

THE



ROUBADOUR

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGIONAL FRATERNITY

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

ISSUE No. 36-37
Sum/Fall 2006



FRATERNITY OF ST. ELIZABETH



EIGHTH CENTENARY
OF THE BIRTH OF
ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY
1207-2007

LORD, HAVE MERCY UPON US. CHRIST, HAVE MERCY UPON US.

LORD, HAVE MERCY UPON US.

CHRIST, HEAR US. CHRIST, GRACIOUSLY HEAR US.

God the Father, of Heaven:
HAVE MERCY UPON US.
God the Son,
Redeemer of the world:
God, the Holy Ghost:
Holy Trinity, one God:
HAVE MERCY UPON US.

Lamb of God, that takest away
the sins of the world:
SPARE US, O LORD.

Lamb of God, that takest away
the sins of the world:
GRACIOUSLY HEAR US, O LORD.

Holy Mary: PRAY FOR US.

Lamb of God, that takest away
the sins of the world:
HAVE MERCY ON US.

Immaculate Virgin:

Mother Mistress of our Order:

St. Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary:
St. Elizabeth, Duchess of Thuringia:
St. Elizabeth, mother in Israel:
St. Elizabeth, queen in the Kingdom
of God:

Pray for us,
O blessed Elizabeth.
That we may be worthy
of the promises of Christ.

St. Elizabeth, consoler of sinners:
St. Elizabeth, nurse of lepers:
St. Elizabeth, devoted wife of Louis the Good:
St. Elizabeth, famous exemplar of
Christian widowhood:

LET US PRAY.

St. Elizabeth, fervent spouse of the Son of God:
St. Elizabeth, humble in prosperity:
St. Elizabeth, patient in adversity:
St. Elizabeth, mighty in penance:
St. Elizabeth, wondrous in prayer:
St. Elizabeth, first-born of the tertiaries regular:
St. Elizabeth, protectress of our Order:
St. Elizabeth, the "dear saint" of Holy Church:
PRAY FOR US.

Merciful Lord, we pray thee to
pour the bright beams
of thy grace into our hearts
that, by the glorious prayers
of thy Saint Elizabeth,
we may learn to despise
all worldly prosperity,
and ever to rejoice
in all heavenly consolation,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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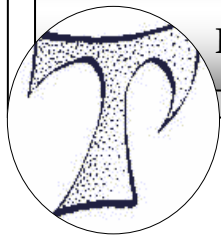
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•ISLAM

SFO APOSTOLATES IN ACTION:



THE 2006 CHRISTMAS STAMP features an oil-on-canvas with gold details entitled *Madonna and Child with Bird*. Dating to around 1765, the painting is attributed to Ignacio Chacón—an artist active from about 1745–1775 in Cuzco, Peru. It is now part of the Engracia and Frank Barrows Freyer Collection of Peruvian colonial art at the Denver Art Museum.



A YEAR-LONG SEASON OF FAITH

A quiet Franciscan way to keep Christ in Christmas all year long that's gaining in popularity is use of the annual Catholic Christmas stamp on First Class personal and business mail, long past the feast itself.

The Mother & Child remind the heart behind every pair of hands the mail passes through, what Christmas is really all about. Increasing numbers of people make it a practice to stock up on Madonna & Child Christmas stamps for that devout purpose.

These good people use the stamp all year as an appropriately Christian way to subordinate their outrage. Some buy \$100 worth to start. If they run out anyway they are pleasantly surprised to find most post offices keep Mary & Jesus stamps on hand, often as long as the following October. If yours doesn't and you'd still like to take part in such a spiritually gratifying practice, the U.S. Postal Service will supply the stamp at anytime of the year in packets of five totaling 100 stamps @ \$39, postpaid. Also, order on the Internet with credit card: <http://shop.usps.com/>

—Submitted by JAMES C.G. CONNIFF

CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS

ROBERT M. SILLIMAN, SFO
St. Michael of the Archangel Fraternity
Hicksville, Ohio

Christmas was in the air. Light flakes were falling, as we walked to town from our house trailer in military housing in the Pacific Northwest. That was long ago, when we were first married and far away from home. There was little money for Christmas decorations, so we just used some white tissue paper from the dime store. We cut out cardboard silhouettes of the crib scene of Jesus' birth and put the tissue paper behind them and taped them to our front window. A light in the window gave a dramatic effect outside at night and passers-by often stopped to look.

That long ago nativity scene in the window became the inspiration of a region-wide apostolate: "Christ in Christmas" for the northern half of Ohio in the Maximilian Kolbe Region.



We passed out plans for a lighted-outdoor crib scene to the twenty-three fraternity ministers attending the May Regional Meeting. The plan consisted of a 32x44 inch painted frosted Plexiglas, with painted black silhouettes of baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph, illuminated from behind with a two 25 watt blue bulbs. A simple stable frames the nativity scene, which can be disassembled for storage. The material cost around \$89.00 and can be put together with simple tools.

This was our answer to the "War on Christmas" stated in a newspaper editorial by a national columnist. Each fraternity was encouraged to ask two members to place free Public Service Announcements in newspapers, local radio or church bulletins, offering the Christmas scene plans upon request for a \$2.00 donation. Do you suppose that having crib scenes appear here and there could be one way to keep "Christ in Christmas?"



Merry Christmas

It won't be 'happy holidays' this year; it will be 'Merry Christmas.' It's bringing "Christmas" back into its marketing, after several years of playing down the term. Wal-Mart stores Christmas cheer seems to be a hot trend this season as several other retailers including Kohl's and Macy's, a division of Federated Department Stores, Inc., are also stepping up their Christmas marketing.

This move is in response to the mounting criticism from Catholics groups that staged boycotts against Wal-Mart and other merchants after they eliminated or de-emphasized "Christmas" in their advertising. Wal-Mart stated that it will launch its first Christmas-specific TV ad in several years, feature Christmas shops, previously called Holiday Shops, and increase the number of seasonal merchandise labeled "Christmas" instead of "holiday."

Macy's is adding Christmas signage in all of its department stores and Kohl's is playing up Christmas this year in its TV, print and radio advertising. Still, not everyone is following suit. "We are going to continue to use the term holiday because there are several holidays throughout that time period, and we certainly need to be respectful of all of them," said Dawn Bryant, a spokeswoman at Best Buy Co. Inc., whose advertising omits any reference to Christmas.



ON YOUR ENVELOPES

Dolores Jules, SFO
St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity
Scotch Plains, NJ

You may have heard in the news that the Post Office has been forced to take down small posters that say, "IN GOD WE TRUST." The law, they say, is being violated. Anyway, I heard proposed on a radio station show, that we should all write "IN GOD WE TRUST" on the back of all our mail...after all, that is our national motto, and it's on all the money we use to buy those stamps.



We must take back our nation from all the people who think that anything that offends them should be removed. It has been reported that 86% of Americans believe in God. Therefore, I have a very hard time understanding why there is such a mess about having "*In God We Trust*" on our money and having God in the *Pledge of Allegiance*. Could it be that WE just need to take action and tell the 14% to sit down and shut up?

I think this is a wonderful idea. I will start writing this on the front of all my envelopes, too! If you agree, pass this on, I've been writing it above the stamp for a long time. I pray our country returns to God. I say a patriotic rosary for the consecration of our nation, it's from Caritas in Alabama. This is one of the quotes from John Adams, July 3, 1776, in the Rosary book:

"It may be the will of Heaven that America shall suffer calamities still more wasting & distresses yet more dreadful. If this is to be the case, it will have this good effect, at least: it will inspire us with many virtues, which we have not, & correct many errors, follies, & vices, which threaten to disturb, dishonor & destroy us. The furnace of affliction produces refinement, in states as well as individuals. And the new governments we are assuming, in every part, will require a purification from our vices, & an augmentation of our virtues or there will be no blessings...but I must submit all my hopes & fears to an overruling Providence; in which, unfashionable as the faith may be, I firmly believe."

**WE HAVE COME TO WORSHIP HIM
...WITH SAINT FRANCIS**
Fr. Ben Brevoort OFM Cap

We adore You, Lord Jesus Christ.

The theme of the World Youth Day was: "We have come to worship Him ...", and we add for this International Franciscan Youth meeting: "...with Saint Francis".

We are invited to worship, to adore the Lord, inwardly and outwardly, with Saint Francis.

Julian of Speyer, a German Friar, in his *Life of Saint Francis*, written in 1234/35, tells us as follows: "The brothers asked Blessed Francis to teach them how to pray. Speaking simply, he passed on to them this formula saying, "When you will pray, say 'Our Father' and 'We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, in all your churches throughout the whole world, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world'." The brothers, humbly carrying out these instructions and regarding these simple words as having the force of a mandate of obedience, even bowed toward churches they could only see in the distance, and lying prostrate on the ground, adored as they had been instructed." (JULIAN SPEYER, CH. 5).

From the very beginning of the life of his Order, Francis stressed the need to adore our Lord Jesus Christ, inwardly and outwardly. We do well to notice that this adoration was not just an attitude of the mind, but expressed by bodily posture, "bowing inwardly and outwardly", "lying prostrate on the ground", turning "toward churches they could only see in the distance". We can safely state that Franciscan adoration is holistic, involving our whole personality, body and mind, heart and soul.

There are many other instances where the brothers saw Francis absorbed in prayer and adoration with his whole person: "When praying in the woods or solitary places, Francis would fill the forest with groans, water the places with tears, strike his breast with his hand ... Thus he would direct all his attention and affection toward the one thing he asked of the Lord, not so much praying as becoming totally prayer." (2 CEL 61)

Francis invites all those who are inspired by his example, to "love God and adore Him with a pure heart and a pure mind", because He who seeks this above all things has said: "True adorers adore the Father in spirit and truth." (JN 4:23) "For all, who adore Him must adore Him in the Spirit of truth."

(CF. JN 4:24) (2LETF 46-47)

To adore God, we need to be blessed with "a pure heart and a pure mind", for then we will see God. "The truly clean of heart – says Saint Francis – are those who look down upon earthly things, seek those of heaven, and, with a clean heart and spirit, never cease adoring and seeing the Lord God living and true." (ADM 16)

Francis himself was one of those "truly clean of heart", who was able to see God in all things, as Thomas of Celano tells us: "Who would be able to tell of the sweet tenderness he enjoyed while contemplating in creatures the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator? From this reflection he often overflowed with amazing, unspeakable joy as he looked at the sun, gazed at the moon, or observed the stars in the sky. ... This man, full of the spirit of God never stopped glorifying, praising and blessing the Creator and Ruler of all things in all the elements and creatures."

(1CEL 29)

ADORE WITH SAINT FRANCIS

To see and to contemplate reality with Francis does not mean to change the world around us, but to change ourselves, or better to let God guide us and let ourselves be changed. And even here, it is not so much a change in the structure of our personality or a change in our bodily faculties, in our senses or our intellect, but a change in the way we see things. The eyes remain the same eyes, the mind remains the same mind, the person remains the same person.

