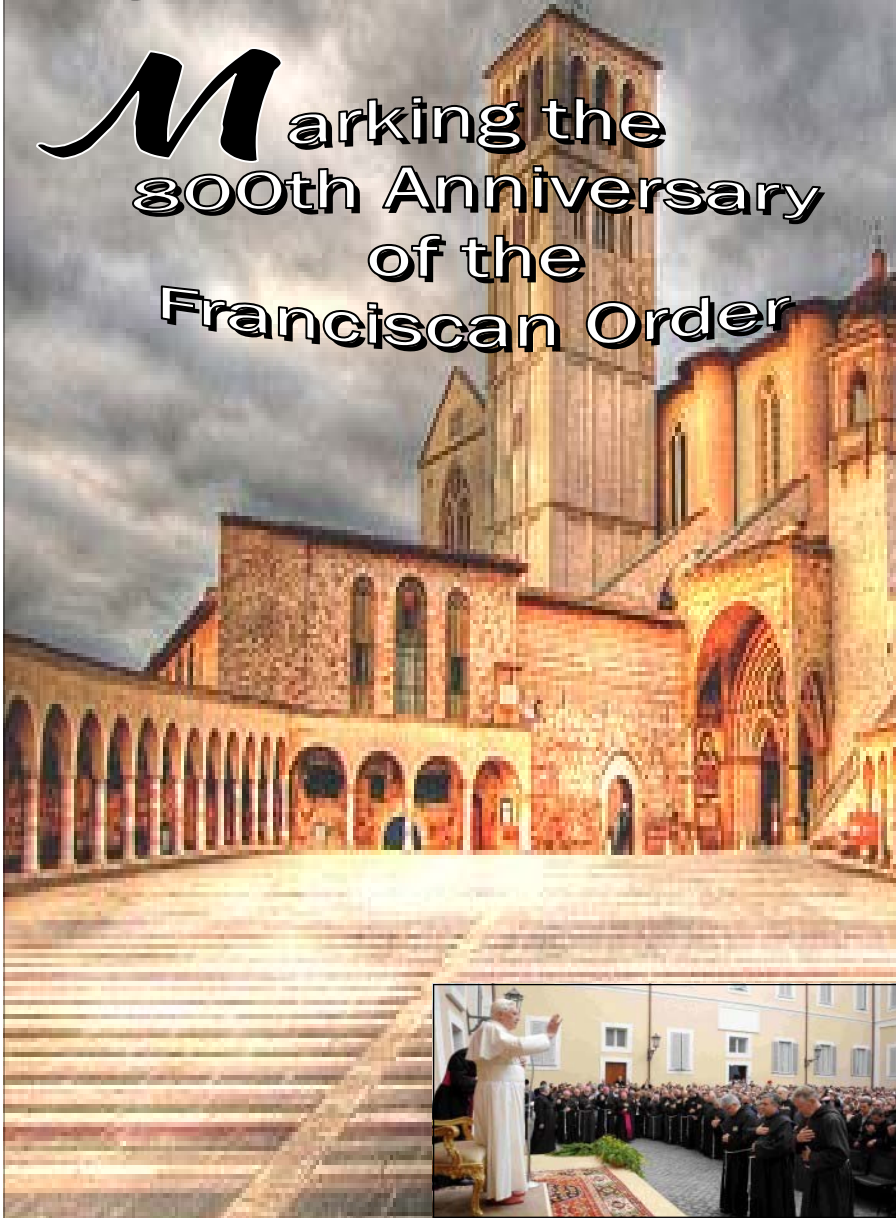


# Marking the 800th Anniversary of the Franciscan Order



**EARLIER THIS YEAR**, in the courtyard of the Apostolic Palace in Castelgandolfo, Benedict XVI received members of the Franciscan Family who are commemorating the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Order's founding. "The dozen friars who first followed St Francis of Assisi, have over the centuries become a multitude scattered throughout the world. ... And I, as Pastor of the universal Church, wish to thank God for the precious gift you yourselves represent for all Christian people.

Pope Benedict then went on to describe the focus of his meeting with the Franciscans as "the Gospel as a rule for life", and he highlighted how Saint Francis "viewed himself entirely in the light of the Gospel. This is his appeal. "Thus the 'Poverello' became a living Gospel, capable of attracting men and women of all times to Christ. However, the Pope noted, "Francis could simply not have come to the Pope ... Yet his first thought was to place his own and his companions' development in the hands of the Bishop of Rome, Peter's Successor. This fact demonstrates his true ecclesial spirit. From the beginning he saw the little 'us' he had begun with his first friars as being part of the great 'us' of the one universal Church. "Eight centuries have passed and today you wish to renew your Founder's gesture", the Pope told his audience. "You are all children and heirs of those origins ... Go forth and continue 'to repair the house' of the Lord Jesus Christ: His Church".

"Yet there is another ruin, an even more serious ruin: that of people and of communities", he said. "Like St Francis, always begin with yourselves". "If you prove capable of renewing yourselves in the spirit of the Gospel, you will continue to help the pastors of the Church...Now as at your beginnings,

this is what the Pope expects from you".



VOLUME 11 • ISSUE 44

## C O N T E N T S

<b>2</b>	HOW DO WE ATTRACT NEW MEMBERS?
<b>3</b>	REGIONAL CALENDAR CLUSTER MEETINGS
<b>4</b>	OLTAR SURVEY & PER CAPITA INITIAL FORMATION RETREAT
<b>5</b>	BLESSED ANGELE DE FOLIGNO

<b>6-7</b>	ANNUAL OLTAR RETREAT
<b>8-9</b>	RECOGNITION RITE OF ELECTIONS
<b>10</b>	A SECULAR FRANCISCAN'S JOURNEY INTO MISSION WORK
<b>11</b>	TAKE THE H2O CHALLENGE
<b>12</b>	ONE IN FRANCIS POETRY: THROUGH YOUR HANDS
<b>13</b>	SAINT CLARE

<b>14</b>	PRAY AND SING THE WORDS OF ST. FRANCIS AND ST. CLARE
<b>16</b>	ENTERED INTO ETERNAL LIFE
<b>17</b>	SCHEDULE PRAYER INTO YOUR DAYTIMER A SIMPLE PRAYER
<b>18</b>	THE LAST MARVEL
<b>19</b>	FREecycle RECYCLING: GIVE AND TAKE STYLE GREEN LIVING EXPO

### INVITATION

You are invited, dear family, to submit articles about your fraternity activities and membership; about your individual and collective expertise, your projects and achievements; wherever you see the spirit of St. Francis at work in the world, in your lives, and in your hearts—we want to hear from you. Come share with us.

—APG, EDITOR



# How Do We Attract New Members?

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Francis and Clare,

May the Lord give you Peace!

In my visits and conversations with our sisters and brothers throughout our Regional Fraternity, I am often faced with the dilemma felt by so many of our local fraternities—the promotion of the Secular Franciscan Order and new vocations. How do we attract new members? How do we attract potential inquirers more effectively? Is there some secret program or set of techniques that will produce an interest in the SFO? The short answer is, no, there is no special method. While well planned and well advertised inquiry nights and excellent public celebrations of profession at Sunday Mass in the parish can be effective means of putting our Order before people to encourage interest, the most important thing we can do is to live our Franciscan vocation boldly and convincingly in order to attract people to our way of life. Francis did not have a program to attract people to the Order—he lived his vocation to Gospel life with every fiber of his being and this is what brought people to seek him out.

I am reminded of the words of Pope Paul VI which were addressed to the members of the Council for the Laity in October of 1974 and which he quoted again in his Apostolic Exhortation, “*Evangelii Nuntiandi*,” the watershed document on Evangelization, when he said, “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” How effective is our individual and collective Franciscan witness? Can people clearly “read the Gospel” in the way we live out our vocation or are we satisfied with anonymity and mediocrity?

Our Rule itself, in Chapter 2 no. 14-15, calls us to bold action:

Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively.... Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.

What courageous initiatives have you undertaken as a fraternity recently?

Last November our Order concluded its General Chapter in Dobogókő, Hungary. Among the conclusions of the Chapter we read the following:

## **PRESENCE IN THE WORLD**

In this Chapter, the necessity for Secular Franciscans to fully assume their secularity has emerged with strength: to be present in the world with their “being” and their “doing” - in the political debate and in the courageous forming of just laws, in the promotion of the rights to life at all its stages, from conception to natural death - and to ensure that all those who suffer, those who are poor and those who are marginalized may enjoy conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.

*(Rule 13 & Gen. Const. 18 &19)*

For too long, the Order has not fully entered into its active mission in the world. The moment has come, and it can no longer be deferred, to “enter the city”, to exercise with determination and full visibility its own responsibilities to witness, and to promote justice, peace, human rights and the integrity of creation.


It is essential that the entire Order be present as such, and not only through the worthy initiatives of its individual members. It is important to re-discover the importance of recognizing oneself and of being one single body for the service of the Kingdom and the world so that it may be redeemed in Christ.

The Order has begun to become fully aware of its world dimension and of the potential socio-political pressure that it can exert. It is its duty to use this presence in every corner of the world to effectively operate everywhere, and to become visible by promoting strong and courageous initiatives, including those in national and international government organizations.

