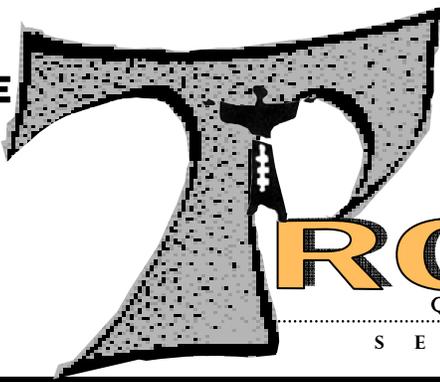


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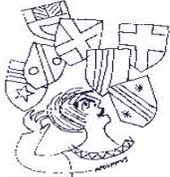
ROUBADOUR

SUMMER 2008

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION OF OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGION

S E C U L A R F R A N C I S C A N O R D E R

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



Heart of Francis

A man possessing such a heart,
 although a rebel from the start.
 A man that loved
 each kind of creature,
 from man to bug
 of every feature.

A heart that praised
 both sun & moon,
 and never giving in to gloom.
 It praised the rain, the wind,
 the trees,
 even so far as praising leaves.

Everything this heart did see,
 filled him with the greatest glee.
 The rich, the poor, the lepers came,
 and all were treated just the same.

This heart that preached the way to live,
 with joy & praise & love did give.
 Even the birds,

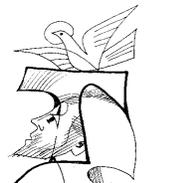
their songs ringing,
 sounded like
 the angels singing.

The heart that mirrored
 God and Christ,
 showed everyone
 its great insight.
 It changed the world
 & all within,
 to send forth peace & give up sin.

This heart so full of such great love,
 could only come from God above.
 The heart of Francis, a pious brother,
 compared to man, there was no other.

DOLORES JULES, SFO
 ST. JOHN VIANNEY FRATERNITY
 COLONIA, NJ

COVER ILLUSTRATIONS BY BR. PHILIPPUS OFM CAP, NETHERLANDS



VOLUME 10 • ISSUE 42

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REGIONAL COUNCIL

INVITATION TO ALL

You are invited, dear readers, to submit articles about your fraternity activities and membership; individual & collective expertise, personal and fraternal projects, aspirations and results.

Wherever the spirit of St. Francis is at work in the world, in your lives and in your hearts—I want to hear from you. Come share with us.
 —APG, EDITOR



OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS

14th Annual Regional Retreat

Friday, October 24 — Sunday, October 26, 2008
St. Mary's Villa, Sloatsburg, New York

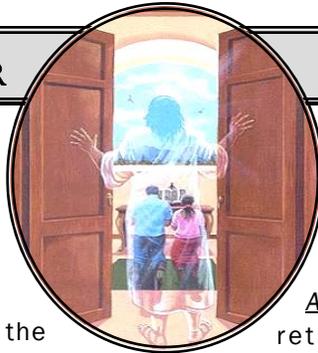
Attend the yearly gathering of our Secular brother and sisters. Share the joy that residing together in an environment of prayer, inspirational renewal, fraternizing and socializing brings.

ABOUT OUR RETREAT DIRECTOR

Our retreat director, Fr. Kevin M. Cronin, OFM, is a friar of the Holy Name Province of the Office of Friars Minor (OFM) Franciscans.

He is one of the few friars of the Holy Name Province designated as a Minister of the Word (M.O.W.) and currently resides at the St. Anthony of Padua Friary in Butler, NJ.

A native New Yorker, Fr. Kevin has pastoral and preaching experience at conferences, adult education and faith-formation programs. Fr. Cronin has served as a parish priest and vocations director, and is founder of *Young Adult Catholics in Boston*. He is also editor of: "A Friar's Joy: Magic Moments from Real Life" and "Kenosis: Self-Emptying and the Path of Christian Service."



RETREAT DETAILS

The cost of the retreat is \$150.00 per person. Full payment is required with the reservation form. Checks and Money Orders must be made payable to Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity otherwise it will be returned with your reservation form.

The last date for cancellation (and money back) is October 1, 2008.

As most of you know, St. Mary's has only six (6) single rooms. These will be assigned strictly on a first come, first served basis, determined by the date that the fully paid reservation form is received. Please do not call or e-mail that you want a single room and that the reservation with the check is in the mail. With that in mind, I strongly urge everyone to look for somebody with whom you would like to share a room with.

RESERVATION FORM—2008 OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS 14TH ANNUAL REGIONAL RETREAT

PLEASE RESERVE: SINGLE: FOR: _____
DOUBLE: AND: _____

HANDICAP: _____ DIETARY NEED: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

FRATERNITY: _____

SEND RESERVATION FORM & PAYMENT (CHECK OR MONEY ORDER ONLY) TO: • Richard Spana, SFO, Retreat Chairperson
• 332 Warburton Avenue, Hastings on Hudson, NY 10025-6005 • Telephone: 914-478-2010
Checks or Money Orders payable to: OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGIONAL FRATERNITY (not to St. Mary's Villa)

I WISH TO VOLUNTEER AS: (CHECK ONE ONLY)

Lector Eucharistic Minister Cantor Liturgy of the Hours Leader



REGIONAL CALENDAR

2 3 4 5
9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

ST. JOHN VIANNEY FRATERNITY, COLONIA, NJ, held an Easter party for the residents of St. Joseph Senior & Nursing Home in Woodbridge, NJ. Residents and fraternity members alike enjoyed scrumptious desserts, inspirational Bible teachings and joyous singing. Almost all of the residents at St. Joseph come from a Polish heritage, so the group delighted in singing many traditional Polish songs. Just like every holiday celebration with the senior home residents, the fraternity signed and distributed greeting cards to everyone.

The brothers and sisters of the St. John Vianney Fraternity minister to the residents at least once a month, and sometimes more. Every time, the Sisters who run the home are overjoyed at our interest and join right in with the activity.

SFO GATHERINGS

ST. ANTHONY'S FRATERNITY, NEW YORK CITY, NY, held their 16th Annual Poor Person's Lenten Lunch gathering on March 15, 2008. The event's theme, "COME AWAY AND SPEND AN AFTERNOON NOURISHING YOUR BODY AND SOUL" attracted the well attended gathering which began with a soup and sandwich Lenten lunch.

Afterwards, attendees were nourished "spiritually" with a Reflection, conducted by our Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Joseph Lorenzo, OFM. This was followed by the opportunity to gather in the Church, receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and spend some quiet time with the Lord. The afternoon concluded with the celebration of the Holy Mass.

In addition to sharing a spiritual afternoon, proceeds from the afternoon, and many generous donations, allowed us to financially aid a charitable cause. This year's recipient, *God's Love We Deliver*, received a check for \$700.00; they were most appreciative.

SEPTEMBER 5-7
COMMITMENT RETREAT FOR CANDIDATES
Mt. St. Francis Ringwood, NJ

OCTOBER 24-26
FRIDAY—SUNDAY
ANNUAL REGIONAL RETREAT
St. Mary's Villa Sloatsburg, NY
Additional details on opposite page

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1
CHAPTER OF MINISTERS
9:15AM-3:00PM
AGENDA: Regional Elections
Holy Name Church
96th St. & Amsterdam Ave., New York City, NY



INTERNATIONAL SFO CHAPTER

The Twelfth General Chapter and Fifth Elective Chapter of the SFO will take place Nov. 15–22, 2008, and will be celebrated in Hungary. Additional information to:

<http://www.ciofs.org/en.htm>

THE THEME OF THE CHAPTER WILL BE:
"The Profession of Secular Franciscans and their Sense of Belonging."

PRAYER FOR THE SFO GENERAL CHAPTER

Most High Glorious God, we praise You for Your presence in the world and for the tremendous gift of our Franciscan vocation. We beseech You to inspire every brother and sister of the Secular Franciscan Order as we prepare for the upcoming General Chapter in Hungary.

Grant the necessary wisdom to our brothers and sisters who will take part in the Chapter to develop the priorities for the Order for the next six years and to elect those You want to lead and animate us.

Guide and direct us so that we may follow the Gospel and our Rule more closely and be coworkers with You in the rebuilding of the Church and the World.

We ask this through Christ our Lord and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Francis, St. Clare, and our holy patrons St. Elizabeth and St. Louis. Amen.