Contemplating with Francis means to look at reality with clean and pure eyes, free of the will to possess, but capable to see the good which is present in any thing and in each person. It was this way of looking at reality which made Francis see all things as "brothers and sisters", which made it possible for him to make peace with the wolf of Gubbio, to see the sultan of Egypt as a brother, and be welcomed in the houses of the poor and of the rich alike. Francis was able to leave aside his own judgments and to look with the eyes of the Spirit. He told one of his brothers, a Minister, to love his brothers: "Love them and do not wish that they be better Christians. ... And if he would sin a thousand times before your eyes, love him more than me so that you may draw him to the Lord, and always be merciful with brothers such as these." (LETTER MIN, 7.11)

Once we are able to look at people and at things with clean eyes, we will see God: "Blessed are the clean in heart, for they will see God." (Mt 5,8) As soon as we can put aside our own interest, stop worrying about our own selves, we will be able "to adore and to see the Lord God living and true." (ADM 16) People and things will become transparent, translucent, they will shine with the light of God and show us the Creator from whom they all come. We will then see other people as our sisters and brothers, because we have one Father, who is in Heaven. We will be able to accept other people as they are, not as we want them to be, because each of them is placed in great excellence, for God "created and formed us to the image of His beloved Son according to the body and to His likeness according to the Spirit." (ADM 5)

To contemplate with Francis is to look at things with our whole self, with the eyes and the senses of our body. Francis wanted to see things as concrete as possible, to see with his own bodily eyes what Jesus had endured for us. To contemplate with Francis means to take the Incarnation serious, to look for God in the realities of our daily life, to try to see and to feel what God has done for us, what Jesus has experienced in His life on earth. It means to look at the cross and to see and to touch and to smell and to hear with all our bodily senses what God has done for us and is doing for us and with us.

To contemplate with Francis means to approach reality around us in a realistic way, to let reality around us approach us as it is. It does mean to accept reality, to embrace the lepers, to show them mercy. Francis can teach us to be fully realistic, to look at reality with open eyes, to see things as they are, not idealizing them, but accept them, accept the wolf who has killed people. And then ... reality will change, the wolf becomes a brother, the enemy a friend, the world a place of God's grace. It is the way of God himself. Jesus redeemed the world by accepting reality, by being nailed to a cross, by being rejected. But God rose Him from the death and by His holy cross redeemed the world.

*"WE ADORE YOU, LORD JESUS CHRIST,
IN ALL YOUR CHURCHES THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD AND WE BLESS YOU
BECAUSE BY YOUR HOLY CROSS YOU HAVE REDEEMED THE WORLD".*

THOUGHTS AT ADORATION

BY DOLORES JULES, SFO
St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity , Scotch Plains, NJ

As I sit in Adoration, Lord,
I see the reading
of Your word.
In many ways
the word is read,
on pages, books
and
even said.
Pages ragged,
torn and worn,
prayers for dead
and some new born.

If only pages
could speak and tell
of prayers offered
for sick and well.

Lives disrupted, full of fears,
bring about a flow of tears.
But through this all,
for all to see,
comes faith and hope
given to me.
Pages torn and hard to read,
reveal the growing
of the seed.
The seed of faith,
the seed of love,
granted to us,
from God above.



READ OF LIFE

CORPUS DOMINE
NOSTRI JESU CHRISI CUSTODIAT
EN VITAM AETERNUM,

the ancient Latin blessing the priest intoned before each communicant prior to Vatican II, translated means, "May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ grant you eternal life."

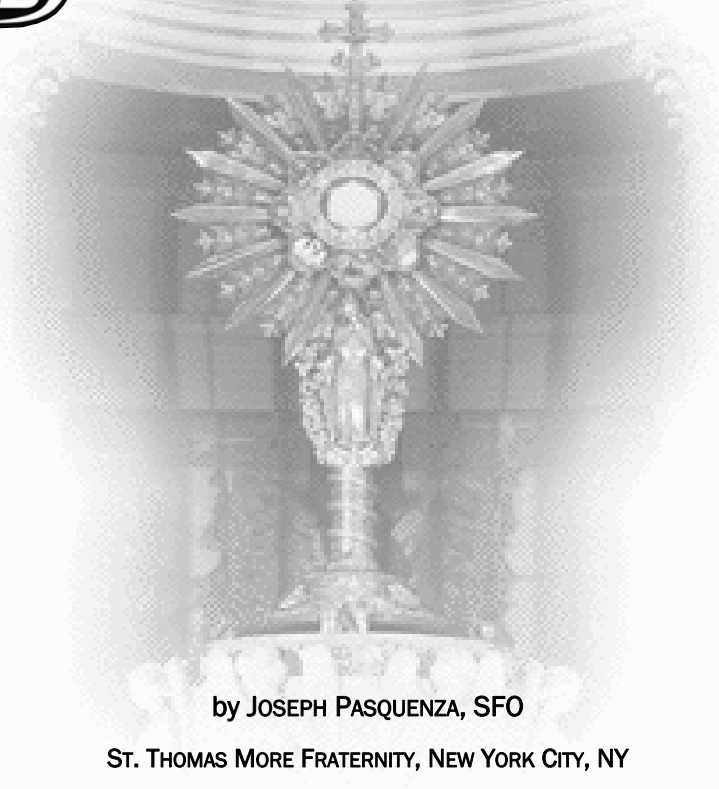
The Liturgy (Mass) gives us divine food for our very existence here on earth. Just as the Apostles gathered together at the Last Supper, so we, the mystical Body of Christ, surround the table of the Lord at our altars to receive the "Bread of Life."

The opening prayer at the Offertory expresses the theme so poignantly:

**Blessed are You,
Lord, God
of all creation.
Through Your goodness
we have this bread to offer
which earth has given
and human hands
have made.
It will become for us
the "Bread of Life".**

The Eucharistic Prayers express plainly what the significance and purpose of the Eucharist represents.

From the words of institution (consecration) to the calling down of the Holy Spirit and the many expressions of thanksgiving, when these are proclaimed clearly and listened to carefully, the true faith is present and alive.



by JOSEPH PASQUENZA, SFO

ST. THOMAS MORE FRATERNITY, NEW YORK CITY, NY

Our greatest Catholic treasure and spiritual wealth is the solemn belief that we are ingesting the Body of the Lord Jesus; not only His Body, but His Blood, Soul and Divinity! This is the central core of the Christian Sacrament. The *Second Vatican Council* rightly proclaims that the Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life."

What we read in the Scriptures, we physically participate in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The heart and soul of the Mass (originally celebrated during a meal) contains the consecration, "This is My Body...this is My Blood...words commanding God to become God under the appearance of bread and wine!" The Eucharist is the vertex of the life of the Church. Christ unites us to Himself and to one another as a single body. Therefore, the Eucharist should be the very essence of our lives.

Transubstantiation is the doctrine that, in the Eucharist, the whole substances of the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, only the accidents of bread and wine remain. In contemplating this mystery some Christians may become mystified and bewilderment is the result, since they misunderstand the theology of the doctrine. But through the power of the Holy Spirit, faith leads to belief and belief grants us the ability to believe without any doubt or confusion.

From former times even to the present, people not of our faith, sometimes mistook what we mean by ingesting the Body of Christ, assuming that it implies some sort of cannibalism. We are, after all, as the Church teaches, dealing here with a profound and divine rite which no human words will ever adequately express. It is a mystery (*mysterium*) of a supernatural event that is unexplainable.

Both the Old and New Testaments trumpet the prophets and apostles attesting to the “Bread of Life” in their description as foretold, prefigured or symbolized in the written Word of God. “Abram returned, and the King of Sodom came out to meet him and Melchizedek, the King of Salem (Jerusalem), who was a priest of God, and brought him bread and wine. Then Melchizedek blessed Abram.” (*Gen. 14:18 and Psalm 110*) “...And the food became known as 'manna' (meaning "What is it?"); it was white, like coriander seed, and flat, and tasted like honey bread.” (*Exodus 16:31-32*) “You gave them bread from Heaven when they were hungry.” (*Nehemiah 9:15*)

“Jesus mentions the 5,000 He fed from the five and seven loaves” (*Matthew: 16-7*) ...the miracle to feed the hungry not only naturally but spiritually. Jesus said: “I am the living bread that came down from Heaven, if anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever...he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life and...abides in Me, and I in him.” (*John: 6:51-56*) “...And it happened that, while He was with them at table, He took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them.” (*Luke 24:13-35*)

The synoptic gospels and St. Paul have handed on to us the account of the Institution of the Eucharist. St. John reports the words of Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum that prepare for this celebration. Christ calls Himself the “Bread of Life” come down from Heaven. Can any Christian, doubt, when hearing these words of God assuring the validity of their meaning, and not adhere to such a divine proclamation?

To the dismay of many Catholics within the Church, who are perplexed and confronted by the “new age thinking” that the Real Presence is only a symbol. The greatest threat to the reliability of the true teaching of the Church is being totally disregarded (by some Catholics) who concur with this erroneous belief.

The reception of Holy Communion signifies a common union among the faithful. As sharers (all part of the mystical Body of Christ) and through the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, we are stamped with an indelible mark of unification, communitarian in character — apostolic credentials of the Church.

Two saints that not only inspired, but promulgated the reception of the Eucharist—

St. Pope Pius X, known as the “Pope of the Eucharist” because he extended the rule so that children could start receiving the Sacrament by age 7.

St. Tarcisus, known as the “Boy Martyr of the Eucharist” and patron of First Communicants. He was martyred defending and protecting the Eucharist.

The Encyclical Letter of John Paul II, “On the Eucharist in its relationship to the Church” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*), is the most profound teaching on the Body and Blood of Christ. The opening sentence in the introduction in the letter states: “The Church draws her life from the Eucharist...It recapitulates the heart of the mystery of the Church!”

It is a rare and insightful document delving into the depth and understanding relating to the “Bread of Life.” As written by his Holiness it is clear, spiritually rewarding and uplifting in its divine message. “Let us make our own the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, an eminent theologian and an impassioned poet of Christ in the Eucharist, and turn in hope to the contemplation of that goal to which our hearts aspire in their thirst for joy and peace” —Pope John Paul II

Bone pastor, panis vere,
Jesu, nostri miserere
come then, good Shepherd,
bread divine,
still show to us thy mercy sign;
oh, feed us, still keep us thine;
so we may see thy glories shine
in fields of immortality.
O thou, the wisest, mightiest, best,
our present food, our future rest,
come, make us each thy chosen guest,
co-heirs of thine, and comrades blest
with Saints whose dwelling is with thee.

SOURCES & QUOTES

“On the Eucharist in its Relationship
to the Church”

(*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*)

Extension Magazine, October, 2003

The Tablet, April, 2004



FRATERNITY SHARING



FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER

Brothers and Sisters,

I had some very interesting discussions and presentations at the last North Jersey Cluster meeting. Some fraternities, who have had difficulty in growing, have decided to reach out to neighboring diocesan churches.

There they have found many new members and are happily growing with those who have been called to our way of life.

I want to encourage all fraternities to reach out as others have done. Do not be stuck in only looking for those in your own parish to become members. We are there for all and should share the joy of our call and our life with everyone.