Outside the Order, it is necessary to establish effective and permanent contacts with the Church in all of its expression. Particular attention should be given to the local Churches so as to realize an active presence in the Church where people actually live their lives. It is deemed important to identify contacts and ways to establish a fruitful collaboration with Catholic Third Orders, with non-Catholic Franciscan Third Orders and with all ecclesial movements and other movements of good-will that share the objectives of the SFO.

The moment has come to be courageous and visible for the service to and the witnessing of the Franciscan charism. For this reason, at all levels, the Order must take up its own responsibilities to be actively present in all the qualified social events and in the promotion of human rights, as well as Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. The privileged instrument to achieve this end, which must be supported in every possible way, is Franciscans International.”

This is a clear and unequivocal call and a challenge to each and every local fraternity. It should form the basis for discussions at the Regional and local levels—in our Councils and in our on-going formation programs. Both individually and collectively we are being summoned to effective and bold initiatives in witnessing to the Gospel.

I invite you to visit the website of the International Fraternity at [www.ciofs.org](http://www.ciofs.org)  in order to read the Chapter Conclusions in their entirety making them a part of your fraternity's study and deliberations. Let it form an “examination of conscience” for us. What are we doing and is it working? How are we going to respond to this summons?

I am convinced that, as our fraternities become more effective as a collective public witness to the Franciscan Vision, people will seek us out. We are the Franciscan Movement—so let's move!

Fraternally,

Ron Pihokker, SFO  
Regional Minister

 Check our website often for Calendar updates at <http://ourladyoftheangelregion.org>



**FRIDAY—SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11-13**  
OLTAR INITIAL FORMATION RETREAT  
FOR INQUIRERS & CANDIDATES — SEE PAGE 4 FOR DETAILS  
BEACON, NY

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9-11**  
OLTAR REGIONAL RETREAT —SEE PAGE 7 FOR DETAILS  
MOUNT ALVERNIA RETREAT HOUSE  
WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14**  
OLTAR REGIONAL CHAPTER OF MINISTERS  
9:30AM-3:00PM  
Holy Name Church  
96TH St. & Amsterdam Avenue  
New York City, NY

**CLUSTER MEETINGS**

**NORTH JERSEY MEETINGS**  
SEPTEMBER 19, DECEMBER 5

**MANHATTAN CLUSTER MEETINGS**  
SEPTEMBER 12, DECEMBER 5

**CENTRAL JERSEY CLUSTER MEETINGS**  
SEPTEMBER 19





# Survey Results and Per Capita

With 44  
Fraternities within  
our region, to date only  
34 fraternities have remitted their  
2009 *Per Capita* which was due in January.

Also, of the survey's mailed during February,  
only 33 of our 44 fraternities have responded.

I urge the Fraternities that have not paid their  
*Per Capita* or returned the surveys to kindly do as soon as  
possible. The region may then have an accurate record of its  
membership and the ability to remit its fare share to our  
National Fraternity.

RICHARD SPANA, SFO  
Regional Treasurer

4

# SFO INITIAL FORMATION RETREAT

FOR Inquirers & Candidates

**THEME:**  
**CONVERSION**

**September 11-13, 2009**

**PRESENTERS:**  
REV. RICHARD TREZZA, OFM  
Regional Spiritual Assistant  
RONALD L. PIHOKKER, SFO  
Regional Minister  
VIRGINIA CHIN, SFO  
Regional Formation Director

**LOCATION:**  
SAINT LAWRENCE FRIARY  
180 Sargent Ave, Beacon, NY 12508  
1.845.831.0394

**WEEKEND COST**  
**PER PERSON: \$150.00**  
Six meals (*Friday dinner to Sunday Lunch*)  
Individual room with bathroom  
Fully air conditioned, elevator  
and handicap accessible.

**CONTACT:**  
VIRGINIA CHIN, SFO  
154-67 24 Road, Whitestone, NY 11357  
Cell: 917.699.4823 (*new cell #*)  
Email: Virginia.chin@morganstanley.com

## SFO INITIAL FORMATION RETREAT REGISTRATION FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ CELL \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
SPECIAL MEDICAL OR DIETARY REQUIREMENTS \_\_\_\_\_  
FRATERNITY \_\_\_\_\_  
CURRENT FORMATION PHASE INQUIRY \_\_\_\_\_ CANDIDATE \_\_\_\_\_

Please send registration form & payment to:  
Virginia Chin, SFO, 154-67 24<sup>th</sup> Road, Whitestone, NY 11357

Make check or money orders payable to: *Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity*  
for \$150.00 per person along with this completed registration form.

For more information or to download a registration packet go to:  
<http://www.ourladyoftheangelsregion.org/formation.html>





# BLESSED ANGELE DE FOLIGNO

“May no one find an excuse for neither possessing nor being able to find Divine Grace, for God gives it to all who seek and desire it.”

January 4, 2009 began the seventh Centenary of the death of the Blessed Angele De Foligno, Franciscan tertiary, declared by Pius XII to be the “greatest Franciscan mystic”. In order to experience and participate more fully in this anniversary, let us be guided by a prayer written for her by Pope John Paul II. He addresses her with these words:

“Enlightened by the preaching of the Word, cleansed by the Sacrament of Penitence, you have become the dazzling example of evangelical virtues, wise mistress of Christian judgment and reliable guide along the road to perfection”.

#### EXAMPLE OF EVANGELICAL VIRTUES.

Our Angele is not a member of the privileged group of souls that felt, from childhood or early adulthood, a strong calling to sanctity, committing themselves at once to a life in accordance with the Gospel and sustained by a deep sense of prayer. Angele is a convert, a penitent in every sense of the word. She, herself addresses this point at length in her writings, which depict a woman whose youth was deeply marked by the experience of sin and by an alienating distance from God.

Her conversion was not the result of a startling event, but developed along a difficult and painful road over seven long years. It is described in her Memoirs in the chapter, “Thirty Steps,” dictated by Angele herself to Brother Arnaldo, her confessor and spiritual advisor. Following certain tragic events in her town and influenced by the effective preaching of the minor friars, other religious and by the noteworthy example of the first Brothers and Sisters of Penance, she begins to reject and be disgusted by her empty and dissolute life. She embarks on an upward path, as conscious of her state of sin as she is ashamed of confessing it. Angele only manages to overcome this shame after appealing for Saint Francis’s help. Her prayer is answered and from this complete and liberating confession begins an inner regeneration and a radical reversal in her life’s direction. The date is 1285 and Angele is already 37 years old.

She is rich. She has a husband, children and a mother who has always encouraged her frivolous and unruly life (and maybe even urged her in that direction), all of which are difficult barriers to be overcome when embracing a new way of life. But in the Gospel, as Jesus stresses, when faced with God’s calling, all other duties and attachments must give way: only God can ask Man for an exclusive attachment.



TOMB OF BLESSED ANGELE IN THE CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS AT FOLIGNO

She seeks God’s help so as to be able to live solely for Him and take a vow of eternal chastity. The Lord answers her prayers in a mysterious and surprising way: “At that time, my mother, who was a great impediment, died, followed in a short space of time, by my husband and all my children”. Angele understands that these partings are God’s particular intent for her. But it is not for this that the pain is any less acute.

She, herself says that the death of her two sons made her suffer as though her insides had been torn out. This expression puts a stop to all the bizarre versions of a certain hagiography, that portray Angele as a woman who wished her own children’s death so that she could fulfill her own calling to follow Christ.

Now she is alone, and mindful of the evangelical advice: “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell everything you own, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me” (*Mt 19, 21*), it becomes possible for her to detach herself from material goods. The Lord helps her to overcome her remaining hesitations and resistance and grants her the firm resolve required renouncing all her property, even down to the estate and villa that were dear to her heart and which she had saved till to the last. Like Francis and his first followers, she gives the entire proceeds from the sale of her goods to the poor of her town. Free from family ties and earthly goods, Angele can take off for the highest summits, as a true daughter of our heavenly Father:

“Legitimate sons are those who try to follow their Master in all things, united, submissive to His Passion, that’s to say in poverty, in distress and in contempt, fully knowing that these three things are the foundation and fulfillment of all perfection.” (*Fourth Letter*)

Alongside this will of spiritual refinement, Angele practices what we today call “the service of the poorest”. A few events linked to the services Angele and her trustworthy companion performed in the lepers’ hospital are the signs: one when Angele sold everything down to the veil she was wearing in order to buy some fish for the sick.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Another, more famous, when Angele and her companion drank the sick people's bath water, feeling "a peace of mind, as gentle as if they had just received Communion". What appears to us with our modern sensitivities as an absurd and revolting act, is based on a similar act by Saint Francis who ate from the bowl in which a leper was resting his infected stump.

Now alone, and finally at ease with her desire and growing love for poverty and evangelical perfection, one might think Angele would live her new life calmly. However, this was not the case. The effects of the path of penitence are difficult and painful for her. In this new light, she sees herself more as being responsible for the evil she has caused. The memory of her former failings come back to torment her with ever greater insistence, especially when she contemplates the Cross, she feels responsible for the Christ's death and worthy of hell. However, each time she asks for reassurance, clarity and answers to her doubts, God revives and enlightens her.

**6** At last, six years after her conversion, Angele feels ready to live the ideal of Saint Francis to the full, and with her probationary year completed, she is admitted in Summer 1291 to Profession in the Franciscan Tertiary Order. That same year, with the Saint's day of our Seraphic father approaching, she went to Assisi on the pilgrimage which would become famous in the history of this Blessed Sister. During her trip and stay in Assisi, she received the very great gift of personally experiencing the presence of the Most Holy Trinity.

