

Regular Meeting: Sun., Dec. 10th at 2 pm - South Rm., St. Helen's Christian Living Ctr.

**Council meeting:** Sat., Dec. 16th at 9:15 am.- Arby's on west side of Rte. #1 at 16<sup>th</sup> Pl. in Vero.

**Agenda and Schedule for meeting:**

- 2:00 - Meeting called to order. Opening Prayer, Reports, Old/New Business. The Nominating Committee will provide a report on the slate of nominees for election in January 2007. Additional names may be placed in nomination at this time.
- 2:25 - A Blessing of our donations to the Food Pantry
- 2:30 - **Ongoing Formation: Continuation of our study of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Rule 21** - "On various levels, each fraternity is animated and guided by a council and minister (or president) who are elected by the professed according to the constitutions. Their service, which lasts for a definite period, is marked by a ready and willing spirit and is a duty of responsibility to each member and to the community. Within themselves, the fraternities are structured in different ways according to the norm of the constitutions, according to the various needs of their members and their regions, and under the guidance of their respective council." (One of our members will provide an introductory lesson and facilitate a discussion to follow.)
- 3:00 - Refreshments and break
- 3:20 - Franciscan Crown Rosary. Liturgy of the Hours for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent..
- 4:00 - Closing Prayer and Dismissal (If you have time, please assist us in straightening out the South Room before you leave for home. Thanks!)

**Refreshment Committee for this meeting:**

**Snacks:** Helen and Eugene Caldarone

**Beverages:** Kathleen Van Buskirk

**Remember in your prayers:** Please pray for Julia McHugh who suffered a mild (she says) stroke shortly after our last meeting and continue to pray for Jennie, George Thomas, Jerry Carey, Donna Haro, John Matthews, Fred and all professed Franciscans in our Florida region who are ill as well for the members of our fraternity who cannot attending our meetings regularly.

**Upcoming Dates to Mark on your calendar:**

Sunday, January 14, 2007 - Chapter of Elections at our regular fraternity meeting with Fr. Tom Murphy, OFM, presiding.

**From the Minister's Desk:** 2006 has been quite a year for our fraternity - we have rejoiced to see three of our candidates professed - Pauline, Elizabeth and, most recently, Adele - three great witnesses to what it means to be a Christian Woman. We have also been saddened by the infirmity and illnesses which have struck Jerry, Jennie, George, Fred, John, Donna and, now, Julia. We know that illness and problems are to be expected in our lives and, indeed, may bring about a greater good through the "tender mercies" of God if we but place ourselves and our loved ones in His care. Isn't that what the great saints of our faith have done? Please make an effort to keep in touch with and pray for all our members who need our "fraternal spirit" now more than ever. Their suffering may bring great blessings on our fraternity, on all Franciscans and on the Church. God bless you all!

Minister: Helen Caldarone, SFO  
Vice-Minister: Fred Schaeffer, SFO  
Secretary: Elizabeth Smith, SFO  
Treasurer: Sarah Hardy, SFO  
Formation Director: Gene Caldarone, SFO  
Councillors-at-Large  
George Thomas, SFO; Marguerite Rysdyke, SFO  
Spiritual Assistant  
Fr. Richard P. LaCorte, 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  
Formation Team: Caroline DiGennaro, SFO;  
Marguerite Rysdyke, SFO; Andrea Cardoza, SFO.

## *Advent*

Advent is the time to let the light of the world shine in. It is a time of hope, of expectation as we watch the Christmas story unfold. During Advent we're introduced to a Woman, Mary, and to the Angel Gabriel who greets her with the words: "Hail, full of Grace! The Lord is with you." And Mary replied at the end of Angel Gabriel's message "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your Word." Mary was humble and obedient to God's Will.

As we experience with great hope the First Sunday of Advent and listen to the Gospel, we find that the focus is on the Second Coming of Jesus. The Gospel commands us to be vigilant because no one knows when the Second Coming will take place except God. This is like our death—death comes as a thief in the night. So we hope for the coming of Christ, we hope to spend eternity with God and we should use Advent to prepare. While it is true that the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is only required if a mortal sin has been committed, the Sacrament has an immense spiritual value. It is a vast source of grace and since we don't know when death comes, let us always be in the state of grace. The Blessed Virgin Mary at Medjugorje recommends that we go to confession once a month. During Advent it is certainly recommended to go to Confession as a suitable preparation for the Birth of Christ.

A daily or weekly examination of conscience will lead to a more meaningful reconciliation experience when one could identify trends in our life and behavior which can stand improvement. Then, also try to attend daily Holy Mass during this time of preparation and maybe try to make that a permanent part of your morning.

Do something meaningful for your family to remind them of the Advent season. Acquire an Advent wreath with four candles and light one each Sunday morning. Have a member of the family read a little prayer as the candle is being lit. Pray for the integrity of your family, for health, for anything that needs prayer. The old adage "Families who pray together, stay together," is true. Make prayer a regular occurrence in your family with your children (single people can join a prayer group or pray alone.) Prayer is a conversation with God!

As Franciscans, dedicated to live the Gospel, and be a leaven in the world, we have a responsibility to spread the Good News in the marketplace. Let us bring the story of Advent to more people, to prepare them spiritually for the Coming of Jesus Christ, not only at Christmas, but for all time.

We all have the means to spend eternity with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with Our Lady and the Angels and Saints. Jesus told us how: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Mt 4:17) Repent, go to confession, and then improve your life with Christ. See Him interiorly in your soul. Allow Him to be a part of your life, of everything you do. Realizing that His love is overwhelming for us, how could we possibly sin again? Prepare... and sin no more.

In Advent frequently pray the Rosary asking Mary our Mother to ask Jesus, her Son, to bless you and your family and to prepare you for the coming of the Lord, the Messiah. As Advent turns into Christmas, you'll want to take your family to Midnight Mass and watch the drama unfold in the Readings and Gospel that are read, and in your heart as you take it all in. We wish you a very special and blessed Advent season.

Fred Schaeffer, sfo 12/2/2006