CELEBRATION OF SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2008

CONVIVENZA



On a picture perfect day, SFO brothers and sisters gathered for Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity's Annual *Convivenza* at St. Bonaventure Church in Paterson, New Jersey. Hosted by St. John Vianney and St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, they provided their warm welcome, and generous spread of refreshments and delicious goodies.

Marcia Stambouljian, SFO Regional Minister, introduced the event's speaker, Lori Pieper, SFO, who spoke on Saint Elizabeth of Hungary and Our Secular Franciscan Vocation. Lori gave an informative presentation, (See page 5) even though she had a bad cough and was running a high fever at the time. Ever the trooper, she nevertheless stayed on and after lunch showed a short trailer on the documentary she is producing, titled: *A Woman For Our Time: St. Elizabeth of Hungary*.

The 9-minute trailer is now available on YouTube at: <http://subcreators.com/blog/?cat=19> 

We attended Mass as a Family in the Beautiful Parish Church of St. Bonaventure's with Celebrant Fr. Dan Grigassy, OFM, Pastor. Afterwards, lunch time provided an ideal fraternity setting that allowed us to catch up with old friends and meet and make new ones.

A very special day indeed.

You can view the *Convivenza* celebration by going to our website at: http://olangels.tripod.com/convivenza_08/index.htm 

-APG, EDITOR



ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY AND OUR SECULAR FRANCISCAN VOCA**T**ION

Since my talk today is going to be about a saint, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, I want to look at what the Pope said about holiness; he called saints, “ordinary men and women who grew up to lead extraordinary lives.” Most important, “any one of us could be among them, for there is no stereotype to this group, no single mold.” He added, “Inflamed with the love of Jesus, their lives became remarkable journeys of hope. All offered an outstretched hand of hope to those they encountered along the way.” For those saints and for us, “The path of that journey twists and turns. . .through the joys and the trials of ordinary, everyday life.” Holiness for the Pope consists in living an ordinary life in an extraordinary way. He clearly believes that every one of us is capable of being a saint.

And though we sometimes don't want to think of it, every one of us is called to be a saint. Sometimes we are afraid of the thought of that much commitment. When Thomas Merton was newly converted to Catholicism, one of his non-Catholic friends said, “It seems like you're trying to become a saint.” Merton, alarmed, quickly replied, “A saint? Me? No, no, no, I just want to be a good Catholic!” But it gave him pause — he eventually realized that it would be absurd to go only halfway; there was no turning back until God was done with him.

Most of us would probably be content to be merely “good Catholics” if we could. We think real heroic sanctity somehow isn't for us. Too many saints' lives present them as automatically holy, not even having to make an effort, but it's obvious that we would have to make a great effort to be that holy, so this kind of saint's life doesn't speak to us. That is why Pope Benedict was so adamant about our way to holiness as a journey, an ongoing process, beginning where we are, and carrying us who knows how high in God's love.

The Pope could have easily added many more saints to this description, and in fact he has spoken of how St. Elizabeth of Hungary made her spiritual journey. He did it in a letter to Peter Cardinal Erdo, the Archbishop of Budapest and Esztergom, in a letter celebrating the eighth centenary of her birth, published on May 27, 2007. It is probably little known, in fact there was no English translation of it up for quite a while at the Vatican web site, (though there is one now). It perfectly encapsulates Elizabeth as a Franciscan saint, and gives us some points to consider when we talk about how we can follow her. I don't want just to repeat the details of her life, but to go deeper. Here is what the Pope said:



ART BY FR. IVAN MATIC, OFM

Elizabeth made her own the program of Jesus Christ, Son of God, who in becoming man “emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.” (*Phil 2:7*) Thanks to the help of her excellent teachers, she walked in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi and set Christ, the one Redeemer of humanity, as her personal and ultimate goal and model in life. Called to be the wife of the Landgrave of Thuringia, she never ceased to devote herself to the care of the poor, in whom she recognized the likeness of the divine Master. She was able to combine her gifts as an exemplary wife and mother with the exercise of the Gospel virtues that she had learned at the school of the Saint of Assisi. She proved to be a true daughter of the Church, who bore a concrete, visible and meaningful witness to Christ's love. Innumerable people down the ages followed her example, viewing her as a model who mirrored the Christian virtues, lived radically in marriage, in the family and also in widowhood. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 6**

The Pope was well aware, I think, that our SFO rule is, 'to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi'. This is both Elizabeth's program and ours.

As you know, in the SFO, we have a two-year program for Elizabeth's centenary.

www.ciofs.org



During the first year, we looked at her life and spirituality in general. Our program this year as expressed to us in a letter from our Minister General in June 2006, is to: "celebrate and deepen the secular aspects of our vocation with initiatives that focus on our Patroness, Elizabeth, as model and inspiration." So I would like to develop some of the points mentioned above in the Pope's talk and in his letter, and try to apply them to Elizabeth's secular life and our rule and life as Secular Franciscans.

Before I go on, I will say that in Elizabeth we have a vital example of the secular vocation and our Franciscan life of penance. The word "secular" means in the world. Those who follow God must abandon worldliness, but not the world.



THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER
MEDAL OF ST. ELIZABETH CAST FOR
THE VIII CENTENARY OF HER BIRTH.

A secular spirituality looks to building up a just world, and consecrating our actions in the world to God.

Some Christians have kept themselves from any interest in the culture around them out of fear of contamination. To love the world in a proper way is to love others, participate in the culture around us, and provide for the welfare of all without adopting the world's way of seeing things.

We are not only a secular order, but an order of penance. According to Raffaele Pazzelli, TOR, the marks of the Franciscan concept of penance are first, continued conversion, that is, removing ourselves from the center and putting God there, and second, acts of compassion and charity toward our brothers and sisters, especially the poorest.

Let's look at the points that the Pope mentioned. First, the way to holiness is a journey. This was pointed out in an unforgettable way not only by Pope Benedict, but by John Paul I, who died in 1978 after only a month as Pope. Talk about a saint! In fact, the hearing of the witnesses in his canonization process is finished, and everything has been sent to Rome.

The day before he died, in his general audience, he commented on the idea of the love of God as a journey. He explained it is a natural part of human nature to always want to advance, to make progress. He said, "at first we went on foot, then on horseback, on camels, then in carriages, then by train, now by airplane. Always advancing. This is the law of progress.

But .. the love of God is a kind of journey. We must make progress here too. "Lord, help me love You more and more." Never stop.

The Lord has said to all Christians, "You are the light of the world", you are the salt of the earth, become perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect ... never stop."

This desire for progress is also true of Elizabeth. Her confessor, Conrad of Marbur, spoke of her "growing strong in virtue, desire for the highest perfection," and her wanting "to make spiritual progress." He saw this natural progression in her life both before and after her husband's death. Our continuing formation in the SFO calls for a greater progress from us, from the time we begin our novitiate onward, and long after our profession. Our formation these past two years in studying our patron is one example. Our rule speaks of our conversion being "carried out daily" and as a "road to renewal."

In this journey, the Pope says, Elizabeth had Christ as her goal and our model. Every journey must have a goal, and the more desired the goal is, the more happy we are to make the journey. Jesus Christ and union with Him is the goal of our life's spiritual journey. Christ is also our model to imitate, but let's look more closely at how this is done.

Pope Benedict speaks of Elizabeth emptying oneself in service and sacrifice for others. In Philippians, Paul tells us, "Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but (also) everyone for those of others. (Phil. 3-4) He says that we should have the same attitude as Christ who, "emptied Himself, took on the form of a slave," and was "obedient to death, death on a cross." This means we must put God first in our lives, ourselves second. We empty ourselves in imitation of Christ, so we can fill ourselves with Christ and give ourselves completely to others as He did.

I think this is what St. Paul means here. This is what our conversion as Franciscans means. This self-emptying really led Elizabeth to do everything for others. We all know how she did this for the poor, working tirelessly to feed, clothe and care for them, especially for the sick. But as a wife of a wealthy ruler and mother she was also constantly giving to her husband and children. She summed up her ideas like this: "Give to God what you have, willingly and cheerfully."