This very singular phenomenon of grace took place while, totally absorbed, she meditated the request she had made to God through the intercession of Saint Francis: that she might feel Christ's presence vividly, that she might comply perfectly with the Rule of her Profession, that she might die as a true member of the poor. When this mystic episode ended, Angele succumbed to a real despair, full of screams and senseless chatter, to the great disturbance and near outrage of those present.

Among them was Brother Arnaldo, who at first forbade Angele from ever returning to Assisi, he later tried to better understand what had happened. Once convinced that it was indeed a great mystic experience, began putting Angele's words into writing.

Thus was born the Spiritual Autobiography of the Blessed Angele, or Memoirs of Brother Arnaldo. The asceticism of Angele continues; a seamless alternation of suffering, visions and prayers, painful doubts, fears of the devil's snares, penance, fasting and never-ending physical and moral ordeals. In the midst of all these torments, Angele never ceases her search for God, and in a letter to her followers, asks:

"What is the purpose of revelations, visions, feelings, and gentleness?"

What is the point of wisdom, exaltation and contemplation, if man has no true knowledge of God or of himself?" (Second Letter)

During this century of major civilian, political and religious conflict, Angele exerts a lasting influence on her environment. A large group of people begin to form around her, among them distinguished characters such as brother Ubertino de Casale.

As an expert guide in perfection, Angele gives inspired advice to all. Her wise and moderating influence also comes to the fore in the passionate debate among Franciscans concerning the observance of poverty. The "Little poor one of Foligno" knew how to be diplomatic and persuasive, masterful in her control of deviant tendencies; as strict with the false "religious" as with the "laxists", she drew them all back to the true spirituality of the Gospel, for which we can never be truly poor without being humble.

Angele is credited with the foundation and running of a true religious "cenacle". But just as famous were the instructions she sent in writing to numerous people who requested and pleaded for her help, enlightenment, encouragement and solace with their problems, difficulties, doubts and hesitations.

Angele fully fulfilled her spiritual maternity towards them. She herself states:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9—SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2009

# Annual OLIVE RETREAT

MT. ALVERNIA  
RETREAT HOUSE  
WAPPINGERS FALLS, NEW YORK



"God has given me other sons to replace the ones I have lost". Francis, her master and model, speaks in his Testament of the "brothers" God has given him. For Angele, as an expression of her womanhood, these spiritual "sons" are a gift from God. The expressions with which she addressed them in her letters are most gentle and touching: "dearest to my soul - my intimate friends - my dearest..."

And always: "dearest sons", "my little children"... To these sons of her soul, Angele hands out her spiritual experience urging, berating, supporting, encouraging them along the road to spiritual perfection on which she herself was traveling, to reach the "fullness of God uncreated". Blessed Angele is a reliable master guide to prayer: her daily nourishment. She designates it as the necessary means for obtaining "heavenly light" and salvation:

"Without heavenly light, no man can be saved...if you wish to gain possession of this light, pray; if you wish to increase this light within you, pray;

if you want faith, pray; if you want hope, pray; if you want charity, pray; if you want poverty, pray; if you want true obedience, pray; if you want chastity, pray; whatever the virtue you seek, pray. And pray in this way: by reading the book of Life that is the life of the One who is God and man, Jesus Christ" (Instruction II)

Angele is thus a mother in the fullest sense: mother of the children born of her womb and prematurely lost; mother of the disinherited, for whom she sold her earthly possessions; mother to her spiritual sons, who remained at her side till the end. Her final testament letter is touching, dense with thought and enduringly valuable! Conscious of her impending death through divine revelation, she reveals this news to the followers she will soon leave as orphans, and, with maternal affection, gives them a final recommendation:

"My children, make every possible effort to love every human being... Try your utmost to have a love so pure that it is no longer from earth, but from heaven".

Her "transitus", her departure to heaven, is every bit as touching and also highly edifying. Her reverent followers, rush to the dying Blessed sister's bedside in Foligno to hear her final advice and receive her blessing. She blesses "from the bottom of her heart ... all those, present and absent" and prays with the words of Christ on the Cross. The date is January 4, 1309.

*This letter was written to all Franciscans, especially for the members of the Franciscan Tertiary Order, secular and regular, wishing us to recall the character of this Blessed Sister, and deepen our knowledge of her human and spiritual story, in the hope that our Franciscan Family will welcome her invitation to live the mystical and spiritual dimensions of the ineffable union of the soul with God, through love.*



**OLTAR ANNUAL REGIONAL RETREAT • FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9—SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2009**

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# Annual OLTAR RETREAT

**THIS YEAR'S RETREAT WILL BE GIVEN BY SECULAR FRANCISCANS FROM THE STIGMATA FRATERNITY AND WILL FOCUS ON THE BEATITUDES. COME AND MEET YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. COME BE REFRESHED AND RENEWED BY THE EXPERIENCE!**

**PRICE:** The same cost as last year of \$150.00 per person, but space is limited so make your reservations early. Price includes presentations, double room, private bath, and five full meals.

**ARRIVAL:** Friday, between 5:00 and 7:00PM (refreshments, but no supper). **DEPARTURE:** After lunch Sunday.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:** RICHARD SPANA, SFO, RETREAT CHAIRPERSON  
332 WARBURTON AVENUE, HASTINGS ON HUDSON, NY 10706 • PHONE: 914. 478.2010 • EMAIL: [rickspanasfo@aol.com](mailto:rickspanasfo@aol.com)



NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
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FOR DIRECTIONS OR REGISTRATION FORMS, GO TO OUR REGIONAL WEBSITE AT: <http://olangels.tripod.com index.html>  
MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO: *Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity* for \$150.00 per person.  
Send payment, along with this completed registration form, to:



Rick Spana, SFO, 332 Warburton Avenue, Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706

Congratulations to the **LITTLE PORTION FRATERNITY 133, HASTINGS ON HUDSON, NY**, who are celebrating their 25<sup>TH</sup> anniversary this year.

Twenty-five years ago a Secular Franciscan Fraternity was formed that is still vibrant and active today.

Service to the poor in the south Bronx brought people together who found that, through their time and efforts, they began to mean more to each other than just a group of volunteers.

Fraternity member, Toni Maconi, SFO, has written a book that describes the group's activities and the formation of the Little Portion Secular Franciscan Fraternity titled, *Birth of a Secular Franciscan Fraternity*.



This 75 page paperback edition, modestly priced at \$6.95, can serve as an inspiration to and a model for any current or aspiring fraternity.

Copies may be obtained online at:  
<http://franciscanjourney.com/>



**FRANCISCAN FRIARS 187<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER**

Franciscan friars gathered in Assisi this past May for the Order's 187<sup>TH</sup> General Chapter as they celebrate 800 years since St. Francis founded the Order. Representation of 15,000 religious working in more than 113 countries, 181 friars (152 delegates and 29 support personnel including translators and assistants) arrived for the month-long meeting. The chapter ended June 20.

Daily briefings of the complete chapter may be viewed at:  
<http://www.icprovince.org/> (click on "latest news") **see also**  
<http://www.ofm.org/fraternitas/2009pdf/07-09eng.pdf>



During the second week of the chapter, Father José Luis Rodríguez Carballo, 55, (*near left*) was re-elected to a second six-year term as minister-general of the order by the 152 representatives of the Order gathered at St. Mary of the Angels. He is the 119<sup>TH</sup> successor of Saint Francis.



Father Michael Perry, (*above right*), provincial of the St. Louis based Sacred Heart Province, was elected vicar-general of the order.

At the invitation of Father José, the Ministers General of the various branches of the Franciscan family gathered together in Assisi on June 8 to address the delegates.

Each of the General Ministers spoke to the Chapter about the charism shared by the many members of the Franciscan Family. Each one praised Fr. José for his collaboration with them. They pointed to the recent Chapter of Mats as an expression of that collaboration. They called for a continuation of this spirit. The General Ministers also commented on the theme of the Chapter, "Proclaiming the Gospel Throughout the World" as an inspired contemporary witness to our common Franciscan vocation.

(*near right*) Joining the delegates for the morning session of the Chapter were Fr. Marco Tusca, OFM Conv, Fr. Mauro Jöhri, OFM Cap, Fr. Michael Higgins, TOR, and Encarnación del Pozo, SFO. The delegates appreciated their words and welcomed them to our assembly with sustained applause. The Ministers General joined the delegates for a festive dinner."



(*near left*) Following their address, the General Ministers gathered with the new administration of the Order for a photo in front of the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli.

(*near right*) Fr. José made the *Profession of Faith* as Cardinal Martins witnessed the profession, and later gives Fr. José the Seal of the Order.



Afterwards, newly re-elected General Minister receives congratulations and a sign of peace from each of the friars gathered (*above right*) Fr. Robert Campagna, OFM, Immaculate Conception Province, embraces the General Minister.