Marcia Stamboulian, SFO



COMMUNICATION

OLA REGION YAHOO GROUP has been established to enhance easy, quick and less expensive communication with the fraternities, the following are the instructions to follow to join the group. We encourage EVERYONE to join!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Go to groups.yahoo.com
2. If you already have a Yahoo IQ you can sign into Yahoo using that IQ.
3. If you do not have a Yahoo IQ, create on by clicking on the link that says: Click Here to Register. This is a free service — there is no charge to register with Yahoo or to join a group.
4. You will be prompted to provide the following information:
 - a. First name
 - b. Last name
 - c. Preferred content
(e.g., Yahoo. United States)
 - d. Gender
 - e. Pick a Yahoo ID and password
 - f. You will also be asked to choose a security question in case you forget your password.
5. Once you complete the registration, go to the Yahoo groups home page and look for our list: OLARegion.
6. Creating a Yahoo ID does not change your current internet service provider, e.g., AOL, Att, etc. You will receive all your messages from the group in your regular E-mail account.

Any questions, please e-mail the List Administrator, **PEGGY LEDGER, SFO**, at: peggysfo@yahoo.com



APPOINTMENTS

With the blessing of **NAFRA**, back as our Regional Treasurer is **JOHN RAS, SFO**. He was appointed to his former position after Kathy Weyant, SFO resigned her position back in May of this year, due to family responsibilities. We wish Kathy all the best and thank her for her service.

John also remains our Database Administrator, where he will continue his excellent work of keeping all the records of elections and membership, and updating the National database for our region.

As always, it is extremely important that any changes to your membership: change of address, telephone number, e-mail, change of status to excused or lapsed, or loss of a member by transfer, moving out of the area, or death, be communicated to him.

With John's new appointment, the need for a new Website Administrator was essential.

DIANE MENDITTO, SFO, who currently serves as our Regional Vice Minister, graciously accepted the call to service, and was appointed as our new Regional Website Administrator.

No stranger to websites, Diane is also the webmaster to her Fraternity's website, (St. Francis Fraternity) as well as her parish' website.

Our website inaugural was June 4, 2006. For those who haven't checked out this dynamic website, go to:

www.ourladyoftheangelsregion.org

It's creative, very easy to navigate and informative.

Diane is frequently updating the site, so make sure to check back often—

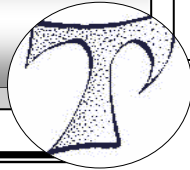
especially the Region events calendar so you can mark your calendars.

RITE OF ADMISSION



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION FRATERNITY
New York City, NY
September 30, 2006
Aurora Gomez

RITE OF PROFESSION



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION FRATERNITY
New York City, NY
September 30, 2006

Lidia Baez
Rosa Cabrera
Xiomara Castillo
Vierka Cruz
Narcisa Espinal
Jenny Gusman
Fausto Guzman
Jazmin Guzman
Ramona Liriano
Arturo Luciano
Hilda Morel

Miguel Ontanera
Mariana Paladin
Liborio Patino
Inocensio Parra
Juana Parra
Cecilia Poveda
Vladimir Quirico
Ana Tesorro
Maria Teresa
de los Rios

MOST HOLY NAME FRATERNITY

Little Falls, NJ
February 5, 2006

Kate Asselin
Dennis Gallagher
Jean Haddad

Lynda Hade
Sarah Latona
Pamela Rauscher

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA FRATERNITY

Scotch Plains, NJ
June 13, 2006

Karen Bonilla

ST. JOHN'S FRATERNITY

NEW YORK CITY, NY
June, 2006

Teresita Blas
Alicia Ignacio
Veronica Obmaces

INQUIRERS AND CANDIDATES

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA FRATERNITY
Scotch Plains, NJ

NOVEMBER 13, 2005
Rosanna Ayers
Susan Ragucci
Mary Ryan
Italia Testa
Pat Walsh

JUNE 13, 2006
Madge Heeney
Rose McMahon

ST. CONRAD'S FRATERNITY
Hoboken, NJ

MARCH 1, 2006
Alfonso Zambrano

OCTOBER 4, 2006
Marie Vasta
Anthony F. Cieri
Diana Pendas

ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR FRATERNITY

New York City, NY, October 2, 2006

Paul Beelitz
Linda Bethel
Patricia Clayton

Yolanda Hackney
Grace Keating
Clifford Proctor



Thank you to Amelia Jalandoni for photo

ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY

Hackensack, NJ, October 12, 2006

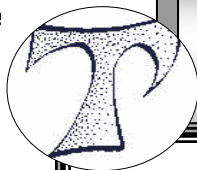
Iris Campillo
Flora Hand
Deacon Alejandro Polanco

Ethel Carroll
Migdania Polanco



Thank you to Karen Ferrari for photo

RECIPES



**In Imitation
of Christ and
Saint Francis**

the sharing
of food
can
also build
a deep
and
profound
connection
with
one another.

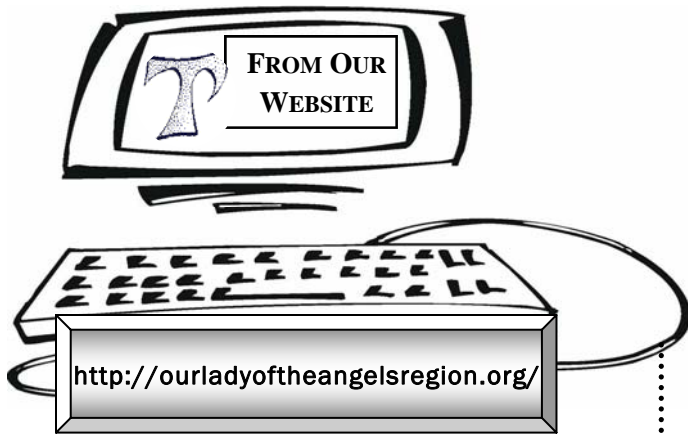
MOSTACCIOLI

—THE FAVORITE COOKIE OF ST. FRANCIS

Submitted by Dolores Jules, SFO
St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Scotch Plains, NJ

INGREDIENTS	
	1 t. cinnamon <i>or</i> 1 t. vanilla
1 lb. blanched almonds	2 egg whites, lightly beaten
½ cup honey	Approximately 1 cup of flour

- ◆ Chop almonds fine or coarsely grind in the blender
- ◆ In a bowl combine nuts, honey, cinnamon and egg whites
- ◆ Gradually add flour to form a thick paste
- ◆ On a floured board, knead paste until smooth and stiff
- ◆ Roll out to about 1/4 inch thick
- ◆ Cut in diamond shapes about 2½ inches long
- ◆ Place the diamonds on a lightly buttered and floured baking sheet
- ◆ Let dry 1 or 2 hours
- ◆ Bake in preheated oven, 250 degrees for 20-30 minutes
- ◆ Don't let brown. Makes about 3 dozen cookies



OUR REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF FORMATION, RON PIHOKKER, SFO, has written the first in an occasional series of articles on formation. To benefit those without computer access, it is also being produced here in *The Troubadour*.

FORMATION IN THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

Formation is the broad term we use when we speak of the process of fostering the overall spiritual growth and development of the vocation of potential members and professed members of the Secular Franciscan Order. Especially as it is understood from the Franciscan perspective, formation is an encounter with the Lord. It begins with the call of God and the response of the individual person in answering that call with a decision to walk with Saint Francis in the footsteps of the poor and crucified Christ as His disciple under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is a continuous process of growth and conversion involving the whole of a person's life in the radical living of the Gospel within the context of fraternity. It is a dynamic process of growth in which the person opens their heart to the Gospel in their daily life and opens themselves to full conversion in following Jesus Christ.

The formation of Secular Franciscans can be spoken of in terms of initial formation and on-going formation. **Initial formation** deals with the process of becoming a Secular Franciscan while **on-going formation** refers to the continuing process of spiritual support for professed members. Formation is a life-long process for Secular Franciscans.

Formation, whether initial or on-going, concerns itself with the overall development of the Franciscan person. We can speak of formation in terms three dimensions: **the human, the Christian and the Franciscan**. All three of these dimensions should be present and reflected in a balanced and well-planned fraternity formation process.

The human dimension is reflected in relation to the individual, the community and to the world. As regards the individual, this dimension of formation consists in coming to know oneself and accepting oneself, through growth in freedom and responsibility, in developing oneself physically, psychologically, morally, spiritually and socially. It includes development of balance emotionally and affectively, it involves sexual integration and growth, honesty and loyalty, joyfulness and a sense of humor. As regards the human dimension of community, formation leads the individual to be able to relate well with others, the ability to communicate and deal with conflict, develop a spirit of cooperation and to develop the sense of openness and flexibility. In terms of the human dimension in relation to the world, formation should lead the individual to develop the ability to "read the signs of the times" and develop a sense of solidarity with the poor and marginalized.

The Christian dimension of formation is reflected both in relation to God and in relation to the Church and the world. Formation should develop one's sense of gratitude to God, one's on-going conversion and one's life of faith and hope.

It should promote growth in unconditional love and the seeking of the will of God in all things. With regard to one's relation to the Church and the world, formation should develop one's sense of God's presence in the world, it should promote a knowledge of the Catholic faith, and a love for the Catholic Church. It should promote a missionary and ecumenical spirit and the pursuit of justice and peace.

With regard to the Franciscan dimension of formation, in relationship with God, formation should promote the following of the poor and humble Christ through a radical living of the Gospel, by means of a life of penance and lived in the spirit of prayer and devotion.

With reference to the fraternity, Franciscan formation should develop a love for the brotherhood/sisterhood and a love and understanding for each brother and sister, it should call one to fraternal service especially to the elderly and sick members. It should promote fraternal obedience to one another through the overcoming of one's egoism, one's own will and the forces which block the building up of the fraternity. It should develop a willingness to work with one's own hands and promote participation in community prayer and liturgy.

Finally, in relation to the Church and the world, the Franciscan dimension of formation should promote a love for the Church and for loving obedience to the Church's ministers, a desire for evangelization and mission, a prophetic spirit, an embrace of the option for the poor, a commitment to reconciliation and forgiveness and respect for nature and the environment.

Initial formation is a process, not a program. That is to say, there should be no rigidly definite time frames but instead should be somewhat fluid. The process should be adjusted to the needs of the individual in formation. Broadly, it should respect a gradual process experienced in several stages which mark a person's growth and gradual entrance into the fraternity.

BROADLY DEFINED, THESE PERIODS ARE:

ORIENTATION—a period of 2-3 months
followed by: *Ritual of Welcoming*

INQUIRY—a period lasting up to six months
followed by: *Ritual of Acceptance into Candidacy*

CANDIDACY—a period lasting at least 18 months
followed by: *Ritual of Commitment*
(which is of a permanent nature)

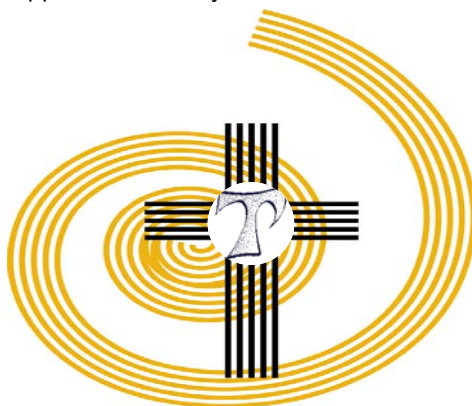
(Optionally, depending on a person's readiness, Temporary Commitment may be made for one year and renewed up to three times after which Permanent Commitment is made.)