Elizabeth's biographer, Dietrich of Apolda, says that once as Landgräfin she went to church in the middle of a large retinue, and there, when she saw Christ on the crucifix at the altar, naked and crowned with thorns, she instantly felt pierced with shame. "Your God hangs naked," she said to herself, "and you, worthless human being, are covered with precious garments; his head is punctured with thorns and your head is surrounded with gold." From that time on, she put aside her gold ornaments. Jesus, not self. In our Franciscan life, conversion. This means making a change, a complete turnaround. Putting God in first place and ourselves second.



CHRIST AS OUR MODEL

Elizabeth was a great imitator of Christ. Like Him, Elizabeth washed the feet of the poor and the lepers as a sign of service. When her confessor, Conrad of Marburg, got angry with her and slapped her face, Elizabeth would accept it meekly, in imitation of the blows in the face that Jesus received at the Sanhedrin during His trial and before Pilate.

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. FRANCIS

That the Pope mentioned Elizabeth was very definitely a Franciscan and followed St. Francis is important, because her identity as a Franciscan has been questioned. Fr. Fernando Scocca, TOR, says that in the past many people he encountered did not see Elizabeth as a Franciscan tertiary, because, there wasn't that much evidence for it, but as a Cistercian or even Dominican. Father Fernando began exploring her life as a Franciscan penitent, and the evidence for that is actually very rich, this is in part because we know more now, and because Franciscan sources for her life have been uncovered. One of them was the Anonymous Franciscan, which I found and edited.



ELIZABETH'S LOVE FOR POVERTY AND HER ATTRACTION TO THE BEGGING LIFE OF THE FRIARS.

Not just a simple romanticized fascination, but a real and deep entering into the viewpoint of St. Francis. When Elizabeth was living in the glittering life at court at the Wartburg as a young wife, in 1223 or 1224, the first Franciscan missionaries to Germany arrived in Eisenach. Elizabeth was then about eighteen years old. She granted a church in Eisenach to the friars, and became so devoted to them that she spun the wool for their habits herself. What she learned then about the life of St Francis and the work of the friars who went barefoot and begging throughout the world must have had an enormous impact on her, for as Isenrude later testified at her canonization process: "Dressing herself in a shabby cloak in front of her ladies in the palace and wrapping a plain piece of cloth around her head, she said, 'This is how I will walk when I go begging and bear misery for the love of God.'" This was little more than a desire; fulfilling it at this point would have been impossible for a woman with a family.

But Elizabeth already longed to be freed from the rich life she lived at court, she longed more and more for a simple poor life, seeing that the type of life she was living hindered complete service to God. This was because the feudal regime and the rule of the Landgraf often gave rise, even without him intending it, to injustices against the poor. In fact, in obedience to her conscience, she refused to eat any of the food that came from the heavy taxes imposed on the poor, which caused a rift in the family. Her husband, Ludwig, supported her, but many in his family opposed what they saw as her interference.



When we find the true self rooted in Christ, we will be compelled to go outside of ourselves and see Christ in others. The brilliance of St. Francis was that he captured this recognition of seeing Christ in others as extending to the whole of creation. This is an extraordinary claim. How is it possible every living thing, even a pesky fly, contains Christ? To get to how Christ is present in creation, we must step back a bit and recall some basic aspects of the Trinity. How God relates to the other persons in the Trinity actually gives us a clue as to how God exists in creation around us.

The Incarnation is a mystery, as is the Trinity. There is very little one can say about it without it becoming enormously complex. In its rawest form, the Incarnation is a God event where God became fully human while also remaining fully divine. This fully human and fully God person is, as we know, Jesus, the second person of the Trinity. The primary person is God the Father, who communicates with Jesus. This sort of communication is a mystery, but we know that the result is a creative love. Some refer to this creative love as the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. Why did God have to become human? This is a tricky and impossible question. Some will answer that God became human to save human beings from the first sin of Adam and Eve. Franciscans will respond, however, that God became human because of love. Because the primary person, God the Father, has an immensely powerful creative love, God needs an other on whom to bestow such love. In other words, God needs a recipient of God's love. Since the only other that would be fully up to the task of receiving and reciprocating that love would be God, we say that Christ existed first in the mind of God before any human being even had sinned.⁹ In that sense then, because of love, God would have become human, even if no human had sinned. Ilia Delio in her book, *The Humility of God*, explains: "The persons of the Trinity are so united in love that everything they do—creation, redemption, salvation—they do together in love, out of love and for love."¹⁰ Thus, Christ being fully God and fully human becomes for us, as Delio points out, a God of humble love bending low to embrace us. The motive then for the Incarnation is simple: love. God becomes human in part because God wants to be loved by us. And we love God by imitating Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is easy to see how Christ is present in human beings, but what about that pesky fly? Why would St. Francis think that God is present in all creation? His reverence for creation was not some hippy vision of trees blowing in the wind, to be sure. It was the very fact that every aspect of creation, even the most ugly and mundane, bears the imprint of God. And we know that all of creation bears this imprint from the simple fact that God created all of creation from that same love which created human beings. Francis's insight was really about our interconnectedness with all creation. The idea is that we all are created by God because of this diffusive and creative love of the Trinity, and so we are all in relationship. In many ways, Francis was not far from the Jewish idea of making sacred the ordinary. He realized that what may have seemed ordinary actually contained the presence of God. The hallmark example of this realization of God present in all creation is his embrace of the leper. In kissing the Christ in the leper, Francis was able to expel his inner leper by recognizing the Christ present within both.

If God is present within all creation, then food should be no exception. Food in its most basic, ordinary sense carries the imprint of God, and thus contains an inherent holiness. But we cannot merely admire the imprint of God in food. We have to eat it, too. And eating can be a way to love God, especially when it recalls for us the Eucharist.

We have already seen that in remembering we come closer to the person God creates us to be. Therefore, when we can recall the memory of the Eucharist and recognize God present in all creation as we eat, while being the person God created us to be, we return the love God bestows on us.

I imagine that when my mother came home from a full day's work to cook our supper, she never thought about how the food she was preparing contained a memory of the Eucharist. And she would be the rule, not the exception. However, perhaps the remembrance need not be so direct as to consciously think of the Eucharist every time we eat or drink. I can guarantee, for instance, that I will not when I next head to the vending machine for cashews. But we know that when we have eaten a satisfying meal, it goes beyond merely filling our stomachs. Usually these memorable meals happen with another over a conversation that lifts us out of ourselves. When we eat in this way, we recall the Eucharist.

What I am suggesting is that there are certain ways of eating that recall the Eucharist simply because they contain characteristics that we also find in eating the Eucharist. Moreover, these characteristics are particularly Franciscan because together they underscore the love that the Trinity has together and the love that created the Incarnation and that same love inherent in all creation.

RITE OF PROFESSION

With Franciscan Joy,
ST. CONRAD'S FRATERNITY, HOBOKEN,
NJ, announces the Profession of:

ANTHONY F. CIERI, SFO
MARIE VASTA, SFO
on May 7, 2008.

ST. THOMAS MORE FRATERNITY,
NEW YORK CITY, NY, is pleased to
announce the Profession of:

JOSEPH BELL, SFO
which was celebrated on
April 20, 2008.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR NEWLY PROFESSED BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN ST. FRANCIS.

INVESTITURE

CONGRATULATIONS TO
BROTHER STEPHEN D'AMATO-PASQUENZA, PBSF
upon his Investiture into the
Order of Penitent Brothers of Saint Francis
January 27, 2008
Mt. Alvernia Franciscan Center
Wappingers Falls, NY.

SAINT FRANCIS AND ME

BY **ANNA ZIELSKI, SFO**
ST. JOHN VIANNEY FRATERNITY
COLONIA, NJ

When I was young and naïve,
Saint Francis looked at me and said:
"Follow me!"

I fell in love with him instantly
trying to imitate his radical ways.

If a great sinner from Assisi
became a saint, why not me?

I gave away my fancy clothes
and ungodly books,
running away from the carnal friends.

I studied the Bible day and night,
trying to adjust my sinful ways
to Gospel teaching.

Sometimes I failed.
Those falls crushed my pride,
but didn't crush my spirit.

If a great sinner from Assisi
became a saint, why not me?

The Good Lord sent Saint Francis
into my life to transform my wretched
soul and turn my path away from sin.

I was inspired not to please people
anymore, but boldly proclaim:
"My God and my all!"