**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL OFFICERS.**  
 Let us pray that each may be led by the Holy Spirit in their leadership roles in the Secular Franciscan Order.  
 —APG, Editor

**ST. PETER'S FRATERNITY 113, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ**  
 CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS HELD MARCH 7, 2009

THE NEW COUNCIL:  
 Minister: MARY FRANCES REAVEY, SFO  
 Vice Minister: EVELYN LEHR, SFO  
 Secretary: SANDY CUNNINGHAM, SFO  
 Treasurer: SAL BONFIGLIO, SFO  
 Formation Director: PENNY GLEASON, SFO  
 Assistant Formation Director: KAY FRANCIS, SFO  
 Councilor 1: DEBRA KUBECK, SFO  
 Councilor 2: MARTIN GLEESON, SFO

PRESIDER OF ELECTION: RON PIHOKKER, SFO  
 FRIAR WITNESS: FR. RICHARD J. TREZZA, OFM

**SERVANTS OF GOD (EM) FRATERNITY 168**  
**YONKERS, NY**  
 CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS HELD JUNE 10, 2009

THE NEW COUNCIL:  
 Minister: TOM SCHEURING, SFO  
 Vice Minister: DEACON EDWARD CASE, SFO  
 Secretary: ANGELA SCANNAPIECO, SFO  
 Treasurer: JANET TORCHIA, SFO  
 Formation Director: LYN SCHEURING, SFO

PRESIDER OF ELECTION: RICHARD SPANA, SFO  
 FRIAR WITNESS: FR. RICHARD J. TREZZA, OFM



**ST. ANNE'S FRATERNITY 101, FAIR LAWN, NJ**  
 CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS HELD MARCH 16, 2009

THE NEW COUNCIL:  
 Minister: ANGELA RODIN, SFO  
 Vice Minister: DOROTHY PYRYT, SFO  
 Secretary: ANNI WEISSHAUPT, SFO  
 Treasurer: VINCENZA REALMONTE, SFO  
 Formation Director: ANTHONY MARINELLI, SFO

PRESIDERS OF ELECTION: RON PIHOKKER, SFO AND DIANE MENDITTO, SFO  
 FRIAR WITNESS: FR. RICHARD J. TREZZA, OFM

L-to-R: Angel Rodin, SFO, Minister; Dorothy Pyryt, SFO, Vice Minister; Anthony Marinelli, SFO, Formation Director; Anni Weisshaupt, SFO, Secretary; Vincenza Realmonte, SFO, Treasurer.

**ST. JOHN VIANNEY FRATERNITY 135, ISELIN, NJ**  
 CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS HELD MAY 17, 2009

THE NEW COUNCIL:  
 Minister: DOLORES JULES, SFO  
 Vice Minister: SARA BOGH DAN, SFO  
 Secretary: JOHN B. MASTROBUONO, SFO  
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PRESIDERS OF ELECTION:  
 DIANE F. MENDITTO, SFO AND ALEX KICZEK, SFO  
 FRIAR WITNESS: FR. JOSEPH KUBIAK, OFM CAP



L-to-R: Dolores Jules, SFO, Minister; John Mastrobuono, SFO, Secretary; Paul Di Lena, SFO, Formation Director; Fr. Joseph Kubiak, OFM Cap, Spiritual Assistant; Francesca Imelda Manalo, SFO, Treasurer.  
 Seated in Front: Sara Boghdan, SFO, Vice Minister.

# A Secular Franciscan's Journey



BY ALEXANDER KICZEK, SFO

## Into Mission Work

My company offered a course for people who were close to retirement that stated that as people live longer it is possible to spend as much time AFTER work as you did working. The course strongly urged that one should prepare for that period of life carefully. Next my son challenged me to do something worth as much as when I was working. This sounded strange to my ears as my perception of retirement was one of relaxation.

As a Franciscan I asked myself what the Gospel (paraphrased) says to my heart. If one gives a cup of water in My Name, he gives it to Me. So I set out to be a volunteer water engineer for developing countries. My company then asked me what it would take for me to stay an extra year before retiring so I could train my replacements. OK, send me to school for water engineering and Spanish lessons.

The Spanish lessons were excellent- one on one, but as a troubleshooter I ended up not getting enough lessons for me to be even mildly proficient in Spanish. The water engineering was a different story, I was able to make up classes I missed by getting notes from other students- and the teacher was himself a troubleshooter and was very understanding and supportive. At the end of the school year, I got a great letter from the teacher to use as my introduction to agencies that do water work in developing countries.

10

Getting started was difficult—how do you get an agency to trust you to work for/with them?

I sent out E-mails to many agencies with no takes. My experience with India was that volunteers are not to be trusted, why would someone do for free what you can make money for?

Finally, Mercy Corp. International said that an NGO (non governmental organization-aka charity) in ES (El Salvador) would like an engineer to come and teach several villages how to maintain their water systems.

As a troubleshooter for my company I'd accrued many airline miles—exchangeable for free air tickets—so I booked tickets to San Salvador

...and my adventure began.

The plane was full of college students who were donating their spring break to help clear the rubble from ES's 2001 earthquake.

I was greeted there by man from Mercy Corp, whose wife worked for the UN. Their previous assignment was in Kosovo. As I slept on a foldout cushion on their marble floor, my bed shook. Strange, how could my bed shake if I'm on marble? Oh, I get it—it is another earthquake!

As we drove from San Salvador out to the country, we passed rubble from the buildings that were toppled. Half the highway we traveled on was "down the mountain". The first village we stopped at was one that had been built with US AID funds to replace homes that had been destroyed by *Hurricane Mitch* in 1979.

There was one electric plug for the whole village and that was to power the water pump. Using that plug and a projector we gave our presentation. My host had translated my slides into Spanish and gave the presentation. The villagers then asked questions which, through him as translator, I was able to answer. This was repeated in three other villages. Once this face to face contact was made, subsequent visits to ES were easy to establish.

ES is the 2<sup>ND</sup> poorest country in our hemisphere after Haiti. All the surface water is contaminated with detergent (clothes & body washing in the river), animal droppings & fertilizer. Safe water can only be obtained from deep wells (100 feet +) or protected springs.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

# Did You Know?

The main exports are coffee & sugar, both of which make plantation owners rich. Workers are only paid for days worked and then only \$5/day.

The next four visits to ES were as an engineer for a Mercy Corp Team commissioned to built 1000 homes using US AID money and working with a local NGO- ADHU (Association for Human Development). I helped set up headquarters both in San Salvador and in San Antonio de Mont. This village reminds me of Lourdes. Pilgrims come here from all over ES to the shrine of St. Anthony. All about the Church are places to eat and religious goods vendors. My bed there in San Antonio was 10 feet from the main tractor trailer route through the state of Sonsonate.

US Aid's rules state that any home built has to have safe water within a 1/2 kilometer of the house. My functions were to train their staff, recommend upgrades to existing wells to make the water safe (examples: concrete pads to drain water away from the well & fences to keep out animals). In all I recommended 13 places to dig wells - all of which hit water! Some were in such remote locations they could only be dug by hand. Three were drilled wells - done by LWIES (Living Water International ES).

LWIES has as its director a Catholic from San Antonio Texas married to a Muslim wife. They took their entire wedding gift money and invested in a used water well drilling rig and drove it from Texas to ES. In my 9 trips to ES so far, I've had the privilege to assist LWIES crews in drilling two wells; one for an orphanage nearby San Salvador's airport, and one in a remote village.

Besides water work, ADHU has me do much more. As a 6'2" American, I represent Catholics from America that care about the plight of the poor in ES. Our Fraternity runs an annual church supper and the money we generate is used for school supplies. In ES education is free, but for a family making \$500/year, uniforms and notebooks etc. are a huge burden. I got to distribute the supplies our Fraternity had paid for: pencils, pens, a calculator, notebooks and a bolt of white and a bolt of blue cloth to make either a shirt & pants or a blouse & skirt. At each village we were expected to eat (6 lunches!) and our truck came back to San Salvador filled with fruit given in thanks. Steak there is a big treat- range fed and absolutely delicious, but since it is not aged so the enzymes can break down the muscular fibers, the meat is TOUGH!

I've been to weddings, bridge dedications and festivals in El Salvador. I've only slept in a hotel one night in all my visits. When I dug a well, we slept in a community room.

At 5:00 AM the corn mill gets turned on so people can make their tortillas. (Good morning!) Another time we slept in a church. We ran 150 feet of cord to a nearby house so we could have a light. I eat whatever is placed before me. Beans, rice & eggs, chicken soup - sometimes even a piece of chicken. Pupas are filled tortillas- and a special ES treat. My favorite mission experience was going by a non air conditioned bus to Guatemala from ES and attending the canonization of Juan Baptista, SFO saint. John Paul II said most of the ceremony in Spanish with 2 minutes in the native Guatemalan Indian language (wow!). The artists there paved the entire way from the airport to the bishop's house with flower petal paintings - curb to curb.



... 66% of the human body is water. (EPA Water Facts)

... 75% of the human brain is water. (EPA Water Facts)

... 80% of all sickness and disease worldwide is attributed to unsafe drinking water.  
(World Resources Institute)

... Every eight seconds a child dies from a water related illness. (World Health Organization)

... 1.2 billion people lack access to clean water.  
(World Health Organization)

... Each year, water related diseases kill more people than AIDS and cancer combined.  
(World Health Organization)

# What Can We Do?

**TAKE THE  
H2O CHALLENGE  
SAVE A LIFE IN 14 DAYS:**

**11**

The H2O Challenge can be done at any time of year. Bring it into your school or workplace in the fall. Many have held it during Lent and Advent seasons. The important thing is to take the challenge.

... Make water your only beverage for just 2 weeks.

