
Regular Meeting: Sun., Aug. 14th - South Rm., St. Helen's Christian Living Ctr., 2 pm.

Council meeting: Sat., Aug. 20th - Hibiscus Café in Vero Beach at 9 am.

Agenda and Schedule for meeting: 1:30 pm - *Initial Formation sessions before the meeting.*

2:00 - Meeting called to order. Opening Prayer, Reports, Old/New Business.

2:15 - A Blessing of our donations to the Food Pantry by Fr. Richard.

2:20 - Ongoing Formation: Fred will speak on the theological virtue of "Chastity" and how it can be practiced in the everyday life of all Franciscans.

2:50 - Refreshments and break

3:05 - Peggy Rysdyke will speak about the Life of St. Francis by St. Bonaventure

3:25 - Liturgy of the Hours; Litany of the Blessed Virgin (in honor of the Feast of the Assumption) in the Chapel.

4:00 - Closing Prayer and Dismissal

Refreshment Committee for May: Jennie Donlin and Marie Fee - Snacks

Sarah Hardy - Soda and/or fruit drinks

Fraternity Apostolate: Over the years, we have discussed an appropriate apostolate for our fraternity - one we could all participate in - maybe one where we could all roll up our sleeves, don aprons and really accomplish something! Yes!! Let's continue to look for a "big" Apostolate. As we grow, I am certain that such plans will become a reality.

However, years ago, our fraternity agreed to provide donations of food and other necessities each month to the Neighborhood Apostolate at St. Helen's. While not dramatic, it is a good and holy thing we do - rather like the "little way" of St. Therese of Lisieux. Sadly, we have seen a neglect of this "work". In fact, some months, with, perhaps, 20 members in attendance, only 3 or 4 bring a donation to the food pantry. We can, and must, do much better. Early on, donations worth \$15 per member was suggested. This might be a hardship all at once but not if a few dollars worth of groceries are bought on each supermarket trip and put aside to bring to the meeting. We must be found faithful in small gestures before we ask for larger ones.

Beginning in August, we will initiate a blessing of our food offerings. Please put your donation to the Food Pantry in the center of our meeting table. Fr. Richard will bless it and extend a blessing to God's poor who will receive it.

Remember in your prayers: Marie Louis-Jacques, who was received into membership in our fraternity with the Rite of Admission during our July meeting. Thanks be to God! Her deep and abiding faith and her zeal for the Church will, with God's help we pray, be a blessing to our fraternity.

- Do not forget to pray for our recently deceased member, Marcella Richard as well as Gertrude Thomas and Jean Kurtz, our sisters who pre-deceased Marcella. If, as we dare to hope, they are sharing their joy in the presence of God with St. Francis and all Franciscan in

Minister: Helen Caldarone, SFO
Vice-Minister: Fred Schaeffer, SFO
Secretary: Jennie Donlin, SFO
Treasurer: Sarah Hardy, SFO
Formation Director: Gene Caldarone, SFO
Councillors-at-Large
George Thomas, SFO
Marguerite Rysdyke, SFO
Spiritual Assisitant
Fr. Richard P. LaCorte, SFO
Webmaster/Editor: Fred Schaeffer, SFO
Commissioners
Work: Jack Solloway, SFO
Family: Susan Solloway, SFO
Peace and Justice: Sarah Hardy, SFO
Youth: (Vacant)
Ecology: Fred Schaeffer, SFO

Formation

Assistant Director: Donna M. Haro, SFO
Team Member: Caroline DiGennaro, SFO
Team Member: Carmela LaMartina SFO
Team Member: Jennie Donlin, SFO

heaven, our prayers are never wasted but will be of use to other souls.

- Please pray for all our members who find it difficult (for health or family reasons) to attend our monthly meetings regularly - Carmela, Andrea, Jerry. May God, in His goodness, grant them, and all of us, relief from life's problems whether large or small.

From the Minister's Desk: I would like to address several issues this month:

- Fr. Richard will celebrate a special Mass for us on the Feast of St. Francis (Tuesday, October 4th) at his parish in Vero Beach, St. John of the Cross. Please put it on your calendar and make every effort to attend. Guests are welcome, of course. (Time will be announced at our August meeting.)
- As we announced at the June meeting, an increase in the amount of our annual "per capita" dues from \$35 to \$45 was debated and approved at the Regional Meeting in May. The Five Franciscan Martyrs Region has, over the past few years, been absorbing increases approved on the National and International fraternity levels but can no longer continue to do so. We ask that our professed members, who have not already done so, give an additional \$10 to Sarah so that it can be forwarded to the Regional Treasurer. We thank you for your faithfulness and generosity.
- Please read and pray about the item listed above under "Fraternity Apostolate".

