and giving it a chance to live.

And I believe I will never be able to hate any human being for his so-called wickedness, that I shall only hate the evil that is within me, though hate is perhaps putting it too strongly even then. In any case, we cannot be lax enough in what we demand of others and strict enough in what we demand of ourselves."

Such wisdom borne of suffering from one so young. I firmly believe that acts of kindness and forgiveness are like a pebble thrown in a pond making ever-widening ripples out from its impact to the shores of the pond. In like manner acts of anger and revenge ripple out into our world scarring the beautiful creation of God. We all need to

take the wisdom of Etty Hillesum to heart and begin to practice acts of kindness and forgiveness. To cultivate kindness and forgiveness is not easy and it is not a feeling, it is a decision that will bring peace to our hearts and our world.

One last example is this prayer by a Jew found on a scrap of paper when Auschwitz was liberated:

Peace be to men of bad will, and an end of all revenge and to all words of pain and punishment. So many have borne witness with their blood!

O God, do not put their suffering on your scales of justice, lest it counted to the hangman, lest he be brought to answer for his atrocities. But to all hangmen and informers, to all traitors and evil ones, do grant the benefit of the courage and fortitude shown by those others, who were their victims.

Grant the benefit of the burning love and sacrifice in those harrowed, tortured hearts, which remained strong and steadfast in the face of death and unto their weakest hour.

All this, O Lord, may it count in Thine eyes in that their sin be forgiven. May this be the ransom that restores justice, and all that is good, let it be counted, and all that is evil, let it be wiped out. May peace come once more upon this earth, peace to men of good will, and may it descend upon the others also. Amen.



Remembering 9-11

from: <http://www.kofc.org/un/publications/columbia/detail.cfm?id=145419>

America awoke on Sept. 11, 2001, to attacks on its financial, military and government centers. As hijacked planes crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, heroes were at the scene, ready to sacrifice and save. There were heroes already in the buildings who died helping others to safety; and there were heroes rushing into the buildings to rescue those seeking to escape.

Knights were among the heroes that day — as firefighters, police officers and emergency workers, and as the chaplain listed as the first to die in the attacks, Franciscan Father Mychal Judge. Forty-five Knights bravely gave their lives while seeking to save others. Their names are listed on a Wall of Honor at the Knights of

Columbus Museum in New Haven.

Franciscan Father Brian Jordan is head of the Immigration Center based at St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City, and member of Holy Family Council 5547 of the Knights of Columbus in Silver Spring, Md. He spent countless hours ministering at Ground Zero, and led a movement to keep the cruciform girders — known as the Cross at Ground Zero — at the site after the rebuilding project is complete:

No New Yorker will ever forget the terrible tragedy of 9/11 and its painful consequences. However, what we're forgetting to maintain is that spirit of solidarity that we all held in the aftermath of 9/11.

I was hoping that spirit would sustain itself, but we are forgetting and falling back to our old ways, not caring for our brothers and sisters in need.

"The Cross at Ground Zero looks like it will remain. After an arduous four-year battle, I have gotten written guarantees from the Port Authority and from the director of the World Trade Center that state that the cross will be temporarily moved to St. Peter's Church, in a position that will face Ground Zero, and then after completion of the new building and memorial, it will be returned to the site. The cross is a reminder that God never abandoned us at Ground Zero.

The cross symbolizes that Christ was both victim and victor. He was humbled, and was ripped apart and bleeding, yet he was victor over death. We, too, can be victims in this life, and we may see no sense to the suffering. But we also can share in the victory of the cross."

Father Robert Romano, New York Police Department deputy chief of chaplains and a member of Don Bosco Council 4960 in Brooklyn, N.Y. He spent weeks working at Ground Zero, and has ministered to police families ever since:

After five years, there has been some healing. People have gotten on with their lives. Some have gotten married, their children are growing, there are new challenges and commitments. Yet deep down, that feeling, that loss, that hurt does not go away. The expression that time heals all wounds is not true. We just learn to live with the pain, and sometimes it can make us stronger. We are able to move on because of our faith, because of our memories, and because of the example of those who gave their lives that day.