... For those 2 weeks, take the money you would normally spend on soda, juice, sports drinks, coffee, milk, etc., and collect it in a special cup. When the 2 weeks is over, contribute the funds to Living Water International:

Living Water International	<b>Mailing address:</b> PO Box 35496 Houston, TX 77235
<b>Physical address:</b> 4001 Greenbriar Drive Suite 200 Stafford, TX 77477	Tel: 281.207.7834 877.594.4426 (LWI4H20)

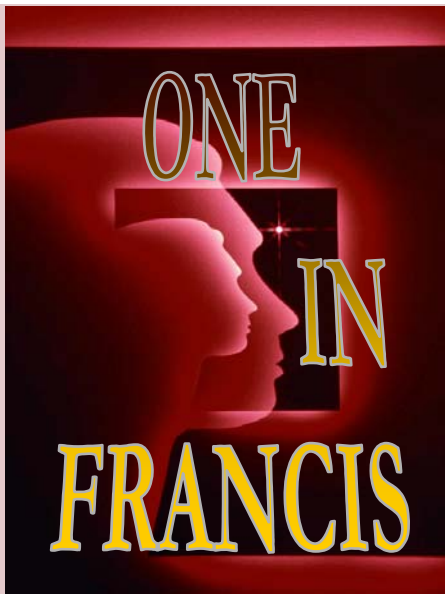
For more information, go to the website at:  
<http://livingwater.theh2oproject.org/solution.html>



Chris Winter, from Living Water International, will help you select a water project to support based on the interests of your group.

You can reach Chris by phone at: 919.349.8190, or by email at: [chris@water.cc](mailto:chris@water.cc)





BY VALERIE MORENO, SFO

“Arnie, I think we need to ask for help.” Tears started streaming as I said the words to my husband. It was a bright July afternoon, though the humiliation in my heart was like a rain cloud blocking any light.

12

Since the loss of Arnie’s 17-year job, serious illness and adjusting to life on social security, managing bills and household expenses had become a challenge.

My talking calculator and I spent many hours juggling money to buy food, medicine and utility bills that seemed to rise every month. When calling available services, we encountered automated systems where the only option was leaving a short voice message.

“My husband and I are blind,” I would explain ten, twenty or more times. “Please call us.” Nothing. “Aren’t there human beings at these places?”

Days passed with no response. Government websites were inaccessible to our email screen reading system. Two hospital deductibles that surfaced after two years were the bitter icing on our financial cake of chaos.

I felt sick as Arnie dialed sister Mely, then acting minister of our SFO fraternity.

“This is horrible!” It was an inward scream/prayer to Jesus.

“This can’t happen, not to us. We’re independent, frugal—this really hurts.”

As Arnie explained our miserable situation, I went to feed our two cats. There was something tugging at my spirit that I’d been pushing away for days. Yes, the situation was upsetting, but it seemed that someone—Francis— was gently whispering in my soul’s ear, “It’s needing help that you’re fighting, it’s pride that’s smarting, not the circumstances.”

I knew this was true. It was so easy being the helper, the one giving. It rocked me back on my spiritual heels to realize how haughty and proud I was. “Some Franciscan I am! Francis, help me to learn the lesson in this.” I thought of the young Francis, turning from the prancing, attention-seeking prankster to the rag clad, joyful singer who begged for food.

Francis never let anything stand in his path, not even his own expectation of reaching Jesus, trusting Him with every part of his life, down to his daily needs.

I realized two things in that moment. One was I could be holding back God’s grace by acting so stubbornly; wanting to do things myself and keeping Arnie from God’s mercy too.

Secondly, I knew I wasn’t alone. Everyone is struggling with something, so we are all in need of one another. I petted Boogie and Munch as they wagged their tails and crunched happily on cat food.

Arnie was teary as he hung up the phone. Love, help and prayers came raining down on us before we could think twice! Hot food was brought by sister Mely and Roque, as well as brother Carl. Both of us were in a daze the first time we sat to eat the wonderful meal. The food was simple and more delicious than ever.

“Wow, Arn,” I gasped, tears coming again. “Remember the bowl of food the first time Francis begged?”

It tasted wonderful; I get it now—because it came from God through the hands of people who cared.”

We cried, we ate, and felt the love of Jesus and Francis in and around us and the care of our Franciscan family. It was as if we were wrapped in a warm rainbow of color and light and we were colors too, blending with the bright sparkle of Jesus and Francis.



WE WANT TO SINCERELY THANK St. John Vianney Fraternity 135, Iselin, NJ, and Franciscan Charities for all their love, prayers, help & support. Pax et Bonum.

To you this

## THROUGH YOUR HANDS

poem is dedicated.



(WRITTEN AS ST. FRANCIS TALKING)

BY ARNIE & VALERIE MORENO, SFO

Through your hands let the world clearly see the loving Son’s pure charity, that feeds the hungry, consoles the weary, and speaks beyond word and theory.

Like a child, come dance with me, running through forest or desert free. Finding love to generously share while trusting Christ with every care. The smile you give, the lives you touch with water, bread, a song that such joy can convey to brighten the darkest day.

Don’t be afraid of pain and tears, I am here and much aware of every step and road you take, and hear your prayer and heartfelt ache.

Little one, lift up your eyes beyond human sight, and puzzling questions in the night, to understand the Son is here in bread and laughter, hope and cheer.

Every need you meet, flowers of praise at Jesus’ feet; take my hand, sweet, humble one, your song of faith with sung. Oh dance, run, shout and sing salvation’s freely bring to every child, big or small, yes, this is truly Love’s bright call.

# Saint Clare

WHILE FRANCIS'S CONVERSION EXPERIENCE WAS DRAMATIC and a radical turning away from a life of sin towards Christ, Clare experienced her conversion more slowly in a quieter way, but no less drastic. Often Clare appears as Francis's shadow in the background, perhaps because more writings by Francis have survived, or Francis's apostolic life may seem more interesting over the contemplative life embraced by Clare. However, Clare's story is integral to the Franciscan family and her life should be given serious consideration.

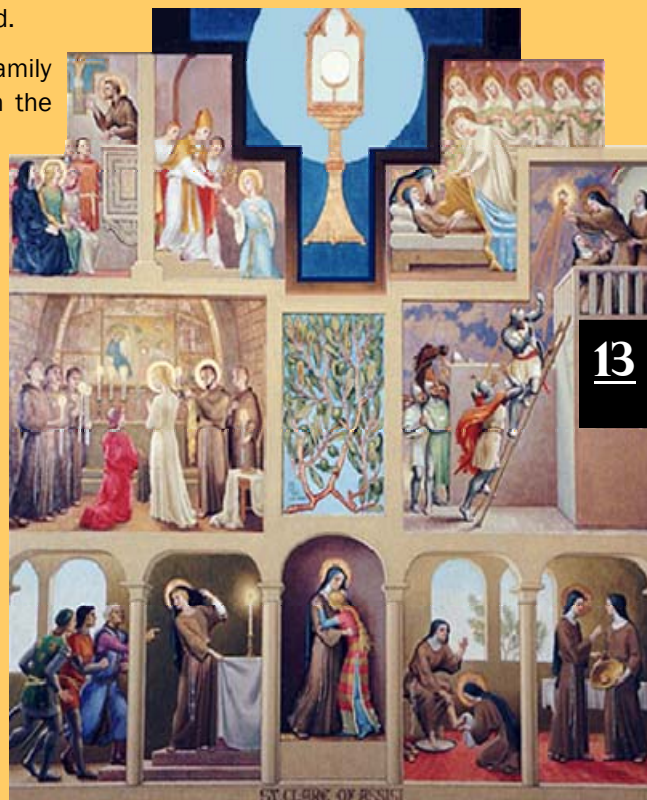
Clare's story is similar to that of Francis's, but is unique as well. Unlike Francis who lived a spoiled, happy-go-lucky adolescence, sources describe Clare as always being holy, even as a child. During her canonization process, she was described by family members and those who knew her while she lived in her father's home as being generous, concerned for others (especially the poor), devout in her faith, and ascetic - as she wore a hair-shirt.

Having witnessed Francis preaching in Assisi, she was inspired by his new message and sought to join his movement. Since original writings are scarce, we may never know what finally convinced her to 'leave the world' and join the young Francis in his new converted life. We can surmise that it was the joy she saw in him as he preached, the truth and force behind his words, and her dissatisfaction with her own life's direction. However, something convinced her to leave the security and comfort of her father's noble household in the middle of the night on Palm Sunday in 1212 and flee to the Porziuncola to meet Francis and his first companions, who promptly gave her the tonsure marking her departure from the world.

An intense struggle would soon follow with her family who depended on Clare's future marriage to strengthen the family position. Unlike contemporary society, a young, medieval woman did not have many options. In that era, upper-class women were educated in the home and their entire childhood was spent in preparation for their marriage, which would be the crowning moment of their lives. The marriage was almost always arranged and served to build up family power. Like Francis, she resisted her family's plans for her, determined in her decision to lead a religious life. However, while Francis may have seemed unsure in the early part of his conversion (he hid from his father in a cave near San Damiano), Clare seems to have been resolute. Also, Francis probably had people around him to support him, while Clare endured the struggle against her family alone. She must have had tremendous inner resolve and fortitude.