During these periods of formation, the individual follows a curriculum which introduces him or her to the history, theology and spirituality of Franciscanism. They follow a personal daily regimen of prayer and study and meet regularly with a group of fellow candidates for study, dialogue and prayer. Franciscan ministerial/apostolic experiences should also be a part of initial formation which gives the individual a sense of the Franciscan apostolate and an opportunity for group sharing discussion and dialogue.

The individual in formation is the most important agent in this entire process. They themselves, are responsible for their own growth as adults within the overall formation process.

In addition, the fraternity spiritual assistant, the fraternity director of formation, the fraternity council and its professed membership all have a role to play in the formation process. Finally, it is the Holy Spirit who is the Agent *par excellence*, of the journey of formation, a journey leading to commitment to the Franciscan way of life.

On-going (or permanent) formation is that period of formation which follows initial formation and permanent commitment to the Rule and Life of the Secular Franciscan Order. Its purpose is to continue the development of the Franciscan vocation in the life of the individual Secular Franciscan. *Franciscanism* is a life journey, it is not an individual achievement and cannot be marked by "an arrival." We are always on a pilgrimage to the Father following the way of the Lord Jesus in the manner of St. Francis. This journey requires a continuous process of support in the movement towards full maturity in Christ and commitment to the Gospel way. It needs continuous nurture of a critical consciousness—the Franciscan vision. It demands regular and constant updating — a continuous rediscovery of the poor and crucified Christ in the daily experiences of one's life through prayerful reflection, dialogue and support in fraternity.



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A GENTLE SOUL'S EVERLASTING SMILE

by *David E. Engelhaupt, SFO*
St. Anthony Fraternity, Butler, NJ

Dear Father,
your touch pierced
the stubbornness of my way
and flowed
into the hollows of my being,
there it did not stay,
for it would not do,
for it to stay caught within me.

Dear Father,
your lumen bedazzled
the kaleidoscope of my heart,
and illuminated
into the pit of my being,
there it did not stay,
for it would not do,
for it to stay caught within me.

Dear Father,
your psalm lifted
the hours of my day,
and echoed
into the cavern of my being,
there it did not stay,
for it would not do,
for it to stay caught within me.

Dear Child,
your smile graced
a window of my love,
and embarked
into the darkness of my world,
there it shall stay forever,
for it would not do,
for it to be forgotten.

*A kaleidoscope of memories
they will have,
an echo in their heart,
and a smile remembering you.*



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

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On the 800th Anniversary of the Birth of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary
"Give to the Lord all you have with joy and happiness"
Rome, November 17, 2006

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

The Lord give you Peace!

Today we are all celebrating the feast of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary with special attention: it is the beginning of the 8th centenary of her birth and this is reason for both joy and commitment. In extending our warmest wishes to all the brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order, the Young Franciscans and our spiritual Assistants, it is my hope that everyone can reap plentiful fruits in the two years of commemoration of our Patron Saint.

The CIOFS Presidency, upon the request of the Commission formed to animate the activities of this centenary, proposes to all the Order a special program of formation and reflection on the life of Saint Elizabeth and its spiritual implications, tracing a parallel with the documents of our Order. The program is divided into 12 themes for each one of the two years of celebration. I am enclosing the outline so that you will be able to begin to create the necessary expectations in all the Fraternities. These themes will be developed month by month in our Web page in the official languages of the International Fraternity: www.ciofs.org

I particularly recommend that all the International Councilors commit themselves to divulging this special initiative and to oversee that all the national Councils will punctually implement it.

Other initiatives will be periodically communicated, but as of now we would like to invite you and all our brothers of the First Order and the TOR to promote the SFO among the married couples, the young families and the young people exactly in virtue of the fact that Saint Elizabeth was a young woman, married and the mother of three children. During this period we can consider two phases:

- ✠ The year of fascination and approach to the Franciscan and Secular spirituality.
- ✠ The year of the deepening of our knowledge and vocation.

This is all for the time being. We will be keeping in constant communication during this special period. We invite all of you to re-discover Saint Elizabeth, her Christian and Franciscan commitments and her values of love and mercy, faithful reflections in her life of the Love and Mercy of the Father, to which she deeply vowed herself. And as Saint Elizabeth said herself, which will be the motto of the Centenary, *"Give to the Lord what you have with joy and cheerfulness"*.

Your sister and minister,

Encarnación del Pozo

**OUTLINE FOR THE REFLECTION
AND FORMATION ON PAGE 17**



CONFERENCE OF THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY

WE HAVE COME TO BELIEVE IN LOVE

LETTER FOR THE EIGHTH CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF SAINT ELIZABETH

To all the brothers and sisters of the Franciscan family, especially to all the brothers and sisters of the Third Order Regular and of the Secular Franciscan Order—May God's mercy fill your hearts.

THE EIGHTH CENTENARY, 1207-2007

During the coming year 2007, we will celebrate the eighth centenary of the birth of St. Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary, Landgräfin of Thuringia and Franciscan penitent. The Jubilee Year will begin on November 17, 2006, the feast day of St. Elizabeth, and will end on the same day in 2007.

The Franciscan Third Order honors her as its patroness and the whole Franciscan family counts her among its glories. We would like to take this unique opportunity to present her as an exceptional example of devotion to God the Father, in the following of Christ and in the dissolving of her whole being in the God who is Love.



In the encyclical which forms the program for his pontificate, *Deus Caritas est* (DC 1), Pope Benedict XVI has recalled to us the fundamental option of a Christian, expressed in these words: *We have come to believe in God's love*. Let's hope that our faith may emerge strengthened from this jubilee encounter with Saint Elizabeth, who believed profoundly in love.

The life of St. Elizabeth displays attitudes which literally reflect the Gospel of Jesus Christ: recognition of the absolute lordship of God, the need to strip ourselves of everything and become like little children in order to enter the kingdom of the Father; the fulfillment, down to the last consequences, of the new commandment of love.

She emptied herself until she made herself available to all the needy. She discovered the presence of Jesus in the poor, the forsaken of society, the hungry, and the sick. (Mt. 25) The whole commitment of her life consisted of living the compassion of the God who is Love and making it present in the midst of the poor.

Elizabeth sought the radical following of Christ, who, though he was rich, made himself poor, in the most genuine manner of St. Francis. She renounced the false appearances and ambitions of the world; the pomp of her court, comforts, riches and luxurious dress. . . She descended from her castle and planted her tent among the rejected and the distressed in order to serve them. Elizabeth, the first Franciscan woman to be canonized, was forged in the evangelical furnace of St. Francis.

Certainly the date we are celebrating on this anniversary is lost in the shadows of a remote past, enveloped in legends, but we are convinced that if, in this jubilee year we can encounter the saint and her work, beyond the legends, we will emerge enriched in our souls and our work.

LIFE AND LEGEND OF ELIZABETH

Elizabeth's life has been interwoven with legends, the fruit of veneration, admiration and imagination, which capture important aspects of her personality. But we are more interested in the history hidden behind those legends. We want to become acquainted with her personality, her genius and her unique and provocative holiness. The legends that surround her are the vivid colors of her portrait, they are a metaphor for the facts. We cannot discard them either.

Who was Elizabeth? A Hungarian princess born in 1207, the daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary and his wife Gertrude of Andechs-Meran. According to Hungarian tradition, she was born in the castle in the town of Sárospatak, one of the favorite residences of the royal family, in northern Hungary. Tradition usually indicates the date of her birth as July 7. We are certain only of the year.

Following the prevailing custom among the medieval nobility, Elizabeth was promised in marriage to a German prince from Thuringia. At the age of four (1211), she was entrusted to the German delegation which came to get her at Pressburg, at that time the westernmost stronghold of the kingdom of Hungary.

She was brought up at the Thuringian court along with the other children of the Landgraf's family, including her future husband, as was the custom at that time. At the age of fourteen, she married Ludwig IV, the Landgraf of Thuringia. She had three children. Elizabeth was left a widow at the age of twenty. She died in 1231, when she was 24. and was canonized by Pope Gregory IX in 1235. A record of a rich life, one in which she was crucified so that she could rise to the greatest height of sanctity, and be proposed as an imperishable example of abnegation and devotion.

A misunderstanding has taken root in the Christian people, due to legends and some not very rigorous popular biographies which say that Elizabeth was the queen of Hungary. Of course, she was never Queen of Hungary, or of Thuringia, but Princess of Hungary and *Landgräfin* of Thuringia in Germany.

Elizabeth is traditionally represented with a crown, which she wore not as a Queen, but as a Princess or Landgräfin.

WIFE AND MOTHER

Elizabeth's companions and attendants describe for us how her pilgrimage towards God started when she was still very young: from her earliest childhood all her games, dreams and prayers were directed towards a life beyond.

In 1221, at the age of 14, she married Landgraf Louis IV of Thuringia. Ludwig and Elizabeth had grown up together and addressed each other as brother and sister.

The wedding took place in the church of St. George in Eisenach. Up until 1227, Elizabeth was an exemplary wife, mother and Landgräfin of Thuringia; one of the women of highest lineage in the empire.

Their relationship as a married couple did not follow the common style of the time, ordinarily marked by motives of politics or convenience, but was one of authentic conjugal and fraternal love. As a married woman, Elizabeth devoted a great deal of time to prayer far into the night, in the bedroom she shared with her husband. She knew that she belonged completely to Ludwig, but she had already heard the call of her "other husband": "Follow me!" Deep joy and complete satisfaction sprang from this double-sided love, however, not a conflict from being divided in her soul. God was the supreme and unconditional value that strengthened Elizabeth's other loves for her husband, her children and the poor.

The miracle of the roses woven by legend does not accurately represent their relationship in their marriage. When Elizabeth was surprised by her husband with her skirt full of bread, there was no reason at all to hide her errand of mercy from him. Therefore, there was no reason for the bread to turn into roses. God does not perform useless miracles.

Elizabeth had three children: Hermann, heir to the throne, Sophia and Gertrude; the last was born when Elizabeth's husband was already dead (1227), a victim of pestilence, as a crusader on the way to the Holy Land. She was only 20 years old.

When Ludwig died, the Landgräfin died as well, and the penitent sister came to the foreground. Biographers disagree about whether she was expelled from Wartburg castle or left on her own. Her answer to loneliness and abandonment was the song of gratitude which she asked to have sung in the chapel of the Franciscans, the *Te Deum*.

ELIZABETH AS A FRANCISCAN PENITENT

Elizabeth of Hungary is the woman who most authentically embodied the penitential spirit of Francis. It has been debated whether or not she was a Franciscan tertiary. We must clarify that during Elizabeth's lifetime, the word *tertiary* was not yet commonly used. However, there were already many Franciscan penitents; many ordinary men and women followed the penitential life stressed by St. Francis and preached by his brothers.

The Friars Minor arrived in Eisenach, the capital of Thuringia, at the end of 1224 or the beginning of 1225; in the castle near the town resided the court of the Landgraf, presided over by Ludwig and Elizabeth. The preaching of Friars Minor among the people, which they had learned from Francis of Assisi, was on the life of penance, that is, giving up worldly life, and practicing prayer, mortification and works of mercy. This way of life was described by Francis in his *Letter to all the Faithful*.

A brother Rudiger introduced Elizabeth to the penitential life which made an impression on her soul, already predisposed towards the values of the spirit. The evidence that Elizabeth was a Franciscan, which appear in the sources on her life, is undeniable:

–It is certain that Elizabeth gave a chapel in Eisenach to the Franciscan Friars.