If a great sinner from Assisi
became a saint, why not me?

EMERGING FRATERNITY

On behalf of St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity, Madge Cooke, SFO and Julia McCants, SFO, received 8 members of the **ALL SAINTS EMERGING GROUP** into the Secular Franciscan Order at a Rite of Admission ceremony held on May 25, 2008.

Fr. Neil O'Connell, OFM, Spiritual Assistant to the Emerging Group addressed the members and spoke of their Franciscan journey. The members of St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity presented each of the new Candidates with a Tau and a copy of the Essential Documents of the Secular Franciscan Order.

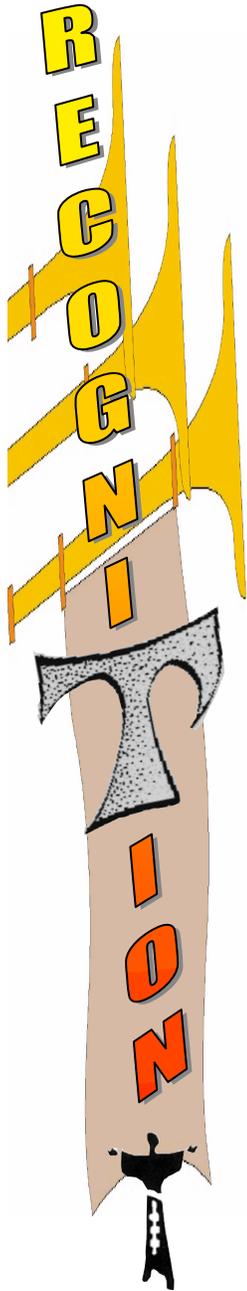
The new candidates are:
Vicktoriana Davis, Gloria Bernadine Harris, Rita Hunt,
Leon Jude McMorris, Noleen Veronica Phillips, Gloria Phillips,
Martha Tremino and Dorothy Ann White.

Two other members of the Emerging Group, Peter Martin Perez and Warren Francis Thomas were unable to attend the ceremony. They will be received into the order at a later date.

We warmly welcome them and promise our support on their journey.



ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY, HACKENSACK, NJ, gathering on Thursday, May 8TH, was a very special one because they celebrated ANNA LICAMELI'S 55TH Anniversary of Profession.



L- Anna and Fr. Anthony with her special cake.
R- Anna receives a special certificate from Minister Diane Menditto, SFO

ARTICLE BY PAUL FITZPATRICK
PHOTOS: DIANE MENDITTO, SFO

Article used with permission of
THE OBSERVER, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ

The fraternity meeting started with a Mass celebrated by Father Anthony Giudice, OFM Cap, the fraternity's newly appointed Spiritual Assistant. Following the Mass, the group enjoyed a dessert and coffee reception in the church hall.

Aside from the regular Secular Franciscan group, many of

Anna's friends from Corpus Christi Parish came to celebrate with her. Anna's brother Charlie Licameli, and sisters Rita and Gae Licameli (all from Corpus Christi) were there also. Gae says that Anna entered the Secular Franciscan Order in Hoboken 55 years ago, "in keeping with the tradition of her grandmother, her mother, and her aunts, and her brother and sister-in-law." In addition, two sisters who are nuns belong to the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Peekskill, NY.

Many of the people present at the gathering shared their feelings about Anna. A couple of them remarked that Anna always has a big smile for them. Another said that the group is a family, and that Anna was like the mother of the family.



L- Lucy Stamilla adds to our joint effort R- Anna received the finished painting at our June meeting.

At the reception, the group got to partake in a unique activity organized by Flora Hand, SFO, who is the director of religious education at Corpus Christi. Flora's friend, artist Joan Kaldawi, had started a painting of St. Francis of Assisi and everyone present was invited to contribute something to the painting. Flora asked everyone to say a prayer while they were painting. Some painted additional leaves on the trees, some added to the color of St. Francis' cloak, and someone added the sun. The completed painting was presented to Anna as a gift at the June fraternity gathering.

Celebration photos of ST. STEPHEN'S FRATERNITY, PERTH AMBOY, NEW JERSEY, on their 100TH Anniversary Jubilee celebration of April 20, 2008.

SUBMITTED BY:

ANNA ZIELSKI, SFO



ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA FRATERNITY, NEW YORK CITY, held a jubilee celebration honoring two fraternity members this past June 22.



ELEANOR GIUFFRA, SFO, celebrated 50 years, and **FRANK PAMIAS, SFO,** celebrated 25 years of their profession as Secular Franciscans. A beautiful Mass was celebrated by Fr. Joe Lorenzo, OFM, Spiritual Assistant, during which Eleanor and Frank came to the foot of the altar, as they each had done so many years ago, and renewed their Secular Franciscan profession commitment.

In true Franciscan manner, a joyous celebration was held in the church lower hall afterwards where family, friends, friars, sisters, SFO local fraternity members, friends from other SFO fraternities, inquirers and members of the parish congregation gathered to celebrate and congratulate our sister



PHOTO CREDITS: TONY JALANDONI, SFO, TOP OF PAGE: Renewal of Vows during the Mass. **ABOVE (L-to-R):** Fr. FRANCIS HANUDEL, OFM, ELEANOR GIUFFRA, SFO, Fr. JOE LORENZO, OFM, ANNA GERACI, SFO MINISTER, FRANK PAMIAS, SFO.

PHOTO CREDITS: MARIANNE SPINELLI, BOTTOM CLUSTER



In other words, this sort of eating is Franciscan because it begins not with sin, but with grace that flows from this self-diffusive love of the Trinity. There are three characteristics I would like to focus on here: Poverty, Grace, and Sanctification.

We usually think of poverty in a negative sense, especially with regard to hunger. Survivors of genocide often talk about their experiences of starvation.

Primo Levi says this about his experiences in Auschwitz:



It is notorious that only the High numbers keep their bread in their pockets; none of us old ones are able to preserve bread for an hour...Alberto says that hunger and bread in one's pockets are terms of opposite sign which automatically cancel each other out and cannot exist in the same individual; and the majority affirm justly that, in the end, one's stomach is the securest safe against thefts and extortions.¹¹

How then does something positive relate to poverty?

First, we have to make the distinction between involuntary and voluntary poverty. The former we do not choose, and the latter we do. Voluntary poverty is a choice and is rooted in detachment. The simple idea is that we do not attach ourselves to things so that they serve us and not the other way around. The goal is that we do not let anything distract us from God. However, this is not to say that we ought to demonize these things. These are neither good nor bad; rather, these things matter only in the sense we use them. Merton puts it this way: "Do you think that [the saints'] love of God was compatible with a hatred for things that reflected Him and spoke of Him on every side? It was because the saints were absorbed in God that they were truly capable of seeing and appreciating created things and it was because they loved Him alone that they alone loved everybody."¹² Poverty then focuses not on lack but on proper use. This has an immediate bearing on how we can view food and eating.

Note this well: food is neither good nor bad. To constantly diet, as with the Atkins diet, is potentially problematic from this poverty perspective, because it has the danger of casting food as a negative object. This is not to say that healthy eating is not important. Indeed it is the very point. Healthy eating will not involve demonizing certain foods or tricking one's body. It will involve not letting food become an addiction or viewing food as a sinful object or using a lack of food as way to control one's appearance. It will involve appreciating the goodness of food per se; eating a balance of nourishing food; eating exactly what is enough. But, most importantly, it will involve not being so preoccupied with food and its effects that we forget ourselves and God.

Once we can view food in its proper context, we can better appreciate the grace inherent in food. Of course, being able to put food in its proper context is dependent on being our true selves. Poverty helps us turn toward our true selves. And, as we have seen, becoming our true selves leads us to Christ, and in coming to Christ we are able to look outside ourselves and see God present in all creation. Thus, we will see God in food as we become more ourselves, which is firmly rooted in Christ, through a voluntary poverty. Moreover, when we are able to view Christ in food, we will undoubtedly recall the Eucharist. And, furthermore, viewing Christ in ordinary foods will recall that sacramental memory as we have discussed earlier. But how does this really look in everyday life?