Please read this article before the next meeting, so we can discuss it at the meeting. Thanks.

Chastity

From: The Evangelical Counsels and the Secular Franciscan Order by Fr. Michael J. Higgins, TOR (Ciofs 11:21 (2005 May IV)

Apart from the mention of the vow in the first chapter of the Rule for the First Order, St. Francis does not mention chastity in his other writings. Rather, he focuses on the need for the brothers to seek for the kingdom of God and to have a pure mind and spirit.

In several of his exhortations he stresses that God seeks, or desires, people who, with pure heart and mind, are willing to serve, love, honor, and adore him. In the Rule of 1221 he writes:

I beg all my brothers, both the ministers and the others, after overcoming every impediment and putting aside every care and anxiety, to serve, love, honor and adore the Lord God with a pure heart and a pure mind in whatever they are best able to do, for that is what He wants above all things... And let us adore Him with a pure heart. (ER XXII: 26, 29)

St. Francis repeats this challenge in the Second Letter to the Faithful, a document addressed to the tertiaries and most likely written during the time that the Saint was writing the Early Rule for the friars. He states,

Let us love God, therefore, and adore Him with a pure heart and a pure mind, because He Who seeks this above all things has said: True adorers adore the Father in Spirit and Truth. (2LTF: 19)

According to Francis, the only appropriate response to God is adoration, love, and a focusing of one's attention on the Divine will.

In Admonition XVI, after quoting from Mt 5: 8, "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God," he writes:

The truly clean of heart are those who look down upon earthly things, seek those of heaven, and, with a clean heart and spirit, never cease adoring and seeing the Lord God living and true. (Adm XVI: 2)

For St. Francis, every relationship should be based on a love and adoration of God and guided by a pure mind and spirit. This is basis for a life of chastity, a life that should make one more loving.

Following the Saint's lead, the Rule of the SFO does not specifically deal with chastity. It does, however, echo his exhortation to the friars and to penitents to love and adore God and to allow that love to flow out to others. Article 12 states,

Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.

As Article 17 points out, the first place this love should take root is in the family. It states that,

In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ. By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for his Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their human and spiritual journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.

The General Constitutions are even more specific - it points out that secular Franciscans "should love and practice purity of heart, the source of true fraternity." And, in their families they,

should concern themselves with respect for all life in every situation from conception until death. Married couples find in the Rule of the SFO an effective aid in their own journey of Christian life, aware that, in the sacrament of matrimony, their love shares in the love that Christ has for his Church. The way spouses love each other and affirm the value of fidelity is a profound witness for their own family, the Church, and the world.

Both the Rule and the Constitutions challenge secular Franciscans to love - love God, love their spouse if they are married, love the brothers and sisters in their fraternities, love the Church and its ministers, love all people, and love all creation. This is basically a challenge to love as God loves, with a pure heart and mind. What a tremendous challenge!

Of course, for the married brothers and sisters of the Order, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the secular embrace of the Franciscan vocation is more properly called conjugal chastity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church points that,

Conjugal love involves a totality, in which all the elements of the person enter - appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility. In a word it is a question of the normal characteristics of all natural conjugal love, but with a new significance which not only purifies and strengthens them, but raises them to the extent of making them the expression of specifically Christian values.

The Pontifical Council for the Family put it this way:

Human sexuality is thus a good, part of that created gift which God saw as being "very good," when he created the human person in his image and likeness, and "male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). Insofar as it is a way of relating and being open to others, sexuality has love as its intrinsic end, more precisely, love as donation and acceptance, love as giving and receiving. The relationship between a man and a woman is essentially a relationship of love: "Sexuality, oriented, elevated and integrated by love acquires a truly human quality." When such love exists in marriage, self-giving expresses, through the body, the complementarity and totality of the gift. Married love thus becomes a power which enriches persons and makes them grow and, at the same time, it contributes to building up the civilization of love.

The document goes on to state that without this love men and women become objects and children become a hindrance. It is only through respectful love that human sexuality can find its fulfillment. For this reason, an active and mutually respectful sex life can be seen and embraced as an essential element of conjugal chastity.