- She also spun wool for the habits of the Friars Minor.
- When she was expelled from her castle, alone and abandoned, she turned to the Franciscans and asked them to sing the *Te Deum* as a thanksgiving to God.
- On Good Friday, March 24, 1228, with her hands placed on the bare altar, she made a public profession in the Franciscan chapel. She took the gray habit of a penitent as an external sign.
- The four handmaids, who were questioned during the canonization process, also took this gray habit. This “humble tunic,” in which Elizabeth wanted to be buried, expressed the religious profession that had conferred a new identity on her.
- She placed the hospital she founded in Marburg (1229) under the protection of Saint Francis, who had been canonized a few months earlier.
- The anonymous Cistercian author of Zwettl (1236) says that Elizabeth “wore the gray habit of the Friars Minor.”

The commitment Elizabeth demonstrated by living in poverty, giving away all her possessions and devoting herself to begging – are not these the things that Francis demanded of his followers? This evidence is corroborated by other sources, which illustrate Elizabeth’s penitential life; such as the rules and other Franciscan documents; the *Memoriale propositi* or ancient rule of the penitents and the similarities or conformities between Elizabeth and Francis.

ELIZABETH’S TWO PROFESSIONS

In the biographical sources, we find two professions by Elizabeth and two ways of professing used at that time: in the first one, she entered the Order of Penitence while her husband was still alive. With her hands in those of the visitor, Conrad of Marburg, she promised obedience and continence. Conrad was a crusade preacher, poor and austere, probably a secular priest. Elizabeth chose him personally, with Ludwig’s consent, because he was poor.

Visitors did not necessarily have to be Franciscans. In the *Regula Non Bullata* (1221), St. Francis orders that “no woman in any way should vow obedience to any friar, but once she has received spiritual advice, she should carry out her life of penance wherever she likes” (*chapter 12*). Three of Elizabeth’s handmaids or companions made their profession along with her as well; they formed a little fraternity of prayer and ascetic life under their superior-visitor Conrad.

After her husband’s death, they followed her in her exile from the castle, towards the kingdom of the poor. They were her encouragement in the bitter hours of loneliness and abandonment. With her they made a second, public, profession, on Good Friday 1228, and a community of sisters took shape. Like Elizabeth, her handmaids received the gray habit, and committed themselves to the same resolution to spread the compassion of God; they worked and ate together, they went out together to visit the houses of the poor and she sent them with food to divide among the needy. When they returned home, they all met in prayer.

This was a full religious life, for professed women, without strict cloister and dedicated to a social work: service to the poor, marginalized, sick, pilgrims...it was a type of consecrated life in the world. But it took centuries for such a way of life for communities of women, without strict cloister to be recognized by the Church. Monastic life was the sole canonical form allowed by the Church for women’s religious communities. Elizabeth, however, was capable of coordinating both inclinations: that of intimacy with God and active service to the poor. *Mariam induit, Martham non exuit*; she clothed herself with Mary, but did not strip herself of Martha.

Today there are some 400 women’s congregations of the TOR, with some 100,000 professed women who follow Elizabeth’s footsteps in the active and contemplative life, and may be called her heirs.

COMPASSIONATE PRINCESS AND PENITENT

Elizabeth’s brief life was filled to overflowing with loving service, joy and suffering. Her generosity and her bond with the needy created a scandal in the court at the Wartburg. She did not fit among them. Many thought she was mad. Here she met one of her great crosses: crucified between the society to which she belonged and the society of those who did not know any compassion. Making use of her full authority when she was still Landgräfin, in her husband’s absence, she had to confront the calamity of a general famine that devastated the country. She did not hesitate to empty the granaries of her husband’s lands and possessions to aid the needy.

Elizabeth personally served the downhearted, the poor and the sick. She cared for lepers, the dregs of society, as Francis did. Day by day, hour by hour, poor person by poor person, Elizabeth lived and poured God’s compassion into the river of pain and misery that surrounded her.



In the unfortunate, Elizabeth saw the person of Christ. (Mt. 25:40) He gave her the strength to overcome her natural repugnance, so much so that she even kissed the purulent wounds of the lepers. But Elizabeth made use not only of her heart, but also of her intelligence in her work of assistance. She knew that institutionalized charity is much more effective and long lasting. When her husband was still alive, she contributed to the building of hospitals in Eisenach and Gotha. Later she built the one in Marburg, the favorite work of her widowhood. She founded a fraternity to tend to it with her female friends and handmaids or servants. She worked with her own hands: in the kitchen, by preparing the meals; in the service of the indigent in the hospital; she washed the dishes, and sent away her handmaids when they tried to stop her. She learned to spin wool and sew clothes for the poor and to earn her living.

ELIZABETH AS CONTEMPLATIVE AND SAINT

Sanctity appears in the history of the Church as a form of madness, the madness of the cross. And Elizabeth's holiness is a real madness. In her life the supremacy of charity shines with a special radiance. Her life is a hymn to love, a love that is expressed in service and abnegation, a love that pours itself out in spreading goodness. She wanted to live the Gospel simply, *sine glossa*, as Francis would say, in all its spiritual and material aspects. She left no writings, but many phases of her life can only be understood through a literal understanding of the Gospel. She made the program of life proposed by Jesus in the Gospel a reality:

- ◆ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it. (Lk 17:33, Mk 8:35)
- ◆ Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. (Mk 8:34-35)
- ◆ If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven. Then come, follow me. (Mt 19:21)
- ◆ Whoever loves father or mother . . . son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (Mt 10:37)


Elizabeth's ardent inner strength grew out of her contact with God. Her prayer was intense and constant, at times even reaching ecstasy. Her constant awareness of the presence of the Lord was the source of her strength and joy, and of her commitment to the poor. But her encounter with Christ in the poor also stimulated her faith and her prayer. Her pilgrimage towards God is marked by resolute steps of detachment, until she was totally stripped bare, like Christ on the Cross. At the end she had nothing left but the poor gray penitential tunic, which she wanted to keep as a symbol and shroud. Elizabeth radiated joy and serenity. The depth of her soul was the kingdom of peace. She made the "perfect joy" taught by Francis a reality in hardship, solitude and suffering. "We must make people happy," she used to say to her handmaids-sisters.

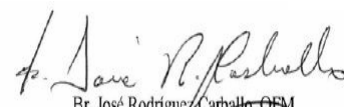
CONCLUSION

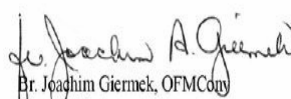
Elizabeth passed through this life like a shining meteor full of hope. She brought light into the darkness of many souls. She brought happiness to afflicted hearts. No one can count the tears she wiped away, the wounds she healed and the love she awakened. Her holiness was an innovation rich in nuances and outstanding virtues. Now it was not only martyrs and virgins who had access to the honor of the altars, but also wives, mothers and widows. Elizabeth made the journey of perfection of Christian love as a laywoman, wife and mother, but after her second profession, she was a woman completely consecrated to God and to the relief of human misery.

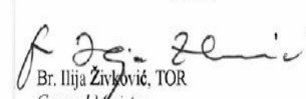
The Third Order of Saint Francis, Regular and Secular, desires to intensify the remembrance of their holy patroness during the eighth centenary of her birth and to propose her as light and model of evangelical commitment. The Franciscan family wants to honor the first woman who achieved sainthood following the footsteps of Christ in accordance with the *forma vitae* of Francis of Assisi.

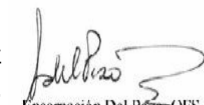
If we recall Elizabeth's birth, her unique personality and her sensitivity, it is so that through knowledge and admiration, we might convert ourselves into instruments of peace, that we might learn from her how to pour a little balm on the wounds of our surroundings, humanize our circumstances, and wipe away some tears. Let us radiate heart where, to human eyes, it seems as if the Father's compassion cannot be found. May the commitment that Elizabeth lived stimulate our commitment. May her example and her intercession light our way towards the Father, source of all love, the Good, all good, supreme good, peace and joy.

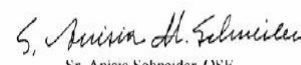

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Sr. Anisia Schneider, OSF
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OUTLINE FOR REFLECTION AND FORMATION PROGRAM
 FOR THE BIENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE 8TH CENTENARY OF THE
 BIRTH OF SAINT ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

THE LIFE OF ST. ELIZABETH - First Year	THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT - Second Year
1. The original family of St. Elizabeth	1. Family: tradition, history, source
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:
2. The years of youth in the court of Thuringia	2. Youth and formation giving up things for God, this home and the heavenly one
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:
3. The marriage	3. Marriage The spirituality of marriage, as a secular state of life
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:
4. The motherhood	4. Parenting Children are presents of God, whom we have for a certain period of time.
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:
5. Meeting the Friars Minor	5. Vital reciprocal union Meeting Franciscan Family, the Church. Spiritual direction
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:
6. Her conscience, the sense of justice	6. Conscience, justice issues Peace and Justice
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:
7. Meeting the poor	7. Encounter with the poor Seeing Christ in the poor
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:
8. The widowhood	8. Dealing with loss The loneliness, losing the beloved
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:
9. The chasing from the court	9. Dealing with the change Profound changes in life
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:
10. Her penitential and prayer life	10. Penitential and prayer life Penance. How can seculars be contemplative
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:
11. Her charity and the hospital in Marburg	11. Works of mercy, outreach How do we practice our service
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:
12. Her sickness and death	12. Death and dying Weakness of our bodies; how we deal with sickness
GOSPEL:	SFO DOCUMENT:

CO-RESPONSIBILITY, PERSONAL PRESENCE

Fr. Kevin M. Queally, TOR

WHILE READING
PICK MORE DAISIES BY
FATHER LESTER BACH, OFM CAP,
I came across two paragraphs
from the *General Constitution
of the SFO*, which caused me to
reflect and, indeed, go to the

Constitutions! I have included a third paragraph from the Constitution, one that was in close proximity to the others.

The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity to which they belong and for the SFO as the organic union of all fraternities throughout the world.

(GC, ARTICLE 30. 1)

This is quite an article. Imagine! All of the members are *co-responsible* for the life of the fraternity, not only on the local level, but also on the regional, national and international level! This is something we must think about and examine ourselves about. Are we really involved in the fraternity so much so that we feel co-responsible? What about our Region? It is tempting to think that service to the fraternity, as a leader is an option. No, it is not. We are all co-responsible! The life of the local fraternity is extremely important, but it is not the only part of the Order. Each member has brothers and sisters in the SFO all over the United States and, indeed, all over the world. The members are connected by a common Rule and spirituality.

How developed is that concept and reality in my local fraternity? This must be asked and each fraternity should be finding ways to express this interconnectedness.

The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires personal presence, witness, prayer, and active collaboration, in accordance with each one's situation and possible obligations for animation of the fraternity.

(GC, ARTICLE 30. 2)

In another article by Father Lester, the Seculars are called to DO something.

He emphasizes "*personal presence*." The fraternity is not the fraternity without you there. In addition, for *active collaboration*, you must not only be here, you must collaborate – work with others!



Father,
you helped
Elizabeth of
Hungary
to recognize
and honor
Christ
in the poor
of this world.