I admit that most of us will not consciously relate Christ and food the next time we eat. But eating in a way that privileges a greater sense of poverty will lead us to recognize grace. And recognizing that grace will force us to respond to God's love through being present to the rest of creation. Think of it this way: when we eat a meal with a friend or family member and share a meaningful conversation, do we use that time to fret over how many calories we will gain or how fat we are or how we will totally need to run a marathon to allow us to afford what we are eating? Or, do we use that time to be more present to that other and share something of our life with that other person? I think it is quite obvious that of the two options, the latter contains more grace than the former. We may not think of it, but there is inherent grace when we choose to use food to be more present to others rather than to alter our appearance to others.

And again we may not think of it, but by doing this, i.e., being more present to others through sharing food, we remember the nature of the Eucharist at Mass that is rooted in the self-diffusive love of the Trinity. Poverty then involves allowing us to use food in a way that will at once recognize and facilitate grace, to be more present to others.

When we are able to be present to others through sharing food we will become holy, which is a nourishment all its own. So, seeing the potential for good through proper use of food we start from the point of grace and not from the avoidance of potential abuse of food, which would be sin in the truest sense of something turning us away from God.

The more we are in touch with this grace filled eating, the more we will be sanctified, and the closer to God we will be. In sum, to eat Franciscan is to eat for holiness, not for health; for grace, and not for self-denial; and for love, not for self-control.

I will end this piece via illustration of this summary point.

Every Thanksgiving, my grandmother makes an apple pie, and if I am good she will let me help. The mere whiff of an apple covers a multitude of sins for her. It contains for her happy memories of apple picking that carries a timeless sense of goodness. When she carries in her apples she does so with the joy of a child and the reverence of a saint. She has a healthy respect for the main ingredient that will make or break her pie, and she insists that only several types of apples will work.

Like the Jewish idea of many correct ideas existing and not just one, no one apple will do. There must be a blend.

She mindfully measures the exact number of the apples we use so as to find just the right amount to be sliced for the pie, no more or less, and she carefully watches as I peel and slice these apples.

She knows her limits, and sometimes she will use a store crust without any guilt whatsoever. Excessive work or perfection is not her goal, but rather a great pie, which she without fail provides. And amazingly I can tell little difference between the store crust and her own, so adept she is in making her pies.

As I help her arrange the slices carefully and brush the crust with half-and-half, we swap our latest stories. We add to this pie our latest news, struggles, hopes and joys to be baked along to, if not perfection, than to sanctification. Ultimately, then, we prepare more than a pie. We are present to each other as we create something beautiful. And we do all this together because of love.

So, when I think of my grandmother taking joy in apples, carefully preparing her pie, and sharing this through love with me, I have no trouble recalling the heart of Franciscan eating, as these memories drive me to my true self.



⁹Ilia Delio, *The Humility of God* (St. Anthony Messenger Press: 2005), 23. *Delio has a lot of fantastic commentary on the Trinity as well as Bonaventure's idea of God bent low in love for us.*

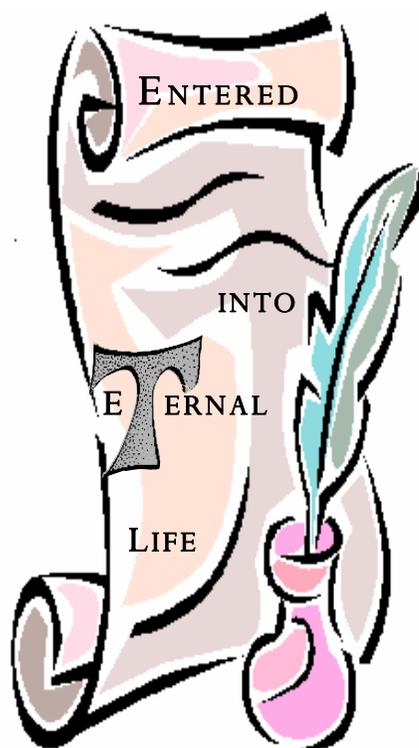
¹⁰Delio, 23.

¹¹Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (Simon & Schuster, 1996), 74.

¹²Merton, 22-23.

LET US PRAY FOR ALL OUR DEPARTED SISTERS AND BROTHERS IN CHRIST AND ST. FRANCIS.

MAY ALL OF OUR BROTHERS 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. THOMAS MORE FRATERNITY
NEW YORK CITY, NY

† **NORMAN REILLY, SFO**
passed away March, 2008
IN HIS 49TH YEAR OF HOLY PROFESSION.

ST. JOHN VIANNEY FRATERNITY
COLONIA, NJ

† **LENA DELUTIS, SFO (ALMOST 102 YRS OLD)**
passed away April, 2008
Surviving are her son John and his wife Mary Ann Delutis of
Colonia; her daughter-in-law Margaret Delutis of Las Vegas, NV,
sisters, Carmella Machetti of Palisades Park and Jennie Muzzarini of
Nutley ; 10 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.



THE LAZARUS PROGRAM

At the **SAINT ANTHONY SHRINE IN BOSTON, MA.**, a ministry that buries the unwanted dead, recently held a funeral Mass for five abandoned infants. Coordinated by Bro. Gary Convertino and Sr. Margaret Henry, the program had previously planned only funeral Masses and burials for homeless women, men and veterans, and other adults without means. But on December 7, five infants were brought to the shrine for a 9:00AM Funeral Mass.

Early that morning, a gift of five small sprays of white roses, one for each tiny coffin, and a large spray for the altar arrived. Fr. John Jaskowiak, OFM, brought a small teddy bear and Miraculous Medal to be placed in each coffin. Since the infants had no name, except baby boy or baby girl, they were named for Franciscan saints.

The five were named: Elizabeth, for Saint Elizabeth of Hungary; Anthony, for Saint Anthony of Padua; Lawrence, for Saint Lawrence of Brindisi; John, for Saint John of Capistrano; and Joseph, for Saint Joseph of Cupertino.

Fr. David Convertino, OFM, con-celebrated the liturgy, with 5 Friars. Also in attendance was the Rev. Lucy Marshall, a Protestant chaplain at MCI Framingham, where one of the baby's mothers is incarcerated.

During the liturgy, Fr. David said: "The Franciscan family coming together in love and dignity is an act of God which demonstrates that God never abandons us or stops loving us. As Franciscans and as Christians, we can never abandon these children, another sign that God never abandons us. Our Franciscan family now has new angels in Heaven who will pray for us."

—APG, EDITOR

**FOR SISTER LENA
4-13-08**

HOME AGAIN

BY VALERIE MORENO, SFO
ST. JOHN VIANNEY FRATERNITY
COLONIA, NJ

(written as St. Francis speaking)

Child, you are home again,
caught up in Heaven's garden
where I've been waiting
to welcome you.

All barriers eliminated,
all frailty erased
as you stand in God's Light
eternally beautiful.

You smile,
as I take your hand,
soul to soul,
we dance,
spinning in the brilliance
love embraces.

Home again,
where Mercy and Light
transform sorrow into joy,
weeping to everlasting singing.





REGIONAL FINANCIAL REPORT

JOHN C. RAS, SFO, REGIONAL TREASURER
OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGIONAL FRATERNITY

The following is the second financial report for the year 2008 from the Regional Treasurer detailing the *Per Capita/Fair Share* received from each local fraternity for the year 2007, and received so far for the year 2008.

While the primary audience of this report are the Fraternity Minister and other members of the Fraternity Council for each Fraternity, all the members of each fraternity, especially those who are already professed, should also take great interest in this. Special note should be made of the fraternities that did not remit their fair share for the year 2007.

There are quite a few fraternities who have failed from year to year to contribute to the region's *Per Capita* fund as required in Paragraph 25 of the *Rule*, which states, "Local fraternities should contribute toward the expenses of the higher fraternity councils."

Also, Paragraph 3, Article 30 of Chapter III of the *General Constitutions* states, "...The brothers and sisters ought to provide the means necessary for supporting the activities and the operations of the fraternities at higher levels, both by their financial assistance and by their contributions in other areas as well."

And last, but not least, the Guidelines for Deactivating an Established Fraternity, in the *Handbook for Spiritual Assistance* states in Paragraph 2: "A Canonically established fraternity can be deactivated for any one or more of the following reasons." This is followed by a list of seven reasons numbered from 2.1 to 2.7. The item numbered 2.4 states as follows: "It no longer contributes to the common fund or supports the higher level of fraternity." (SFO Rule 25, SFO Gen. Cons. 30.3)

It is thus, imperative, that all the members of each fraternity should be greatly interested that their respective fraternities do not fail to support the regional fraternity with their yearly fair share contribution. A deactivated fraternity can no longer function and will not be allowed to function as a fraternity. The professed members, those who wish to, will be assisted in transferring to another functioning fraternity.