Talk	less...	Listen	more.
TV	less...	Think	more.
Ride	less...	Walk	more.
Sit	less...	Kneel	more.
Rest	less...	Work	more.
Self	less...	Others	more.
Hate	less...	Love	more.
Eat	less...	Live	longer.

- from Confirmation cards given out by Bishop Rombert Casimir Kowalski, O.F.M. (1884-1970)



New SFO National Executive Council

National Minister Patrick Mendes, SFO, Former Regional Minister of Mother Cabrini Region.



National Vice Minister Tom Bello, SFO, Former Regional Minister of St. Margaret of Cortona Region

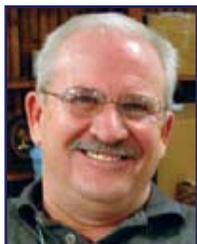


National Secretary Sarah Mulholland, SFO, Former Secretary to the Council of National Spiritual Assistants



National Treasurer Dennis Ross, SFO, Re-elected National Treasurer

National Councilor Mike Carstens, SFO, Re-elected National Councilor



National Councilor Pat Brandwein Ball, SFO, Former Regional Minister of St. Elizabeth of Hungry Region

National Councilor Clare McCluggage, SFO, Former Regional Minister of Los Tres Companeros Region



CIOFS Councilor Anne Mulqueen, SFO, Former Co-chair of the National Formation Commission.

annual gathering of Roman Catholics! Over 40,000 in Attendance

Variety of Topics -- Over the three days, Congress offered workshops in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Free Exhibits for Registrants ranging from religious art to music, and from publishing houses to educational institutions, in addition to our own represented Archdiocesan ministries.

Free Entertainment for Registrants Admission to Congress includes both free lunchtime and evening concerts ranging from contemporary Christian music to Celtic pop-rock and from bilingual (Spanish/English) to liturgical dance!

For more information check out the Web information:

www.recongress.org/

E-mail information:

congress@la-archdiocese.org

The 2007 Los Angeles Religious Education Congress

It is the nation's largest annual gathering of Roman Catholics. Over 41,000 people participated this year, some coming from across the country and from as far away as Ireland and Singapore. Make plans to be part of this Spirit filled experience! Register before Friday, January 5, 2007 for best selections and discounts.

March 1, 2007 – Youth Day, Registration \$15

March 2-4 – Congress Days, Registration \$55

The theme for the 2007 Congress is *Stand in the light / Permanecer en la Luz.*

The Religious Education Congress sponsored by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Office of Religious Education, is the nation's largest

A Reminder

from Mike Morris SFO, our Web Master for our Region web page

If you know of any events we might be able to attend together, let me know. Also, if you have access to the Internet you can look at our Regional Calendar located on our Regions website,

<http://www.stfrancisregion.org>

for upcoming events in other fraternities. We are all part of a big Franciscan family. All are welcome to attend these gatherings



St. Elizabeth, cont. from page 1

situation for a woman), the mission that we speak so much about today.

We intend to celebrate this centenary in two phases:

In the first year, from November 17, 2006, to November 17, 2007, together with the entire Family of the Third Order, supported and accompanied by the First Order, will be dedicated to learning more about the spirituality of Saint Elizabeth;

In the second year, from November 17, 2007 to November 17, 2008, will be celebrated especially by the SFO and will be dedicated to going into further detail on the secularity of our vocation, inspiring ourselves to our Patron.

On February 23, 2007, a Historical Congress on Saint Elizabeth will be celebrated at the "Antonianum" Pontifical University.

For both these years there will be a small guidebook available with all the most significant events to help us focus on reflections shared by the entire Order.

For the whole duration of the centenary, a spiritual thought on Saint Elizabeth and a brief reflection on the concrete life of Secular Franciscans today will be published monthly in our Web site.

To co-ordinate and animate the centenary celebrations, the CIOFS Presidency created a Commission formed by:

- Lori Pieper, United States
- Tibor Kauser, International Councilor of Hungary
- Francesco and Antonello Mattiocco, a couple belonging to the Fraternity of the deacons of Rome
- a member of the German SFO
- Xavi Ramos, CIOFS Presidency Councilor
- an SFO General Assistant.
- Barbara Bonauer

On the basis of the indications of the Presidency, this Commission will offer us guidelines to ensure that the centenary of Saint Elizabeth is not merely focused on the celebrations, but is, instead, characterized by a marked sense of formation and personal and community interiorization on the fundamental aspects of our Christian, Franciscan and secular vocation and our mission in this important historical moment.