Let her prayers help us
to serve our brothers and sisters
in time of trouble and need.
We ask this through our
Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The fraternity depends on each and every one. You are a Franciscan. Your life must reflect this call, this vocation: *witness*. It is fairly impossible to do it for one hour a month. That would be like eating only once a month. For instance, *prayer* is something we do each day. Our witness and our prayer are linked organically. There cannot be one, authentically, without the other.

The SFO is not a contemplative Order.

There must be action and contemplation!

The *personal presence* is essential to build your community. One hour a month is the very least you can give. Perhaps you already know that the burdens of being minister are great. Do you offer to help? Do you jump at the chance to volunteer to organize an event? In what way do you work with other fraternity members so the burden is lighter for all?

We must all animate the fraternity, whether it is on the local, regional, national or international level! It calls on us to give of ourselves.

by Valerie Moreno, SFO

St. John Vianney Fraternity, Colonia, NJ

CAN YOU SEE ME?

I'm a young waitress
who serves you coffee
in the morning
I smiled when you left,
though you didn't seem
to leave me a tip
or smile back.

I'm a tall,
lean man,
picking crops
in the field,
as sweat pours
down my back
and chemicals
invade my skin.



I'm a young girl—
lunch time, in a cafeteria,
I sit alone
though the room is full.
Is it because I'm disabled
or because
no one chooses to care?

I'm a little girl
in a desert country.
Dry eyed,
I think of my family
my heart aching
because
they were taken away forever
because someone chose to hate.

.....
CO-RESPONSIBILITY...continued from page 18

The leaders should see to the spiritual and technical preparation and animation of the meetings, both of the fraternities and of the councils. They should seek to inspire life and soul into the fraternities by their own witness, suggesting appropriate means for the development of the life of the fraternity and of apostolic activities in the light of the fundamental Franciscan options. They should see to it that the decisions made are carried out and they should promote collaboration among the brothers and sisters.

(GC, ARTICLE 31. 4)

While this article does address the leaders, please remember what was said earlier about co-responsibility. We all help decide the appropriate activities to be developed for the fraternity, both on the spiritual and apostolic side. (This includes Spiritual Assistants!) The *General Constitution* says: "They should seek to inspire life and soul into the fraternities."

This is quite a tall order. Perhaps many are daunted by the idea of leadership. Too often at elections, it is difficult to find fraternity members to serve in all the positions. Our documents do not allow the same person to serve over and over. There are "term limits." We are all called to serve.

None of us should feel we are in it alone. We are able to call on the whole fraternity to help in the responsibilities.

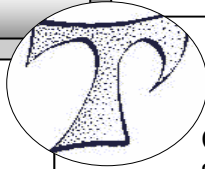
As I reflected on these articles of the *General Constitutions*, I was reminded that these ideals are something that we need to bring to mind and strive toward. It is difficult for us to be doing well in all areas of our Franciscan life. It almost never happens. We are human beings. Only God is perfect. But the key is to keep striving, keep trying, and continue being active.

The *Rule* is something for SFO's to work at their whole lives. Many, I fear, are not familiar with our documents. Some are too familiar and get lost in legalism. For all, the admonition is to live the *Rule*, bring it to life in your own home and workplace and neighborhood and parish. To borrow from the popular saying, you are the only Franciscan many will ever meet. Our Franciscan life constantly challenges us to grow. Remember Saint Francis saying,

"Let us begin, for up to now
we have done very little."

This was at the end of his life! We can grow and change and constantly become better Franciscans!

ELECTION RESULTS



**ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY
HACKENSACK, NJ**
CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS HELD
SEPTEMBER 14, 2006

Congratulations to
all newly elected
council officers.

Let us pray each may
be led by the Spirit in
their leadership roles
in the
Secular Franciscan
Order.

APG—Editor

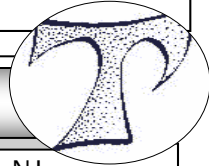
THE NEW COUNCIL IS:
Minister: Diane Menditto, SFO
Vice Minister: Marguerite Cox, SFO
Secretary: Edson Atwood, SFO
Treasurer: Joseph Sortino, SFO
Formation Director: Harry Henky, SFO
Councilor: Patricia Franz, SFO
Spiritual Assistant:
Fr. Pius Caccavalle, OFM Cap

Marcia Stamboulion, SFO and
Maddie Romaine, SFO
conducted the elections.



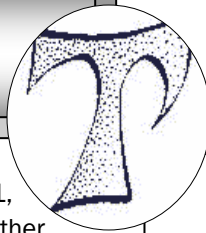
Pat Franz (Councilor); Marcia Stamboulion (Region
Minister); Harry Henky (Formation Director);
Diane Menditto (Minister); Joe Sortino (Treasurer);
Ed Atwood (Secretary) Fr. Pius Caccavalle (Spiritual
Assistant); Maddie Romaine (Region Councilor);
Marguerite Cox (Vice-Minister).

WELCOME



St. Francis Fraternity, Hackensack, NJ,
welcomes their new Spiritual Assistant:
FR. PIUS CACCAVALLE, OFM CAP
Fr. Pius has served for many years as SFO Provincial
Spiritual Assistant and is well-versed in the SFO life.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ELECTION & BIOS



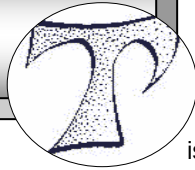
J. PATRICK MENDÉS, SFO, professed in 1961,
has been regional minister for the Chicago-area Mother
Cabrini Region. He recently retired as parish coordinator of
ministries at St. Colette Parish in Rolling Meadows, IL, and
he is vice president of the board of directors for two
Franciscan retirement communities, Mayslake Village in
Oakbrook and Cedar Lake Village in Plainfield, IL. He
formerly was a university professor and chief nursing officer/
vice president for professional services of a multi-facility
healthcare system. He holds master's degrees in nursing
and education, a C.A.S. in gerontology, and a doctorate in
adult education. He is credentialed in ministry with mandate
from the Archdiocese of Chicago/University of St. Mary of the
Lake. He served on the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, is
involved in ministries of care and bereavement, and is a
Eucharistic minister. He has been active in and has held
leadership positions in several professional associations.

NATIONAL FRATERNITY FOR THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER USA

CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS HELD OCTOBER 28, 2006
THE 2006–2009 COUNCIL IS:
National Minister: J. Patrick Mendés, SFO
National Vice Minister: Deacon Tom Bello, SFO
National Secretary: Sarah Mulholland, SFO
National Treasurer: Dennis Ross, SFO
National Councilor: Pat Brandwein-Ball, SFO
National Councilor: Mike Carsten, SFO
National Councilor: Clare McCluggage, SFO
International Councilor: Anne Mulqueen, SFO
President-in-Turn Council of
National Spiritual Assistants:
Fr. Bart Karwacki, OFM Conv.

DEACON TOM BELLO, SFO, is a teacher to adult immigrants and refugees in Fairfax County, VA. Ordained to the permanent diaconate in 1987, he is assigned to St. James Catholic Church in Falls Church, VA. A summa cum laude graduate of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Bello is a Rhodes scholar who earned both a B.A. and M.A. from Oxford University (Merton College) at Oxford, England. He holds a master's in religious studies from Notre Dame Pontifical Catechetical Institute in Arlington, VA. In addition to parish work, Deacon Bello works in Catholic Charities Prison Ministry at the Alexandria Detention Center and is a member of St. Ann's Hospital Ministry Team. He has worked with the poor and homeless at Christ House in Alexandria. Professed in 1983, he is a member of St. Thomas More Fraternity in Arlington. He served in a number of Franciscan leadership positions, including local fraternity minister, regional councilor and regional minister for St. Margaret of Cortona Region. He and his wife, Judy, have three children.

**NATIONAL
COUNCIL** ...continued from page 20



.....
SARAH MULHOLLAND, SFO, is a freelance editor for American Psychological Association in Washington, D.C. She retired from APA last year after working in its Publications Department for 26 years as an indexer, editor and manager of abstracting/indexing. She holds a BA in psychology. After retiring, she and her husband, Dan, moved to Bend, OR. She is involved with the prayer shawl ministry and the Small Communities Bible Study at St Francis of Assisi parish in Bend. Her Franciscan fraternity has adopted a section of highway, as part of its ecology work. On the national level, she and her husband are former co-chairs of the order's National Peace and Justice Commission, and she is the executive secretary for the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants. Sarah has held a number of leadership positions, including fraternity minister and formation director, and was recently elected secretary of her local fraternity, St Francis of Assisi. She and her husband have seven grown children and 13 grandchildren.

.....
DENNIS ROSS, SFO, who begins his second term as national treasurer, is a retired high school math teacher and junior high assistant principal. He holds a BA in sociology and mathematics and an MA in education administration from John Carroll University, Cleveland Heights, Ohio. He is active at St. Bede the Venerable Parish, serving on the parish council, as a Eucharistic minister, and as a religious education principal. Professed as a Secular Franciscan in 1986, Dennis served in a number of local leadership positions, including minister of Br. Jacopa Fraternity, before being elected regional minister and regional treasurer for St. Maximilian Kolbe Region. He and his wife, Lynn, have four daughters, two sons, and seven grandchildren.

.....
PAT BRANDWEIN-BALL, SFO, is a former two-term regional minister of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Region. She is a staff nurse with Rochester Pediatric Association, Rochester, NH. Before that she was a pediatric nurse and a psychiatric unit counselor at Wentworth-Douglass Hospital in Dover, NH. She holds an LPN from Nevada Public School of Practical Nursing, Nevada, MO, and a BA in Psychology from University of New Hampshire. She completed the Spiritual Direction Training Program with the Mercy Center, Colorado Springs, CO, and is a member of Spiritual Direction International. Active in Our Lady of the Angels Parish in South Berwick, ME, she served as a Eucharistic minister and as a member of the parish merger taskforce. She previously was parish newsletter editor and confirmation teacher. As a Secular Franciscan, she was local fraternity minister and regional vice minister. She also serves on the national Spirit and Life Team, and she conducts retreats and days of recollection. She and her husband, Gary Ball, have two sons.

.....
MIKE CARSTEN, SFO, re-elected to a second term as national councilor, is a construction superintendent and carpenter. He completed trade school and high school. He is active at St. Augustine Parish in Deerfield Township, MI, and was involved at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Fenton, where he had been a catechist, RCIA team member, Eucharistic minister, lector, and parish council president. Also active in the community, he has been a Boy Scout leader, soccer coach, Little League coach and Girls' Softball coach. Mike has held a number of leadership positions in the Secular Franciscan Order, including local fraternity minister, regional Youth/Young Adult Commission chair, regional councilor and regional minister for Divine Mercy Region. He and his wife, Sharon have three grown children and four grandchildren.

.....
CLARE MCCLUGGAGE, SFO, is a family physician who recently relocated to Vancouver, where she practices with Kaiser Permanente. For 20 years she was on the faculty of University of Texas Southwestern Medical School Dallas, where she taught medical students and residents, and was Residency Program director. Dr. McCluggage volunteered at North Dallas Shared Ministries Clinic. She received her medical degree from University of Missouri, Columbia, with training at St. Paul Medical Center and University of Texas Southwestern Medical School.