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGIONAL FRATERNITY Per Capita Collections for the Years' 2007 and 2008 As of 6/23/2008

ID #	FRATERNITY NAME	2007	2008	ID #	FRATERNITY NAME	2007	2008
101	Saint Anne's, Fair Lawn	0.00	0.00	112	Holy Name, Little Falls	425. ⁰⁰	450. ⁰⁰
102	Assumption, Wood-Ridge	475. ⁰⁰	425. ⁰⁰	113	St. Peter's, New Brunswick	0.00	370. ⁰⁰ *
103	St. Benedict the Moor, NYC	675. ⁰⁰	650. ⁰⁰	* Includes \$70. ⁰⁰ Per Capita for 2007			
104	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Paterson	125. ⁰⁰	0.00	114	St. Stephen of Hungary, NYC	0.00	325. ⁰⁰ *
105	St. Francis of Assisi, Jersey City	545. ⁰⁰	525. ⁰⁰	* Includes \$175. ⁰⁰ Per Capita for 2007			
106	St. Francis, Hoboken	100. ⁰⁰	200. ⁰⁰	115	St. Thomas More, NYC	650. ⁰⁰	0.00
108	St. Francis of Assisi, Monroe	325. ⁰⁰	325. ⁰⁰	117	La Verna, NYC	100. ⁰⁰	100. ⁰⁰
109	St. Francis Gospel, Pompton Plains	175. ⁰⁰	100. ⁰⁰	118	Cortesia, Lincroft	300. ⁰⁰	300. ⁰⁰
110	St. John Vianney, Paterson	1195. ⁰⁰	0.00	119	Korean Martyrs, NYC	2225. ⁰⁰	150. ⁰⁰ *
				* Includes \$150. ⁰⁰ Per Capita for 2007			
				120	St. Mary of the Angels, NYC	375. ⁰⁰	350. ⁰⁰

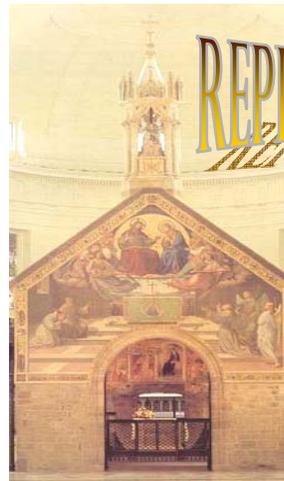
OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGIONAL FRATERNITY

Per Capita Collections for
the Years' 2007 and 2008
as of 6/23/2008

ID	# FRATERNITY NAME	2007	2008
121	St. Mary of the Assumption Pompton Lakes	225.00	0.00
122	St. Louis, Staten Island	675.00	600.00
123	St. Elizabeth, Staten Island	1125.00	1075.00
125	St. Louis, Fort Lee	700.00	0.00
128	St. Stephen's, Perth Amboy	400.00	375.00
129	Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Wallington	0.00	0.00
132	St. Anthony of Padua, NYC * Includes \$150.00 Per Capita for 2007	0.00	300.00 *
133	Little Portion, Hastings-on-Hudson * Partial only, for the Spanish members	550.00	100.00 *
135	St. John Vianney, Colonia	0.00	0.00
136	Porziuncula, East Hanover	225.00	225.00
137	St. Francis, Hackensack * Partial only	425.00	450.00 *
138	St. Conrad, Hoboken	275.00	225.00
139	San Damiano, Sussex	500.00	0.00
143	St. Anthony of Padua, Scotch Plains	420.00	625.00
144	St. Paschal of Baylon, Passaic	225.00	0.00
146	Sacred Heart, Yonkers	1075.00	1075.00
147	St. Francis, Yonkers	425.00	0.00
150	Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Yonkers	0.00	0.00
151	St. John's, NYC * Partial only	2025.00	1000.00 *
152	Saints Elizabeth and Louis, NYC	1250.00	0.00
153	Immaculate Heart of Mary, NYC * Per Capita for 2005, 2006, 2007	2320.00 *	0.00
154	St. Elizabeth of Hungary Perth Amboy	150.00	0.00
156	St. Ladislaus Fraternity	0.00	0.00
161	Saint Anthony, Butler	375.00	375.00
163	Immaculada Concepcion, NYC * Partial only	0.00	130.00 *
164	Mother of God, NYC	180.00	0.00
166	Divine Mercy, NYC	300.00	0.00
167	Mother Seton (EM), NYC	0.00	0.00
168	Servants of God (EM), Bronx	425.00	425.00

TOTAL:

21,960.00 11,250.00



REPLICA OF PORZIUNCULA

A mirror-image replica of St. Francis of Assisi's 13th century chapel, the birthplace of the Franciscan Order, the saint's favorite spot and one of the most sacred places in the Roman Catholic world outside the Holy Land, is taking shape at the National Shrine of St. Francis in San Francisco.

The reconstruction of the *Porziuncula* is being built inside a former gym next to the shrine's church. Workers removed the wooden molds in late January and opened the concrete shell to visitors for the first time. The replica measures 40 feet long by 13 feet wide by 18 feet high, identical to the dimensions of the original chapel preserved in St. Mary of Angels Basilica in Assisi. The workers scheduled to soon finish the chapel are to match the original to the smallest detail, including frescoes over the entrance and altar, the iron gate in front of the altar, the wooden doors and the bronze - inlaid Latin legend at the threshold that reads, "This is a Holy Place."

Porziuncula means "little portion" in Latin and refers to the rundown Benedictine chapel that young Francis restored in the winter of 1206 after he heard Christ call him to go forth and rebuild the church.

Angela Alioto, who is directing the chapel project, traveled to Assisi in March to gather rocks for the facade from the same hill where Francis collected the square stones for his place of worship. This past April, two Franciscan Friars from Assisi, Italy, arrived in San Francisco with an actual stone that was handled by Francis during the building of his chapel more than 800 years ago. This precious gift was encased in a felt-lined leather case bearing the wax seal of the Franciscan Order. The 2.2 pound boulder of pink marble will be permanently installed on the replica's altar in an open enclosure designed so pilgrims can touch it.



The intent of the replica in the city of St. Francis is to capture the spiritual intensity of the original for the benefit of Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Alioto hopes the chapel will become a major pilgrimage site for people of all faiths who are attracted to St. Francis' values of peace, serving the poor, protecting the environment and loving animals. She also feels that it will be a force for evangelizing the Church. That it's going to bring many people back to the Church who, for whatever reason have lost faith. "The bottom line is, this is a place where everybody will be able to come when they lose hope and it's a place where people will be able to pray and have some solace."

The \$2.8 million, privately funded replica is scheduled to open September 26–28, 2008 during a three-day festival of global peace in San Francisco. Popular Franciscan singer Buddy Comfort is scheduled to sing. (SEE PAGE 16)

GREGORIAN *CHANTS*

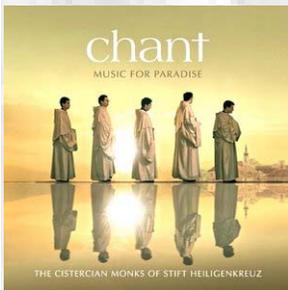
A WINNER

A group of Austrian monks were signed to a major recording contract after submitting a *YouTube* clip of their Gregorian chanting. The professionally edited video begins with a shot of altar candles and then switches to images of monks clad in white habits walking in double file through the ancient cloisters.

Universal Music had put out a call in religious publications for “monks, men of the cloth, and sacred singers” in February of 2008.

Recording executives were inundated with hundreds of demos in response to its advertisements, but said the Monks from the Heiligenkreuz monastery stood head and shoulders above the competition. “I was blown away” by the quality of their singing,” said Tom Lewis, an executive at Universal. “They are quite simply the best Gregorian singers we have heard. They make a magical sound which is calming and deeply moving.”