Later on, with the suggestions of the Commission, we will provide further information on this event. Let's get prepared to start!"

Encarnación del Pozo
SFO General Minister



The Legend of Saint Elizabeth

by Ruth Sawyer

<http://www.cin.org/elizhung.html>

St Elizabeth is traditionally represented as dressed in rich clothes, bearing in her top skirt-which is gathered up at the front to form an apron-a profusion of red roses, while behind her back she

holds a loaf of bread; these are the symbols of her life, her inherited position as Queen of Hungary, and the life she elected for herself of penance and asceticism.

The contrast between the two callings is everywhere apparent in the twenty-four years which made up her life. Even before her wedding at the age of thirteen to the saintly Louis of Thuringia, she was marked out for suffering. Her mother-in-law tried to prevent the wedding out of jealousy and constantly mocked Elizabeth for her charity and humility. She said that she behaved 'like a tired old mule,' when she prostrated herself before the crucifix, and that she was totally unfitted to be Queen.

Her mortification took the form of wearing the simplest clothes woven of coarse untreated wool and of eating as little as possible; she refused to wear her jewelled crown, when our Lord wore one of thorns. However, more important than these mortifications was her constant and remarkable charity, which was expressed in every detail of her life, inward and outward. When she was not actively engaged in the business of government she spent all her time either in prayer or visiting the poor and the sick, with the result that, after her husband's death in 1227, his family accused her of squandering the royal purse on the vagrants of the land.

Her husband's family gained control of the government and

Legend, continued on page 16



ousted her from the palace with her four children, and Louis's brother declared himself regent. He forbade any citizen to take her in, and such was his reputation for savagery that she was reduced to spending the first days of her banishment in a pigsty. She refused the asylum offered by her father, but finally accepted the hospitality of her own uncle, the bishop of Bamberg.

Since 1226 her confessor had been Master Conrad of Hamburg, a severe and unpopular inquisitor of heretics. St Elizabeth now placed herself unreservedly under his direction, which was so severe as to seem sadistic: he banished all her followers, substituting two ugly and disagreeable waiting women; and for infringements of his discipline he would administer a beating, sometimes for merely missing a sermon.

Eventually her husband's comrades returned from the Crusades, entrusted with the duty of protecting Elizabeth. This they were preparing to do when the usurper changed his attitude to her; she was recalled and the rights of her son recognized.

She had few more years of life to run, but she spent them in constant prayer and practical charity, and became universally loved and revered. She died on November 19th, 1231, and was canonized four years later by Pope Gregory IX.

ON NOBILITY OF SOUL

<http://www.franciscan-sfo.org/HS/s11.htm#17>

1. Consider how noble Elizabeth was by birth: the daughter of a king, the wife of a prince who governed a beautiful and wealthy country. But nobility of soul meant more to her who was God's child, destined to serve the Most High here on earth, and to be an heir of the heavenly kingdom. Filled with the spirit of God, Elizabeth appreciated her dignity from childhood on. She found her sweetest delight in being united with God by prayer and pious practices, and her favorite occupation was to serve God in His poor and sick members. She did this with such holy sentiments that our Lord deigned to take the place of the leper she was nursing. She was always aware of the nobility of her own soul and acted accordingly. -- Is your soul not equally noble? Are your sentiments and conduct in keeping with your nobility?

2. Many people believe that the way to maintain their dignity is by proud and domineering manners and by exterior pomp and finery. Elizabeth thought otherwise. She looked upon vain pomp as a form of slavery in which the soul basely serves the detestable vice of pride, the sin through which our first parents lost their nobility in Paradise. The Son of God gave His own blood to atone for that sin; and only by means of that royal purple have we been restored to the position of children of God.

That is why Elizabeth loathed everything that savored of pride, always remaining as humble and submissive as a child. -- Do you permit the nobility of your soul to be sullied by pride and vanity?