In her parish she taught CCD, led scripture study groups, sang in the choir, was a RENEW small group leader and served on the liturgy planning team. At her new parish, St. John the Evangelist in Vancouver, she is a Lifeteen Core member. As a Secular Franciscan, she was a founding member and minister of Immaculata Fraternity, and held several regional offices with Los Tres Compañeros Region, including secretary, formation director, vice minister and minister.

.....
ANNE MULQUEEN, SFO, has served at all fraternity levels as formation director (local, regional and national), and she was an International Formation Workshop lecturer in Rome in 2006.

She is a retired aide to three successive chief judges of the Federal District Court of Maryland. She holds a BA in English and is a certified spiritual companion/director.

A parishioner at St. Stephen Church, she has served as a lay representative to the Archdiocesan Regional Council, a member of the parish council, coordinator of parish Small Church Communities, Bible Studies instructor, and spirituality writer for the local newsletter. Anne has conducted multiple workshops and seminars for the Secular Franciscan Order. She and her husband, Bill, have two daughters and two grandchildren.

GENERAL INTEREST



FALL 2006 EDITION OF TAU-USA AVAILABLE ONLINE

All professed SFO members currently receive TAU-USA, the SFO National newsletter, by mail.

Did you know it's also available online?

You can now read the entire edition at <http://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa.html>
Click on Articles from TAU-USA.

Ministers and Formation Directors, please make your people in initial formation aware of this so that they can become acquainted with the activities of our National fraternity.

SISTERS SELL CHRISTMAS CARDS

Christmas cards have been added to the gift store of the Sisters of St. Clare in Saginaw, Michigan. Five designs of 5" x 7" cards are available. The Poor Clare Sisters depend on alms as their major support, however, they try to do projects that help support them and are also a spiritual benefit to others.

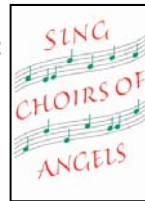


They have created Fragrant Anointing Oil as a means to help Christians pray with others. People use this to bless someone in need, to touch and soothe a friend in the hospital. While Christmas cards share the joy of the Season, other cards being sold include funeral cards—created to console those grieving a death, and sympathy cards which affirm our faith in life eternal.

They also design Scripture cards for all occasions:

jubilees, weddings, anniversaries, celebration of sacraments. A pc disk of Desktop Publishing Crosses is also available.

Information is available on the Web site:
<http://www.rc.net/saginaw/srsclare/xmas06.html>



CRECHES OF POPE JOHN PAUL II EXHIBITION DECEMBER 2—JANUARY 31, 2007

A Vatican Christmas—Crèches of Pope John Paul II is the second in a series of the museum's annual Christmas in Miniature, since the actual crèches are too large to be exhibited. As with last year's Crèches from Around the World, the nativity scenes will fill three large galleries. The exhibit tells the story of the late pontiff's keen interest in the three-dimensional re-creation of the birth of Jesus Christ. In 1982, Pope John Paul II instituted a tradition in St. Peter's Square by displaying a larger-than-life-sized Nativity scene in front of the obelisk each year. As a further tribute to Pope John Paul II, Polish szopkas (Nativity scenes) from his home diocese of Kraków are also being shown, including the silver szopka that the pope kept close to him on his desk. The exhibit will run concurrently with the museum's annual Christmas Tree Festival.

Knights of Columbus Museum, One State Street, New Haven, Connecticut.
For further information: 203.865.0400 or website: www.kofc.org

FRANCISCAN RESOURCES NOW HAS WEB-SITE

WEBSITE: www.FranciscanResources.com

ADDRESS: 15219-310TH St.
Menasha, MN 56464

PHONE: 1. 800.772. 6910
They carry formation programs, fraternity and Spiritual Assistant material. Books about St. Francis/St. Clare, prayer books, Franciscan medals, pendants, lapel pins, pendants and rings. Wall crosses, statues and much more.

CATALOG AVAILABLE AS WELL.

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE COMPENDIUM ONLINE

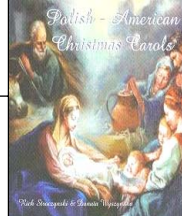
The **CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH** is available online in English, French, German, Italian, Latin, and Spanish. The **COMPENDIUM** is available online in English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovenian and Spanish.

Website for both is:
<http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc/index.htm>

JUSTICE AND PEACE WEB PAGE

The Holy See has started a web page dedicated to information about, and formation in, **JUSTICE AND PEACE**. The initiative by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace is available in English, French, Italian and Spanish, will publish information on ecclesial documents, congresses, statements of representatives of the Church.

Website: <http://www.justpax.it/>



CD AVAILABLE

Danuta Wyszynski, SFO, St. Stephen Fraternity, Perth Amboy, NJ, and Richard Stroczyński, combined efforts to produce:

"POLISH-AMERICAN CHRISTMAS CAROLS,"

a beautiful CD which glorifies God and his joyous Christmas Season. There are several Polish Christmas Carols with verses which have been translated into English, and likewise English carols which have verses that have been wonderfully translated into Polish. This CD is for everyone to enjoy, but especially Polish-Americans who have childhood memories of celebrating Polish "Wigilia" with their families.

All proceeds of this CD go towards the restoration of St. Stephen's Church in Perth Amboy, NJ. Donation of \$15.00 includes the CD and the cost of the shipping & handling for each CD.

For more information contact St. Stephens' Church at 732.725.2673 or go to their website: www.st-stephens-church.com



Franciscans living in the world wear this reminder of their commitment to a Gospel life. If you are married or single and you feel the call from God to embrace a Franciscan lifestyle, call us today to learn more.

- Live in the world.
- Work in the world.
- Celebrate your family life in the world.

Become a Secular Franciscan where you'll find fraternity and support while living in the world.

God is waiting for your call.

vocations@nafra-sfo.org
1-800-FRANCIS
www.nafra-sfo.org

SFO's, you can download this ad and circulate it in your parishes, retreat houses, or other places where Catholics gather.

An informative 39-page **SFO-PR GUIDE MANUAL** for all SFO local, regional and national levels is available at the NAFRA website:

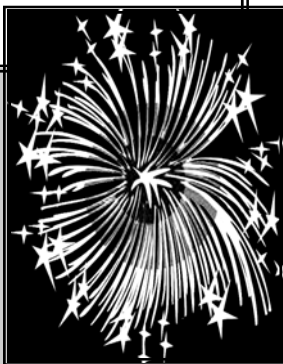
http://www.nafra-sfo.org/pressroom/nafra_pr_manual-1-1.pdf

QUINQUENNIAL CONGRESS PRAYER

by Anne Mulqueen, SFO

SEVENTEENTH QUINQUENNIAL CONGRESS

JULY 3-8, 2007



Franciscan University
Steubenville, Ohio

Plan ahead. Celebrate the joy of
St. Francis with your brothers and sisters.

THE THEME IS,

“...go out to all the world...
and tell the Good News.”

The registration fee is \$490.00 with a
\$40.00 discount for early registration.

The registration form will be in the
next issue of TAU-USA.

Y₂Q

For the first time in over
30 years, a Franciscan Youth Congress
will be held simultaneously with the
Quinquennial Congress.

The Youth Congress is open to any
youth or young adult from the ages of
16-26. The youth do not have to be
involved in a Franciscan group to attend.
All are welcome.

Youth will have the opportunity to
learn about the Franciscan family and
charism, about Franciscan views on
Ecology and Peace & Justice. There will be
opportunities to put those principles into
actions! An Urban Restoration Project and
a Peace Pilgrimage, right in the
Steubenville area is planned. For more
information go to the FYYA website at:
www.franciscanyouthusa.com

Most Holy and Blessed Trinity,
as we anticipate our Seventeenth Quinquennial Congress,
we turn to you in prayer.

We ask you to be a member of the planning committee,
because without your presence we can do nothing.

We must await your inspiration.

Our God and Father,
You brought us to life and called us by name.

Each one of us is precious in your sight.

Remind us that when we encounter others,
they are your children as well.

Through your grace, blend our beautiful diversity
into a single symphony of harmonious gifts and talents.

Jesus, Son and Word made Flesh,
Smooth the path before us and pick us up when we stumble.

You became one of us and lived as a Jew.

You respected the law of Moses,
yet you gave us a new way to live.

You said “no” to an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

You said love your enemy and return good for evil.

We ask you to teach us how to love one another as you love us.

Holy Spirit, breath of the Blessed Trinity,
inspire and bless all those who have and will have shared
their gifts and talents to make this Quinquennial Congress
a spiritual awakening.

Bless those who will travel distances to participate.
Bless those who cannot participate and let them be aware
that, although absent in flesh, they are present in spirit.

Bless our youth and our seniors
and all those people in between.

Holy Father Francis, pray for us.

Holy Lady Clare, pray for us.

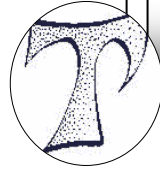
Our Lady of Guadalupe,
Patroness of the Americas,
pray for us.

All the angels, saints and
holy men and women,
pray for us.

First, Second and
Third Order Franciscans,
pray for us.

Amen.




 ENTERED INTO ETERNAL LIFE


• **P**RAISED BE YOU,
 MY LORD,
 THROUGH OUR
 SISTER
 BODILY DEATH,
 FROM WHOM
 NO LIVING MAN
 CAN ESCAPE.
 • **L**AUDATO SI,
 MIO SIGNORE,
 PER SORA NOSTRA
 MORTE CORPORALE,
 DE LA QUALE
 NULLO UOMO VIVENTE
 PUO SCAPPARE.
 • **L**OADO SEAS,
 MI SEÑOR,
 POR NUESTRA HERMANA
 LA MUERTE CORPORAL, DE
 LA CUAL NINGÚN HOMBRE
 VIVIENTE PUEDE ESCAPAR.

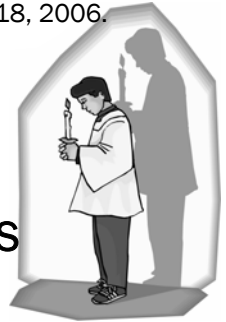
LET US PRAY for all our departed sisters and brothers in Christ and St. Francis.
 May all of our brother and sisters who sleep in the Lord find eternal happiness
 and peace. *May the Souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God,
 Rest in Peace. Amen.*

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA FRATERNITY, NEW YORK CITY, NY, **MARIAN GOLISCHANO, SFO**, May 3, 2006.
 Though Marian was only 40 years old, she leaves behind a legacy of love and kindness. In
 her short life, she performed many silent acts of kindness and generosity, never wanting her
 acts to be acknowledged or recorded to others. "God keeps score," she would always say.

ST. CONRAD'S FRATERNITY, HOBOKEN, NJ, **NANCY MELILLO, SFO**, March 6, 2006
GENEVIEVE BLASKEWIEZ, SFO, May 1, 2006

ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY, HACKENSACK, NJ, **JOSEPH SORTINO, SFO**, newly-elected fraternity
 treasurer and former Provincial Minister, passed away suddenly November 18, 2006.
 Please remember him and his mother Marie in your prayers.

A
COMMUNION OF SAINTS



It was to be my first funeral. I was home from the seminary but a few weeks and was still trying to learn to be a curate at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago. The announcement on the rectory bulletin board was quite clear: "Funeral Mass tomorrow morning at 10:30, Father Ed." Somewhat unnerved, I spent several hours that night reviewing the rubrics and preparing my sermon.