There are 80 monks at Heiligenkreuz, a Cistercian monastery located in the Vienna woods that dates back to 1133. It is the oldest Cistercian monastery in the world that has continued without interruption since its founding. The monastery is famous for its relic of the True Cross. The monks have described their success as “divine intervention.” The monastery’s spokesman, Father Karl Wallner welcomed the news. “It’s been a fun experience because I didn’t think they would choose us – it was just for fun that we contacted them. It’s a good thing because Gregorian chant is part of spirituality and our life.”



The resulting album, *Chant—Music for Paradise*, released on May 19 of this year, hit the top ten of the UK pop charts, outselling Amy Winehouse and Madonna. It is currently the No. 1 album on the Top Classical Albums chart in the US.

Exults Wallner, “We hope that all who listen to it find strength in those 1,000 year-old melodies,” and stated that the income received will be used to further education of their Cistercian brothers from Vietnam and other poor countries.

To hear their winning demo on the Internet, go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLFN-RVpLtk>



Check out their website at:

<http://www.stift-heiligenkreuz.org/English.kinder-und-jugendfuehrungen.0.html>



PEACE AND COMFORT

Buddy Comfort is a

musician, composer, singer, recording artist, and producer. He is known as a performing artist in the US, Canada and Europe. It was his

first trip to Assisi, Italy that inspired his release of *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*. He has long been described as “one of the foremost practitioners of healing music”, by others as a “cosmic folk artist.” It doesn’t seem to matter who is describing him, for they always seem to create a category that belongs to him alone. In describing his own music, he offers this:

“Can you remember a time when cares and troubles dropped from you like gentle spring rain? In my music it is my hope that you can experience such a time again.”

Although music has always been the driving force in his life, it parallels his love for nature. He considers long contemplative walks a “necessity of life”. He also enjoys photography, films, writing and gardening. Wellness and healing of the whole person have always been a strong interest for him. Throughout the years he has spent valuable time training in alternative approaches to health including studies in herbology, natural healing, and training in bodywork and sound healing. It would seem that the way in which his music has developed has been, perhaps the best way to have blended all of his aspirations.



Comfort, a quiet and gentle man, has had strong feelings for many years around issues involving the environment. He expresses great delight that the early efforts of what seemed to be from only a few in the vanguard are now becoming stronger and more widespread on the planet. He grieves for the many human and environmental tragedies, but chooses to remain hopeful. He states,

“As greed, shortsightedness, selfishness and duplicity run amok, we all have to keep focused and clear and stay committed to our vision.” He goes on to say, “Each one of us has talents that we can use to bring about positive change. I’ve been involved in music all my life... this became more and more the focus of my own work. I had always felt there was a side of man that needed food for his spirit through music.

I’ve spoken out strongly for the benefit of becoming aware of the noise pollution in our environment and the need to consciously surround ourselves with sounds that soothe, nurture, and allow us to steady ourselves - to quiet our hearts and recharge our inner resources. Sometimes that means being in silence. Music can take you on many, many wonderful journeys and paths, and no one can argue against the magical effects of the sounds of delighted laughter!”

His release of *BROTHER SUN, SISTER MOON* on Tellurian Records, received notable acclaim in the genre of top new age vocal releases. To hear previews of his soundtrack, or to purchase, go to:

<http://cdbaby.com/cd/bcomfort>



A DAY OF REST ADOR

With the support of family and friends, in May of this year, California 8TH grader, Jennifer Sekar founded a non-profit organization called, *A Day Of Rest (ADOR)*, whose main goal is to encourage people across continents to take rest, a true rest, and spend time with friends and families. True rest meaning, not driving any type of powered vehicle on October 4TH.

Jennifer researched that keeping one million drivers off the road for that one day will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 10,000 tons. There are 700 million cars worldwide emitting 2.8 billion tons of carbon dioxide. Though Jennifer does not drive—after all, she’s just 13 years old—she is very driven in her goal to have one million people give themselves, and their engines, a day of rest this fall.

Just as important as promising to park their cars, those signing the ADOR pledge will promise to “park” themselves with family and friends on the day of the event. “You can always be without a car,” Jennifer said, “but without family and friends, you can’t really do much. ADOR would be a really good time to strengthen people’s friendships and bonds with their families.” In March 2008, she learned of the Vatican’s list of seven new social sins. “The fourth one was not to pollute the environment,” she said, “and I thought ADOR was a good idea for this.” Her father, Richard Sekar added that October 4 is also the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, a strong advocate for the care of the earth.

She realizes some people have no choice but to drive on October 4, but she said she hopes they will try to carpool or take public transportation that day. She added that she chose a Saturday for ADOR to enable as many drivers as possible to participate. ADOR is collecting pledges at the website, not for money, but for a promise to rest and not drive for one day. She is seeking everyone’s support in promoting ADOR’s effort to make an impact on the environment. Visit their website at: www adayofrest.org 

The Solemnity of St. Clare of Assisi was joyfully celebrated on August 11TH at St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City.

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS MANHATTAN CLUSTER FRATERNITY gathering was standing room only as the evening began with a Eucharistic Liturgy celebration. That the Church was filled with wonderful Franciscan spirit was evidenced by all in attendance as the singing roared to a deafening pitch. Several of the concelebrating friars later commented to me about this, and how incredible it sounded.

Sr. Liliame Alam, FMM, gave a very special reflection on St. Clare of Assisi, which afterwards had many commenting on how wonderful her talk had been. The stillness in the Church was equally amazing, as everyone was intent on listening to her every word. One SFO commented, “It was so quiet you could hear a pin drop while she spoke”, and many of us admitted that we wished she would have continued on.

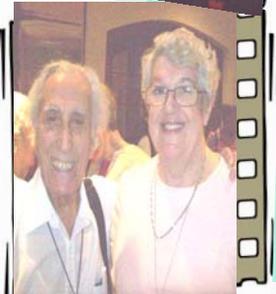
THE SOLEMNITY OF ST. CLARE



In talking with Sr. Liliame afterwards, she promised that she would send her reflection for publication in *Troubadour*.

After the Mass, a joyous fraternal celebration was held in the St. Clare Room where coffee and many goodies were shared. There were so many seculars and friends waiting to get in that a long line formed.

Friendly faces, good food, and the fraternal gathering of our three Franciscan Orders all united for one special day—Saint Clare must surely have smiled down upon us.



ARTICLE AND PHOTOS—APG, EDITOR



THE Chinese SFO

All Catholic religious orders are banned in China, including the SFO. The local fraternities legally function only as a parish organization for the faithful. They are forbidden to contact each other and are not allowed to form regions or a national fraternity. Belonging to the SFO guarantees that you and your family will be discriminated against in everything from promotion at the workplace, getting your kids into college, etc.

In spite of these obstacles, many Chinese have elected to follow Christ as a Secular Franciscan. Almost 99% of the SFO live in the poorest parts of China. Monthly incomes are less than two hundred dollars a month, but they are very active and full of the Holy Spirit. They visit the sick, care for the homeless, and pray for those in need. Their prayer books and formation materials are photocopies of pre-war versions. They have no access to items such as Franciscan holy cards, San Damiano crucifixes, and Franciscan Crown rosaries.

When Patrick White, SFO, began visiting local fraternities, he took with him some Franciscan Holy Cards and Crowns that had been donated by his own fraternity in Virginia. He soon discovered that the demand far outweighed his scant supplies.

Some cried at seeing for the first time items that had actually been made in Assisi. Since then, Patrick has always tried to bring at least a small amount of this "Franciscan Gold" on each visit. It gives him the greatest pleasure on behalf of the ten thousand Chinese members of the Secular Franciscan Order to thank you for the many Franciscan religious articles donated. The entire Chinese SFO is so very grateful for this precious Gold.

The Friars operating secretly in China have given them the use of one of their places to use as a "safe house" where they can allow local fraternity leaders to privately meet each other and where they can receive formation out of harms way. But they must pay the upkeep and utilities.

**A NOTE FROM
TOM BELLO**

Brothers and Sisters,

You may know that our NAFRA family has supported, as has the Vatican and the International family, the SFO missionary activities of Patrick and Ying White (both SFO's) living and working in China. I hope and pray that that support will continue. After consulting our National Minister, I wanted to share this appeal (*see below*) with you that I received from Patrick. His actual budget request was less than \$5,000 dollars. Honestly, because of security issues, I cannot share electronically with you (and on the Internet with others not always so friendly) all of their efforts.