3. Consider how almighty God prepares the soul, which He has endowed with such nobility, for its destiny in eternity. In company with all the angels and saints the soul is to enjoy the most intimate union with God. That is why God permits many trials and hardships to come upon human beings, so that their fidelity may be proved and everything unworthy may first be removed.

But he who tries to escape the test of the cross and seeks sensual pleasures makes himself unworthy of nobility of soul and exposes himself to the danger of losing it. He who wants to be faithful to God but submits only imperfectly to His ordinances must pass through a severe purification in purgatory before he can enter heaven. Only the soul that has been thoroughly purified here on earth can be admitted to heaven immediately after death.

When Elizabeth departed from this life, her soul was radiant in the full brilliance of its nobility. In trials she had thanked God in the words of the Te Deum; and then she submitted to the strict guidance of a confessor who completed the preparation of her soul for heaven.

-- While there is time, prepare your soul so that, when you die, it may be ready for heaven.



*Future of Spiritual Assistants
continued from page 2*

Spiritual Assistants. Another special part of the time was to hear the Friars talk about the decreasing numbers of Friars and how could they give spiritual assistance to the SFO where there were no Friars? Their concern was genuine and painful. At the end of the 4 days, the Friars drafted and made a statement that was their vision of the future as far as spiritual assistants were concerned. I quote the last paragraph from their statement.

“There were continuing discussions of the state of Spiritual Assistance in the US today. The naming of SFO members as Spiritual Assistants was affirmed, at both local and regional levels. A program for training the SFOs for this important ministry will cover all aspects of Spiritual Assistance, including how they form the link to the larger Order.”

The future is now, we Lay Spiritual Assistants have our work cut out for us. Continued gatherings of the Conference of Lay Spiritual Assistants, will sharpen our skills, but it will be the times we are with our SFO family as Spiritual Assistants that will assist us on our journey.

I love this job!

Peace, love and blessings

Rock DeSpain, SFO

Minister – St. Francis Region



*Initial Formation Seminars
continued from page 2*

In as much as conversion is interiorized, it concerns first of all in a change in evaluating things (metnoia) from which if it is sincere, new behavior will inevitably follow. By the term (“conversion”) is meant the decision to make a more or less radical break with one’s previous lifestyle, that is the world.

The person, who was not necessarily a public or habitual sinner, pledged to live a new kind of life, a “life of penance. This commitment was realized by the persons entrance into one of the many forms of penitential life which, which were developing within the church from the fourth to the eighth centuries.

WHAT TO WE DO ?

Vatican II constitution on the Laity, The Church and Joy and Hope. The S.F.O. rule.

The Church was founded to spread the Kingdom of Christ over all the earth, for the Glory of God the Father, to make all men partakers in redemption and salvation, and through them to establish the right relationship to the entire world to Christ. Every activity with this in view goes by the name of “Apostolate.”

Between the members of this body there exists, further, such a unity and solidarity that a member that does not work at the growth of the body, to the extent of his possibilities, must be considered useless, both to the Church and to himself.

WHAT AND WHO DIRECTS US ?

The Magisterium, the SFO Constitutions (chapter three, Life in Fraternity) and the SFO Statues and Regional Norms. Art.#28-2

The SFO is divided into fraternities at various levels, with mutual collaboration among the brothers and sisters, and their active and communal presence, both in the local and universal church.

WHAT IS OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE?

Franciscan solitude (edited by Andre Cirino OFM and Joseph Raischl)

“It was Francis’s custom to use the time God had given him, to earn grace in two ways: first for the benefit of the people, and then for the solitude of contemplation.” Our living in the life of hermitage (Hermitage days run by Lay Spiritual Assistants to train quiet, prayer, meditation, contemplation, for that day and to be used in our homes on a weekly basis. Francis’s love of and use of the Liturgy of the Hours to foster meditation and contemplation, personal and communal prayer.

The reading of Sacred Scripture.

A plan to influence and cause change in the daily life and fraternal life of a Secular Franciscan.

To make it clear that we are brothers and sisters around the world!