Clare intended to live the penitential life like Francis, but, it would take some time for her way of life to take shape. After giving her the tonsure, Francis promptly sent her off to reside in the Benedictine monastery of San Paolo delle Abbadesse in nearby Bastia, which was made up primarily of noble women who entered religious life with their dowries, and led a comfortable life with servants. True to Franciscan poverty, Clare radically departs from this tradition and gives away her possessions before entering. Thus, she renounces her birth right and arrives not as a noblewoman, but as a servant! Then after a brief stay at Sant'Angelo in Panzo on the slopes of Subasio, Clare takes up permanent residence at San Damiano where she lived for the rest of her life as a cloistered Sister. In rebuilding San Damiano, Francis had made the prophecy that someday poor, holy women would dwell there who would glorify God. In the *Second life of Celano* he said: "Most fervently he stirred up everyone for the work of that church and speaking in a loud voice in French, he prophesied before all that there would be a monastery there of holy virgins of Christ." (2 Cel 13). While Francis initially repaired the church with actual stones, Clare and her Sisters would become the living stones that would edify in a spiritual sense not only the church building, but the Order, and also the universal Church.

To some, the fact that such a remarkable saint chose a cloistered vocation might seem a waste. The reality is that, for the most part, medieval women of the 13<sup>th</sup> century were relegated to *casa e chiesa* (home and church) to use the Italian expression still in use today. That applied to both lay and Religious women. Unmarried noble lay women rarely ventured very far from the home, and when they did it was usually to go to church or some other special event, and always with some sort of chaperone.



Once married, a woman's responsibilities were domestic and she became the matriarch of the home.



If a woman entered the monastery, the only option was as a contemplative, since apostolic Orders for women did not emerge within the Church for many centuries. However, the vocation of a contemplative should not be undervalued, as their prayers are immensely valuable. Thomas Merton once wrote that the prayers of one cloistered monk are powerful enough to stop a war.

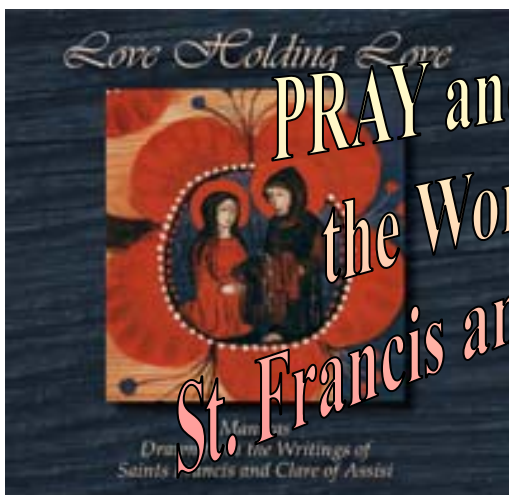
As a Sister at San Damiano, a way of life for the Poor Clares Sisters emerged which emphasized work, poverty, prayer and community. Clare maintained a tradition of diligent work and prayer to avoid idleness (echoing the Benedictine tradition of *Ora et Labora*), however, in a drastic departure, she refused payment for her work!

While the Sisters among the Humiliati and Beguines had developed successful businesses in the cloth trade, Clare literally gives away the fruits of their labor, accepting only alms for subsistence! This is probably the most striking aspect of Clare's story – the fact that she desires to live not as the Benedictines, who owned vast estates – but to own absolutely nothing, nor to accept dowries from new Sisters who entered. A religious community of women who refused ownership was completely unheard of at the time and this request thoroughly baffled Popes and Bishops whom she asked of it. Concerned for their welfare, they did not believe that cloistered women could live evangelical poverty and expect to provide for themselves unlike their male counterparts who had the freedom to move about in the world. However, Clare zealously persisted in her fight for the Privilege of Poverty, which she was ultimately granted on her death bed.

Clare very much wanted her life to be an example. Although their way of life appears on the surface identical to the life of the Benedictine nuns who preceded them, with a little examination, some very distinct characteristics are apparent. They both lived secluded within the confines of the cloister; they both alternated between praying the Liturgy of the Hours and working; they both observed periods of silence. However, unlike the spirituality of the traditional Benedictine monasteries, which was closed off from the world and turned inwards, Clare's vision was that her life and that of her Sisters should be an example of evangelical living in the hermitical life. Their lives would reflect, as in a mirror, the Gospel perfection that was so much sought out in her time.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

14



A double CD disc album titled, *Love Holding Love*, is now available. It contains 26 Franciscan mantras taken directly from the writings of Saints Francis and Clare, background information on Francis and Clare, and a 16 page booklet explaining each chant.

“The gospel will penetrate you through these simple chants, sung over and over again: ‘Jesus, your light is shining within us; let my heart always welcome your love.’ When you work, when you rest, these realities keep echoing within you. Sometimes prayer is an inner struggle, and sometimes it means surrendering one’s whole being. At a given moment, it becomes simply resting in God in silence. That is perhaps one of the high points of prayer.” *Brother Roger of Taizé*

Fr. André Cirino, OFM, who produced the music with Josef Raischl, SFO, said the music is aimed at adding new dimension to the prayer and worship of the Franciscan family. The CD's are distributed by Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs, whose proceeds help offset scholarships for friars from developing countries to attend Assisi pilgrimages.

Cost of the double CD is \$25.00, plus \$4.00 shipping and handling. To order, contact: Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs  
PO Box 321490, Franklin, WI, 53123, phone: 414.427.0570, website: [www.franciscanpilgrimages.com](http://www.franciscanpilgrimages.com)

Also newly released is a special songbook at \$5.95 per copy for the singer's edition; \$8.95, musician's edition, plus S&H.  
To order, contact: Tau-Publishing, 1422 E. Edgemont Avenue, Phoenix, AZ, 85006, phone: 602.625.6183.

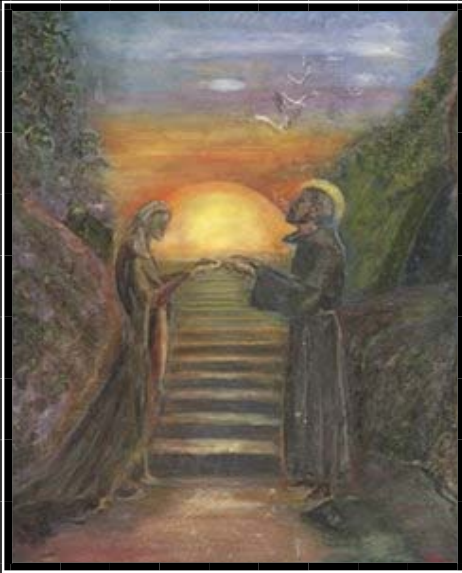
website: [tau-publishing.com](http://tau-publishing.com)

Songs can be sampled on the Assisi Journey website at: [http://assisijourney.com/public\\_ftp/samples.html](http://assisijourney.com/public_ftp/samples.html)



In addition to their dedication to poverty, already mentioned, Clare never wanted to be considered a nun, which implied dowries and property; nor did she want the title Abbess, which implied hierarchy which she was ultimately forced to accept. Clare insisted she was to be a Sister in the style of servant leadership, with no property, and a rejection of classes in accepting members without dowries. Even though she was confined to a cloister (with very stringent rules protecting the enclosure) the lives of the Sisters were open for all to see in a spiritual sense. They lived in spiritual dialogue with anyone who might come to San Damiano for direction. And they were examples to all. In a Gospel paradox, seclusion for Clare is really openness to the world.

So, just as the friars alternated between periods of prayer and apostolic activity – so did Clare – only her apostolic works were more spiritual than worldly. Thus, her life is decidedly Franciscan in that it reflects the complete evangelical life involving prayer and service, despite the fact that she and her Sisters lived in a contemplative cloister.



### FRANCIS AND CLARE

Francis and Clare lived similar and unique lives. They both jealously guarded the charism of poverty; they embraced life in community; in a nod to orthodoxy, each fully complied with and remained in line with Church procedures and regulations; both lived ascetic lives; both were fundamentally Christological in their spirituality – each passionately devoted to both the Incarnation and the Passion.

However, despite the similarities, two distinct spiritualities are very much apparent: Clare's vision is very much marked by her feminine nature, Francis's is masculine. And although there are certainly overlaps, some generalizations can be made. Francis is an active doer – he rebuilds churches, begs, and preaches in a world that is physical and exterior. Clare, on the other hand, remains on the inside of a cloister and her spirituality is characterized by being and interiority. She is a contemplative mother and sister who desires to be in touch with her Sisters and to share their spirituality.

Clare, also inspired by medieval chivalry, is united to Christ in a unique way – the mystical marriage – celestially bound to the noblest of husbands.

Although they grew up in different social classes (Francis—merchant, Clare—noble), both were equally affected by the intense fights they witnessed around them between their two classes (*Minores* and *Majores*), Pope and Emperor, Assisi and Perugia, Christians and Saracens. Francis, having spent a year in a dungeon prison after the battle of Collestrada, would have been deeply marked by the disaster of war, as would Clare have been influenced by her exile to Perugia after the *Minores'* short-lived victory against the Assisian nobility.

Both would, no doubt, have been struck by the contrast between the less-than-virtuous behavior of the rich merchants and the poor begging for scraps of food in Assisi – Francis perhaps more so than Clare. And the sins and new urban social vices would have been scandalous to any committed Christian.

Then, the itinerant preachers who would pass through Assisi intermittently would surely have piqued the curiosity of both who would have heard the call to conversion, repentance, seeking God, and the rejection of vices and corruption of the world.