If you have any rosary makers in your Region or any Franciscan prayer cards or photos of your fraternity gatherings, you may mail them to me at: Tom Bello, SFO, 1710 Chesterbrook Vale Ct., McLean, VA 22101 or email photos and best wishes at: tbelloso@aol.com.

Please pray for Patrick and Ying and all our missionaries. It was difficult and dangerous work in the beginning and is still now. Please pray for the conversion of China!

Peace and love, Tom



Hi Tom,

A friend in need, is a friend indeed!

I know you are preparing for the important leadership meeting. I hope it goes well for the wonderful SFO sisters and brothers in the USA.

Please pass on to them a fraternal greeting from not only Ying and myself, but also from their Sisters and Brothers in China who they are presently supporting.

When visiting the Chinese SFO, I never fail to tell them about this overseas support. They are always so curious how the American SFO's live out their vocations.

I attempt in my limited fashion to give them some idea, but you know, one picture is worth a thousand words.

As I was following up on this article, SFO National Fraternity Vice Minister, Tom Bello, SFO, was kind enough to share with me the following letter from Patrick. It should make us pause to reflect how blessed we are in this country where we are able worship freely wherever and whenever we want without fear of persecution or repercussion. Makes one think about how small our excuses seem when we miss out on the opportunities to worship and fraternize together whenever possible. **—APG, EDITOR**

Maybe you can ask some of the Sisters and Brothers for a small photo story of their fraternities and some of the things they do as Franciscans. We can translate it into Chinese.

We also need supplies, like Franciscan Holy Cards, Crown Rosaries, small San Damiano Crucifixes etc. If someone could launch a drive to collect these on behalf of the Sisters and Brothers in China, we can find a way to get them here. The Chinese SFO are not allowed by the Government to openly procure these, so you can imagine the simple joy when they receive some from

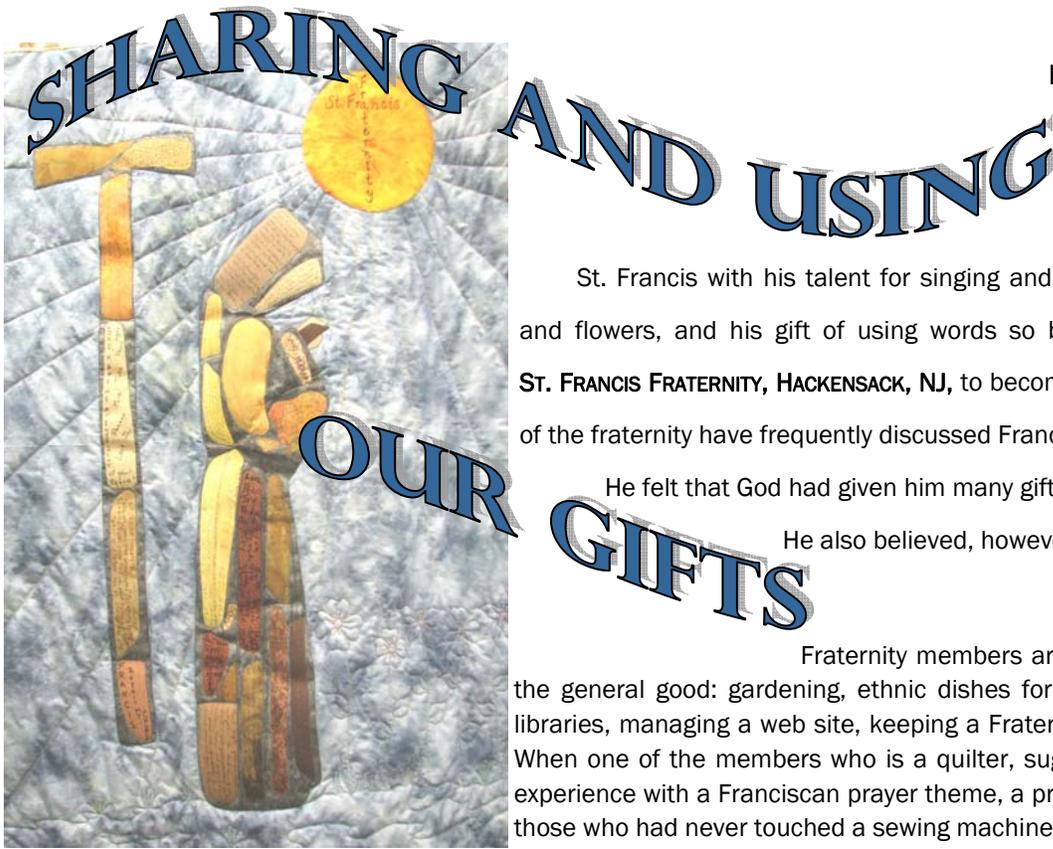
the American SFO. I have some now donated from fraternities in our own region, but supplies are running low.

Concerning the ever present problem with finances, I am enclosing some information for your use. You can share it with the core leadership if you feel it will help. We are desperate! Help! Let me know what more you need from us here. You are in our prayers.

Please stay in touch. We need to know that we are not alone.

In Francis and Clare,
Patrick

LUCY STAMILLA, SFO AND FLORA HAND, SFO
PHOTOS: DIANE MENDITTO, SFO
ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY, HACKENSACK, NJ



St. Francis with his talent for singing and dancing, his love of nature and animals and flowers, and his gift of using words so beautifully, served as inspiration for the **ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY, HACKENSACK, NJ**, to become involved in a special project. Members of the fraternity have frequently discussed Francis' eagerness to share his gifts freely.

He felt that God had given him many gifts which made him the person he was.

He also believed, however, that those gifts were not his alone.

Fraternity members are always willing to share their talents for the general good: gardening, ethnic dishes for our pot-luck dinners, sharing from their libraries, managing a web site, keeping a Fraternity scrapbook, acting, singing or sewing. When one of the members who is a quilter, suggested that we have a "banner-making" experience with a Franciscan prayer theme, a project evolved that included all of us, even those who had never touched a sewing machine or iron before.

And so it happened. We planned an evening where we would all work together to make a banner which would express our own prayers through the words spoken so eloquently by our Seraphic Father Francis. All members were asked to bring brown fabric of different shades and sizes. These fabric pieces were cut and ironed onto a fusible web, then we each wrote a prayer on our piece of the fabric -words taken mostly from Francis- and then they were ironed onto an image of a Franciscan robe and a Tau cross. (SEE INSET A) In essence, we created a mosaic of prayer. The quilter then used her skills to complete the banner and had it mounted for display. Now, it has a place of honor at each of our meetings or special occasions.

This was an inspired project because it brought the entire fraternity together. Each person was able to use his or her talents for the good of the entire group. We loved working on it, sharing it with others, and we especially enjoy reading the beautiful and inspirational sayings lovingly written on it. That is true Franciscan joy!

This project developed when one member offered her gift for the use of the whole community; like Francis, she felt that her gift was not hers alone, but was meant to be shared by all. The following prayer expresses so beautifully the concept of sharing our talents, appreciating our gifts, and giving thanks:



O COME HOLY SPIRIT,
Light the fire in my heart
to be a good Steward.

You have blessed me with
all that I am and all that I have.
Help me to recognize the need to
share my time, talents and treasures.
Help me to know Your will,
and to choose to do Your will
in the spirit of love, as Jesus did.
And when I fail, I will trust in Your love
and forgiveness to inspire me to try again.
These things I ask in the sweet name of Jesus.
Amen.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- *The Troubadour* is published quarterly by *Our Lady of the Angels Region* of the Secular Franciscan Order. If you wish to receive this newsletter, please send your name and complete address to: Region Database Administrator, John Ras, SFO, 50 West 97th Street, Apt. 3-P, New York, NY 10025-6005. Don't forget to notify John when you've had a change in address, phone, or membership status.
- The right to copy all material printed in *The Troubadour* is granted so long as you credit *The Troubadour* and author.
- With the number of submissions increasing, not every article received may be published in the upcoming issue. When this occurs every consideration is given for publication in the following issue.
- When submitting articles, don't forget to state fraternity name and location, as well as your own name and address.
- All photos, disks and original art will be returned upon publication completion.

—APG, EDITOR

THE TROUBADOUR

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2008—09

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THE TROUBADOUR

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