Franciscan Calendar of Saints May

How great a shame it would be for us servants of the Lord that the saints and blessed and other holy men and women bore true witness by their life and death, while we should be content to admire their deeds and seek honor and glory merely by recounting what they have done!"

- *St. Francis of Assisi, Admonition VI*

December

8. Immaculate Conception of Mary, Patron and Queen of Franciscan Orders. Solemnity
10. Blessed Peter Tecelano (III Order)
15. Bl. Mary Frances Schervier, virgin, III Order
18. Mother Alfred Moes, III Order

January

1. Solemnity of the Mother of God
3. Holy Name of Jesus – Memorial
5. Blessed Diego José of Cádiz
7. Bl. Angela of Foligno, religious, III Order
12. Bl. Bernard of Corleone, religious, I Order
14. Bl. Odoric of Pordenone, priest, I Order
16. Berard, priest, and companions, protomartyrs, I Order – Memorial
18. Saint Charles of Sezze, I Order
24. Saint Francis de Sales, bishop, doctor, cord-bearer of Saint Francis. Memorial.
28. Brother Juniper, I Order
30. Hyacinth of Mariscotti, III Order
31. Saint John Bosco, pr., III Order, Fndr

February

4. Joseph of Leonissa, priest, I Order
6. Peter Baptist, Paul Miki and companions, martyrs, I and III Orders -- Memorial
7. Colette, virgin, II Order
10. Conrad of Piacenza, hermit, III Order
19. Saint Conrad of Piacenza, hermit, III Order

March

2. Bl. Agnes of Prague, II Order,
4. Bl. Didacus Joseph of Gadiz, priest, I Order
9. Saint Frances of Rome, rel., of III Order
12. Blessed Angela Salawa, III Order
23. Saint Catherine of Genoa, III Order

April

2. Blessed Elisabetta Vendramini, III Order
3. Benedict the Black, religious, I Order – Memorial
6. Saint Crescentia Höss, III Order
16. Saint Bernadette Soubirous, cordbearer of St Francis
17. Saint Benedict Joseph Labre, cord-bearer of St Francis
21. Conrad of Parzham, religious, I Order-- Memorial
23. Bl. Giles of Assisi, I Order
24. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, priest and martyr, I Order – Feast
27. Saint Zitta of Lucca. III Order
28. Bl. Luchesius and Buonadona, III Order

9. Catherine of Bologna, virgin, II Order
10. Saint Ivo of Brittany, III Order
11. Ignatius of Laconi, religious, I Order
16. Margaret of Cortona, III Order -- Memorial
17. Paschal Baylon, religious, I Order -- Memorial
18. Felix of Cantalice, rel., I Order
20. Bernardine of Siena, pr., I Order
24. Dedication of the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi
28. Mary Ann of Jesus of Paredes, virgin, III Order
30. Bl. Bapbtista Varano, virgin, II Order
30. Saint Ferdinand, King, member of the III Order.

"No devotion to the saints is more acceptable and more proper than if you strive to express their virtues."

- *Erasmus*

Franciscan Print Resources

Franciscan Resources

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WHAT IS A SECULAR FRANCISCAN?

A Secular Franciscan is a person conscious of their baptismal dignity who incorporated into the people of God through spirituality of communion, lead their brothers and sisters to encounter the living Jesus Christ. They are largely responsible for the future of the Church. They work in holiness wherever they are and consecrate the world itself to God. They embody deeply evangelical ideas, such as mercy, forgiveness, honesty, transparency of heart and patience in difficult situations. They announce the Gospel with one heart and soul. They cultivate deep unity among themselves, which is based on complete doctrinal agreement. They live belonging to the Church and society as inseparable realities. They commit themselves with connection to the high measure of ordinary Christian life. They are persons who persevere in the true faith and in a life of joyful conversion in the manner of St. Francis of Assisi.

CF The Church in the Americas JP11
 CF Consistorial Message JP11
 CF Message of JP11 to the S.F.O.

Most high
 glorious God,
 enlighten the
 darkness of my
 heart;
 Give me, Lord,
 a correct faith,
 a certain hope,
 a perfect charity,
 sense and
 knowledge,
 so that I may
 carry out Your holy
 and true command.
 - St. Francis of Assisi

The Joy of Francis



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