When the preaching was aimed against Church leaders, their reactions may have been mixed. Could the motives of Popes who wiped out cities during the struggle for temporal dominance have been divinely inspired? And the vices and laxity of worldly clergy and bishops would have been quite apparent to anyone. But, on the other hand, weren't these same Popes and Bishops direct descendants of Peter and Jesus through Apostolic succession and the laying on of hands?

These were the times of Francis and Clare. So, when they both fully acknowledged that something was seriously wrong with their world;

—when they intuitively knew and their consciences screamed out that the answer was not to be found in more money or more power;

—when the contrast between the mercantile way of life and Gospel living grated at Francis too much;

—when the idea of marrying a well-to-do nobleman to give her family more worldly power left Clare feeling empty;

—when the pleasures and joys of the world left them both unfulfilled;

—when the gap between rich and poor, powerful and weak was intolerable to them;

—when they could no longer continue to sit idly by doing nothing;

—then they began to listen in earnest to the words of the Gospel which stirred them into action:

*'If you wish to be perfect...'*

*'Take nothing with you for the journey...'*

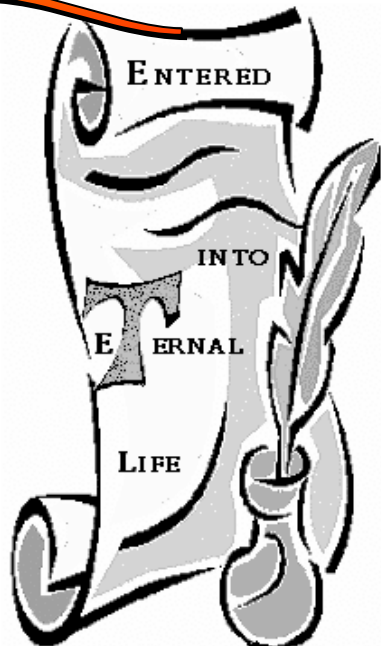
Francis made a decision. He would settle for no less than full acceptance of Jesus' call as in the Gospel - he could not be content with a mediocre Christian life. He embraced literal, Gospel poverty in reaction to the riches of the world; he chose humility in response to worldly power; he took on the penitential habit while renouncing worldly pleasures; he pledged obedience to the Bishop and Pope as a response to the heretics.

Later Clare would hear him preaching and his words would effect in her the same zeal and fervor that Francis had received from the Spirit.

And the fire that ignited them would soon spread throughout Assisi, and the world. Thus the Franciscan movement began.



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 SHARE ETERNAL JOY AND PEACE.



MAY  
THE  
SOULS  
OF THE  
FAITHFUL  
DEPARTED,  
THROUGH  
THE MERCY  
OF GOD, REST  
IN  
PEACE.  
AMEN.

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ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA FRATERNITY, SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ

† DOROTHY BOGDAN, SFO  
Passed away March 10, 2009  
Professed November 15, 2003

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ST. ANTHONY'S FRATERNITY, BUTLER, NJ

† ALICE LORETTA GORMLEY, SFO  
Passed away March 14, 2009  
July 21, 1908 – March 14, 2009

Dearly loved Alice Gormley was a professed member of St. Anthony's Fraternity in Butler, NJ, for well over 50 years. She was 100 years young.



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ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY, JERSEY CITY, NJ

† DEACON JOSEPH J. DEL MONTE, SFO  
Passed away March 1, 2009

It is with sadness that we communicate the passing of Deacon Joe J. Del Monte, SFO, Spiritual Assistant to St. Francis Fraternity, Jersey City, NJ, who died on Sunday, March 1, 2009. Deacon Joe (78) was an exceptional Secular Franciscan.

His obituary from the *Jersey Journal*-March 4, 2009 follows:

Deacon Joseph J. Del Monte, a tireless advocate for the homeless, died Sunday at the age of 78. The founder of *St. Francis Workshop*, a program that provides food and clothing to the less fortunate out of a storefront in the Lafayette section of the city, Del Monte was the first recipient of *The Jersey Journal's Betty Foley Memorial Everyday Hero Award*.

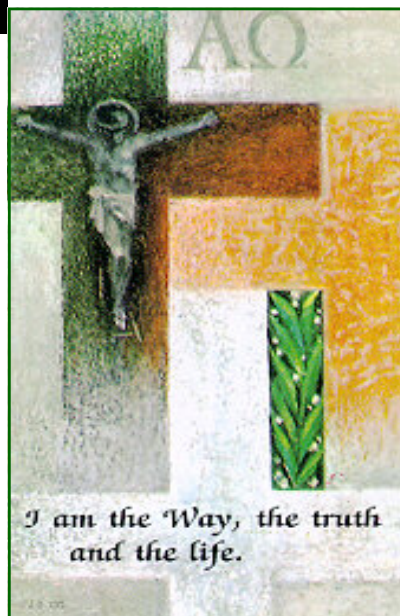
"Anyone who met him was touched by his generosity and his humor," said Del Monte's son, Anthony. As a youth, Del Monte peddled fruits and vegetables with his Italian immigrant father on a horse-drawn wagon.

He became a Marine and fought in the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War. As a result of the conflict, which pitted 120,000 Chinese against 30,000 UN soldiers, he suffered frostbite wounds the rest of his life, his son said. "He was really painfully shy about discussing the battle because he didn't want to relive the horrors. But he did make a vow to the Virgin Mary that he would help those less fortunate," Anthony said. And so Del Monte opened *St. Francis Workshop* as well as soup kitchens.

"He was an advocate of the homeless his whole life," Anthony said. "The day before he died he was barking orders to my brother to pick up bread from the baker who'd donated it to *St. Francis Workshop*, and to make sandwiches to give out Sunday."

A graduate of Seton Hall University, Del Monte became a Roman Catholic deacon in 1976, and later served as chaplain for the Hudson County Correctional Center. He worked as an employment counselor as part of a federal government program. He also taught at Jersey City State College as an adjunct professor, his son said. "He sacrificed a lot of time from his family to help others. Every Thanksgiving we had a homeless person at our table and every Christmas we'd drive out turkeys and canned goods and food to the needy," Anthony said.

"...His ministry will continue through the *Saint Francis Workshop* and his family".





# Schedule Prayer

PRAYER IS A PART OF OUR DAILY LIVES.  
HOLY MASS. LITURGY OF THE HOURS. THE ROSARY.

But too often people turn away from this spiritual conversation. Their reasons are many. No time. Don't know how to pray. A child died. A love walked away forever. Thus forgetting that we share our lives with Jesus leads to heart-breaking loneliness.

It's not as though prayer is a sign of weakness in today's media-driven society.

Bono, the rock star, puts his faith front and center in many of his song lyrics. He prays each day, says grace with his wife and four children at mealtime, reads the Bible during a time he calls the Sabbath hour. Bono has even been known to pray over his audience, echoing the words of *Psalm 116*:

"What can I give back to God for the blessings that he has poured out on me? I'll lift high the cup of salvation. A toast to God. I'll pray in the name of God. I'll complete what I promised God I'll do. And I'll do it together with his people."

## Into Your Daytimer

BY LASHA MORNINGSTAR

Master fiddler and mother of two, Natalie MacMaster and her husband, Donnell Leahy, weave their Catholic faith into their hectic lives. Daily prayer is a given and a wooden rosary is favored because Natalie can slip it around her neck and it won't set off alarms in airports. As she makes the sign of the cross on her forehead just before going on stage, Natalie says, "Oftentimes I say a little prayer for anyone who needs to receive something from the music, that God would work through me to help them – for me to be open to transmit whatever it is that He wants them to receive."

For these two musicians and a multitude of other artists, their art is part of their prayer life. The key is to create a time for prayer. For others, as the parish priest opens the church doors each early morning, one or two searching souls slip in, light their candles and then sink to their knees in front of the Blessed Sacrament to pour out their hearts. Entreaties and gratitudes shared, then comes the crucial part – the listening. For the hardest time in life is when God is silent. Or seems to be.

Others find their prayerful respite on the computer.

Check out *Sacred Space website* at: [www.sacredspace.ie/](http://www.sacredspace.ie/)

This web site, a labor of love by the gentle Irish Jesuits, is available in 22 languages. It takes you through a prayerful meditation each day. Click by click you move into Jesus' presence. The daily Scripture is included and guidance is offered should you want it.

Millions of people from around the world have made use of this computer chapel. And there is a place to leave your intentions. The prayer usually takes 10 minutes or so and when you have pressed the final click, made the sign of the cross and silently said your "Amen," you feel as though you have rested in Jesus' arms. Most have favorite prayers, words that comfort and say what you mean.

The one I murmur before opening the door to leave home each day comes from Father Mychal Judge, the populist priest who died ministering to the wounded in the World Trade Center terrorist attack:

"Let me go where you want me to go.  
Let me meet who you want me to meet.  
Tell me what to say, and keep me out of your way."

PRAY.

Even a hurried blessing or whispered "God help me," matters. For as Henri Nouwen says,

"Through prayer, we can carry in our heart all human pain and sorrow, all conflicts and agonies, all torture and war, all hunger, loneliness, and misery, not because of some great psychological or emotional capacity, but because God's heart has become one with ours."



## A Simple Prayer

BY IRMA CRUSO, SFO

Lord,  
I apologize for all my sins!  
Forgive me for my imperfections.  
Allow me to follow the footsteps  
of my brother St. Francis and St. Clare,  
so that I can be holy and glorify You,  
honor You, adore You,  
and please You,  
all the days  
of my life.  
Amen.