The following morning, robed in the black vestments of the time and led by two servers in starched, white surplices, I made my way to the altar, eyes cast down and chalice firmly in hand.

Not until the "Collect" or "Prayer" of the Mass did I turn around to see the congregation.

It was two ladies and two gentlemen, all very much up in years, kneeling in the front row.

In the center aisle there stood a metal cart upon which had been placed a modest coffin covered in grey felt.

At the rear of the cathedral two young men were making a quiet visit and above the choir loft, the organist sat motionless.

The name of the deceased was written on a card which the sacristan had placed upon the altar.

I took the card with me to the pulpit. Next to the name were the words: "Catholic Charities Funeral. No known relatives or friends."

That evening at supper the senior curate asked me how the funeral had gone.

"We have three or four of those Charities funerals a week," he observed, "and the congregation is always pretty much the same."

"Did you meet Emily?" one of the other curates inquired. "Who is Emily?" I asked.

"She usually sits in the front row with a few of her friends," I was told.

“Every morning she checks with Lillian at the switchboard to find out if there is to be a Catholic Charities funeral the next day. “Emily doesn't want anyone going to the Lord alone.” As it happened, that week I was assigned to two other such funerals, and the congregation was always the same. They followed the coffin in. They prayed the Mass devoutly. And they followed the coffin out. Anyone happening into the Cathedral would have assumed that they were elderly relatives or friends of the deceased.

It was several weeks later that I made the acquaintance of Emily and the other members of the congregation. I was passing a diner on Chicago Avenue one afternoon. The four of them were seated in a booth near the window. They waved and beckoned me to join them. It was immediately clear which one was Emily. She was in her late seventies and stood ramrod straight and spoke with a commanding voice.

“We have been looking forward to meeting you, Father,” she announced. “We have been seeing you at funerals a good deal lately.” With that, she extracted from her unusually large handbag about twenty pieces of notebook paper that were rolled up and clipped together at the top. She laid them out on the diner table and reviewed the funerals I had celebrated. This one was for Charles, and I had spoken of the mercy of God. This other was for Cynthia, and I had spoken of the joy that would be ours in heaven. The third was for Gilbert, and I had spoken of Christ's sacrificial death for all without exception.

And so it went. I could hardly believe my eyes and ears.

Each of the funerals was carefully recorded on an individual sheet of paper at the top of which was written in flowing, Spencerian script the words from the twelfth chapter of the Second Book of Maccabees. “It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead.”

“A holy and a wholesome thought,” Emily read slowly and with evident pleasure.

“But why do you do all this?” I asked, immediately regretting that I had not phrased my question more diplomatically.

“The Communion of Saints,” one of the elderly gentlemen replied without a moment's hesitation.



“Of course,” Emily interjected, “the Communion of Saints. All of us in the Church — whether in Heaven, in Purgatory, or still here on earth — are one family under God, our Father, and with Jesus our Brother. We are the Communion of Saints, and if we are truly that, we have to take care of one another.”

There was a moment of silence, but only a moment. Emily had much more to say.

“The dear departed whom Catholic Charities send to Holy Name for their funerals,” she explained, “are our brothers and sisters in the Lord, members of our Church, members of our ‘communion.’ They deserve to have caring loved-ones praying for them at their funeral Masses, and we do our best not to disappoint them. We treat them like relatives.”

“Or at least very close friends,” the other lady added.

There was a second moment of silence, longer than the first. It was broken by the gentleman who had spoken earlier.

“We do it,” he stated as though replying to my original question in a more definitive manner, “because of the Communion of Saints.”

Emily and the others nodded in total agreement. Not long after that conversation I was transferred to live some few blocks away at the Cardinal's residence. Still, I ate lunch each weekday at the Cathedral Rectory and regularly made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament before going up to the dining room.

Often I would see the end of a Catholic Charities funeral with the “saints” walking slowly behind the wooden coffin that bore another “saint” whom they had never met, but whom they dearly loved.

I knew that another page had been inscribed with the words of the Second Book of Macabees.

I knew that the theme of another funeral sermon had been recorded. I knew that something altogether “holy and wholesome” had taken place. I even knew that I could never doubt that the “saints” are ever in communion.



ISLAM

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ISLAM originated in the Middle East as did Christianity and Judaism, where monotheism has been present for centuries.

WITH THE CURRENT WORLD SITUATION, more knowledge of Islam will give all of us an opportunity to learn more about the second largest religion in the world after Christianity, and a religion which will soon be the second largest in this country.

Muslims are and will increasingly be, our neighbors, our colleagues and our fellow citizens, and ignorance about Islam distorts our views. This situation can only be improved if we take the time and make an effort to understand and learn about our neighbors.

The city of Mekkah (Mecca) in the sixth century AD was a growing center of commerce with much wealth. The division between the classes had widened and this was not the way the Arabian people felt their society should go. Also at this time the Prophet Muhammad had a divine revelation and called all to the return to the worship of the one true God. Muhammad actually did not start a new religion, but should be called a reformer. These revelations directed the people to return to what is called the "straight path" in the Quran, the path of God. Muhammad is considered the last of the prophets.

Muslims see themselves as "children of Abraham." Some Jewish and Christian people are descended from Abraham and his wife Sarah through their son Isaac, while some Arab Muslims trace their lineage back to Ishmael, Abraham's son by his servant Hagar.

Like Jews and Christians there are many human interpretations of Islam. Best known are the Sunni Muslims with 85% and the Shii Muslims with 15% of the world's Muslims. These two branches have many theological and legal differences. In addition there are many diverse ways within the various cultures that Muslims practice their religion. It can be said that the Islamic people do practice their faith in many different ways but there is a basic unity of belief.

Muslims are monotheists, believing in one God as do Jews and Christians. This one God is the creator, sustainer, ruler and judge of the universe. They also believe in prophets, not only Muhammad, but also the prophets of the Hebrews, Abraham and Moses, etc., and Jesus and John the Baptist from the New Testament.

They also believe in heaven and hell, the Day of Judgment and angels. According to Islamic teaching God's revelation was received in the Torah, the New Testament and Quran. People of all three religions are viewed by Muslims as "people of the book." Believers who have received revelations through prophets from God. Muslims believe that Muhammad received his revelations from God, through the angel Gabriel, to correct human error that had made its way into the scriptures and belief systems of Jews and Christians. They also hold Islam as the oldest religion, because it represents the original as well as the final revelation of the God of Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad.

How do Muslims regard Muhammad? He is looked upon as an entirely human figure, but somebody who had great spiritual as well as political insight and was guided by God. They look to Muhammad in all aspects of life; how to treat friends as well as enemies, what to drink and eat, when to pray and how to make love and war. These examples were passed on orally and in writing and reflect Muhammad's actions and decisions and today provide guidance for all Muslims.

The "Pillars of Islam" are the core and commonality that unites all Muslims.

The first Pillar is called the "Declaration of Faith." A Muslim believes that "there is no god but God (*Allah*) and Muhammad is the messenger of God. (*Allah is the Arabic for God like Yahweh is the Hebrew name for God.*) To become a Muslim you have only this declaration to make.

The second Pillar of Islam is "Prayer." Muslims pray five times a day turning in the direction of Makkah, at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and evening. These times for prayer were established by Muhammad. They are called to prayer by the *muezzin* from high atop the mosque's minaret. Prayers in Arabic are recitations from the Quran and the glorification of God.

Prayer can take place in any clean place, alone or together, in a mosque or at home, at work or traveling, indoors or out.

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The third Pillar concerns alms. Each Muslim is expected to give 2.5% each year of his total wealth and assets, not just income. These monies are given to the poor, orphans, widows and others in great need.

Each year they have the "Fast of Ramadam" which occurs in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. During this month long fast they must abstain from dawn to sunset from food, drink and sexual activity. This is the fourth Pillar.

The fifth Pillar calls for the "Pilgrimage or Hajj" to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. At least once in a lifetime every adult Muslim is to make this pilgrimage. The time of pilgrimage follows Ramadan. While on this pilgrimage they will follow certain rituals, becoming a pilgrim totally at God's service.

The vast majority of Muslims are not Arabs, they account for only 20%. Muslims can be found in America and Europe, China, India, Iran and Iraq, Indonesia, Egypt and North Africa, Pakistan and Central Asian nations, Russia and Bangladesh. Muslims in America number six million, making Islam the third largest religion in the country.

All three, Judaism, Christianity and Islam are monotheistic faiths that worship the God of Adam, Abraham and Moses. All three faiths stress moral responsibility, Judgment Day and eternal reward and punishment. Peace is central to all three faiths, which use similar greetings: "shalom aleichem" in Judaism, "pax vobiscum" in Christianity and "salaam alaikum" in Islam. All three phrases mean "peace be to you."

The Quran proclaims, that like Jews and Christians before them, Muslims have been called into a covenant relationship with God, making them a community of believers who must serve as an example to other nations by creating a moral social order. In the ideal Islamic state, the political authority carries out the divine message. Such a state is a nomocracy, a community governed by God's law. In this manner they differ with all legal processes truly Islamic law, not civil law.

Ever since 9/11 many non-Islamic people have raised the question:

Does the Quran condone terrorism? The Quran does not condone or advocate terrorism. Islam doesn't support the illegitimate use of violence or acts of terrorism, as other religions don't support them. They do permit Muslims to protect themselves from acts of aggression. Jihad, or struggle, first was revealed when Mohammad and his followers were forced to defend themselves while in flight from their persecution in Makkah. According to the Quran, Muhammad was told, "Leave is given to those who fight because they were wronged—surely God is able to help them who were forced from their homes wrongfully for saying 'Our Lord is God'". Hence the use of "a holy war." Certain verses in the Quran have been taken out of context to describe Islam as a violent religion, but Quranic verses underscore that peace, not violence and war, is the norm.

Will the Muslim world turn to democracy?

Some Muslims argue that Islam has its own ways that do not include democracy. Others believe that democracy can only be fully realized if Muslim society restricts religion to private life. Some do believe that Islam is fully capable of supporting democracy. They say that certain Islamic concepts currently in practice will suffice and make democracy possible. This is a matter that will bear watching since many cultures are involved and it will not be a religious matter only as Muslims become more worldly.

It may seem strange to Christians to learn that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a prominent figure in Islam and the only woman mentioned by name in the Quran. Mary is upheld as one of the four perfect examples of womanhood. An entire chapter of the Quran is dedicated to Mary and her story. She is mentioned more times in the Quran than in the New Testament with more biographical information as well. The Quran teaches that since Mary gave herself completely to God's will, she is to be revered.

The Quran affirms the teachings of Jesus as found in the Gospels. Muslims believe in the virgin conception by God's spirit, some of his miracles, but do not believe Jesus is the Son of God, only that he is a prophet. The doctrine of the Trinity is considered a form of polytheism, since it is saying that there are three Gods rather than one God. Since Muslims do not believe in Original Sin and that each of us will be held accountable before God, therefore there was no need for Jesus' death and resurrection.

There are many more interesting aspects about the Muslim religion that are not mentioned here and it would profit all of us to learn more about our neighbors and co-workers. They are going to be more present in our lives as time goes on.

A highly interesting book that will help you to learn more is "What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam" by John L. Esposito, who is University Professor of Religion at Georgetown University.

THE TROUBADOUR



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