# THE LAST MARVEL

BY  
REBECCA DOEL



**Q:** What do Spiderman, the Incredible Hulk, Iron Man, Wolverine and St. Francis of Assisi all have in common?

**A:** They're all *Marvel* comic book superheroes.

*Francis: Brother of the Universe* was first published in 1980 and went out of print in 2006. According to its author, Fr. Roy Gasnick, OFM, it has sold over one million copies in English and has been translated into eight different languages, including French, Chinese, Japanese, Swahili and two Spanish Versions. Marvel estimates the comic has reached at least 15 million readers.

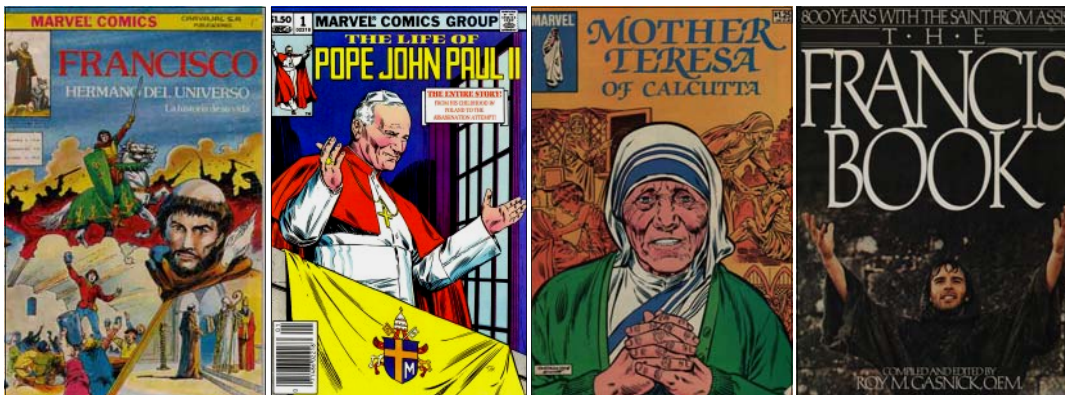
The comic book project began with a phone call by Fr. Campion Lally, OFM, who was serving in Tokyo in the late 1970's, to Gene Pelc, corporate head of Marvel Comics in Japan, and frequent attendee to Mass at the Franciscan Chapel Center in Tokyo. In his article, "Saint Francis of Assisi ... Superhero," published in *The Tokyo Weekender* in November 1979, Pelc recalled some of his initial thoughts upon hearing Fr. Campion's suggestion of how to celebrate the 800th anniversary of Francis' birth in 1982.

18

"Church ... comics ... Saint Francis ... Superheroes?" He wrote, "Well, why not? If we can call Superman and Captain America superheroes in our magazines, then how much more so is Saint Francis! He has shaped events and influenced millions of people's minds, particularly the young, for centuries." Pelc was then introduced to Fr. Flavian Walsh, OFM, Fr. William DeBiase, OFM, and Fr. Conrad Harkins, OFM, director of St. Bonaventure's Franciscan Institute at the time.

The friars were excited at the possibility of reaching a new audience with the project. With New York's Marvel Comics on board and willing to illustrate, publish and distribute its first religious comic book, all they needed was an author. Friars' Flavian and Campion suggested Fr. Roy Gasnick, then the Province's director of communications. An avid reader and trader of comic books in his youth, Fr. Roy said he "jumped at the chance of doing a comic book."

According to Fr. Roy, Pelc informally gave the comic to Pope John Paul II during a private audience with him in 1980, emphasizing that this was the first about a saint ever to be published by a major comic book publisher. Fr. Roy said the Pope asked Pelc in English, "So, why cannot John Paul II be number two?" Shortly thereafter, Marvel published *The Life of Pope John Paul II*.



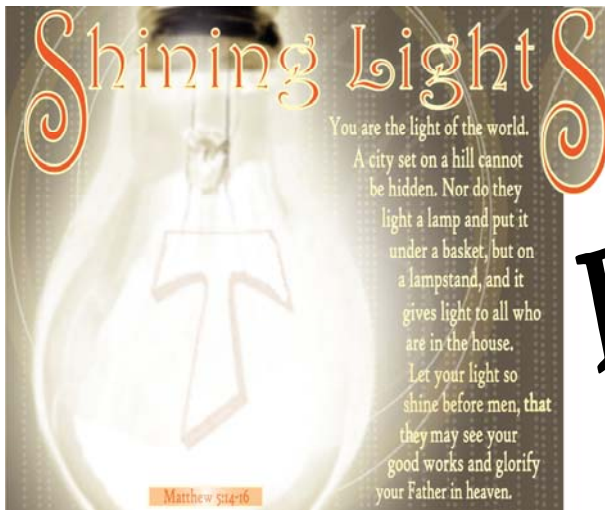
## RELATED PROJECTS

Fr. Roy also worked on a biography of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, a dual publication of Marvel Comics and Holy Name Province's Franciscan Communications Office, earning the title of Catholic Book of the Year – Youth Division from the Catholic Press Association. He said he received "a lovely letter of appreciation from Mother Teresa after she had read my comic book biography."

Fr. Roy also worked with Paramount Pictures in publicizing *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*, with NBC on an hour-long documentary about St. Francis, and with the off-Broadway musical *Francis*. In 1980, Macmillan Publishing Co., published *The Francis Book*, a collection of articles and images about the saint compiled and edited by Fr. Roy.

Pelc closed his article with these words: "So comics and the Church have joined hands. An unlikely couple? Maybe, but made possible by a few people who believe ... and a man whose spirit continues to touch all of mankind 800 years after his birth. A man who truly can be called ... *Francis – Brother of the Universe!*"





# Recycling: GIVE & TAKE STYLE

The *Freecycle* mission is simple: to build a worldwide gifting movement that reduces waste, saves precious resources and eases the burden on our landfills while enabling members to benefit from the strength of a larger community.

*Freecycle*™ was launched on May 1, 2003 by Deron Beal, an environmentalist who at the time was working for a small nonprofit recycler in Tuscon, Arizona. Through his job, he saw firsthand, the items people were discarding and thought that some of the items, while no longer useful to their present owner, would be a welcome gift for someone in need. The give and take idea was massaged, and the freecycle concept took flight. Their motto, “Changing the world, one gift at a time”.

The *Freecycle Network*™ as we know it today is made up of nearly 5,000 groups with nearly 6 million members across the globe. It’s a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving and getting stuff for free in their own towns. The *Freecycle* community uses the power and reach of the internet to connect local individuals looking to give something away with those who would like to acquire it. The guiding principle is that everything be free with no strings attached. It might be described as a virtual yard sale of sorts, where no money ever changes hands, where communities are strengthened and where the environment is preserved.


All groups are moderated by volunteer moderators who monitor the interaction between the givers and the takers, and manage its activity. All of them aim to keep the members safe, *(some of the more obvious rules include forbidding the exchange of tobacco, guns, drugs, or pornography)* and to make the experience rewarding. The rules, along with *Freecycle* etiquette tips are posted online.

In five short years, Deron Beal’s idea is now a success on many levels. The concept has inspired a grass-roots altruistic trend that has spread to over 75 countries and includes thousands of local groups representing millions of members— “people helping people”.

The benefits are **many**—  
it is in giving that we receive.

It is also environmentally benefiting—currently over 300 tons a day are kept out of landfills! This amounts to four times the height of Mt. Everest in the past year alone, when stacked in garbage trucks!

19

Visit **[www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)** to find the *Freecycle* group in your area. Membership is free. 

To sign up, find your community by entering it into the search box on “Browse Groups” to locate one closest to you. Chances are there is a group already established in your local area.



If you are already living a green way of life or you want to start, you’ll have the opportunity to learn about creating, maintaining, and improving life in your own community, in your own backyard, in your own home. The *Green Living Expo* will be the catalyst between businesses, organizations, and consumers looking for information, inspiration, and innovation. It will provide information to help move us in the direction of a lifestyle that is both economically viable and ecologically sound. The *Green Living Expo* will have two full days of programming to make the event both educational and fun. Speakers have been selected for their passion, commitment, innovation, and authority on their “green” topic. There is no additional fee required to attend the programs/lectures/classes.

Through product sampling, product demos, lectures, and interaction with more than 150 exhibitors, you’ll learn about new products and services to incorporate into your life, as well as greener alternatives to products and services already in use.

DATE: November 21-22, 2009 • LOCATION: Suffolk County Community College, 1001 Crooked Hill Road, Brentwood, NY 11717  
HOURS: Saturday and Sunday 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM • TICKETS: \$10 per adult. Kids 12 and under are free.  
Tickets can be purchased at the box office on event day (cash only). CONTACT: Lee Sommers, Event Mgr, 516. 284. 3305

FOR MORE INFO, GO TO: <http://www.greenlivingexpoli.com/tickets.html> 

Special activities for kids make this event a fun day for the whole family! Educating kids today can lead to a greener tomorrow!

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—APG, Editor

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OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGIONAL NEWSLETTER  
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER  
15 DIANE DRIVE  
MORGANVILLE, NJ 07751-1370



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
New York, NY  
Permit No. PI 1976



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

# THE TROUBADOUR

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Wherever you see the spirit of St Francis at work in the world, in your lives, and in your hearts—we want to hear from you. Come Share With Us.



All articles for our next issue must be received by:

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