

**Regular Meeting:** Sun., May 21st at 2 pm - South Rm., St. Helen's Christian Living Ctr.

**Council meeting:** Sat., May 27th at 9 am.- Arby's on west side of Rte. #1 at 16<sup>th</sup> Pl. in Vero.

**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

2:25 - Brief report on the Annual Regional Meeting at San Pedro Ctr occurring the same weekend as our May meeting.

2:35 - Ongoing Formation and Discussion: We continue our focus on the lives and charisms of Franciscan saints and blessed. At the May meeting, Gene Caldarone will tell us about the life and virtues of St. John of Capistrano. As we learn more about those who have preceded us in living a Gospel-based life, we hope to renew our commitment and to find a particular saint or blessed who, through prayer, will help us on our journey in the footsteps of St. Francis.

**PLEASE NOTE: In addition to a biographical report about each saint, please add your own comments on how studying and emulating this saint would be of value on your own franciscan journey. And, as much as possible, present your report in your own words.**

3:10 - Refreshments and break

3:25 - Liturgy of the Hours for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter; Divine Mercy Chaplet

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:** Julia McHugh and Ed O'Donnell

**Beverages:** Pat Riordan

**Fraternity Apostolate:** Please place your donations to the Food Pantry on our meeting table when you arrive. Thank you for your faithfulness and generosity.

**Remember in your prayers:** As you read this Canticle, Adele Lamour is on a pilgrimage to Fatima and Lourdes and may not be home in time to attend our May meeting. Please pray that she has a safe journey and that the blessings of this pilgrimage are poured on her abundantly. Also, please continue praying for Jennie who is in a nursing home, for George Thomas, who was recently hospitalized, for Marie Fee who may need a pacemaker, and for Fred's difficult health problems.

Our inquirer, Joseph Assam, whose Admission Rite was scheduled for this meeting, seems to have had to move and we have lost contact with him. We pray that we hear from him soon. If any of you have any information about Joseph, please give me or Fred a call.

**From the Minister's Desk:** While it is good to be home after our long stay in NYC, Gene and I experienced magnificent liturgies in some truly beautiful old churches during the last weeks of Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Divine Mercy Sunday. It was truly a gloriously spiritual time for us. My sister, Maryellen, continues her chemo but feels generally good and spent a lot of time with us. And, of course, our newest granddaughter, Lucia Maryellen, was a joy. Her Baptism, on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, was conducted with great beauty and reverence. The power of the Holy Spirit and the magnificence of this sacrament was poured out on the two babies being baptized. What a gift it is. . . a "Luminous" mystery!!

**Minister:** Helen Caldarone, SFO

**Vice-Minister:** Fred Schaeffer, SFO

**Secretary:** Jennie Donlin, SFO

**Treasurer:** Sarah Hardy, SFO

**Formation Director:** Gene Caldarone, SFO

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**Spiritual Assisitant**

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**Peace and Justice:** Sarah Hardy, SFO

**Youth:** (*vacant*)

**Ecology:** Fred Schaeffer, SFO

**Formation**

**Assistant Director:** Donna M. Haro, SFO

**Formation Team:** Caroline DiGennaro, SFO;

Jennie Donlin, SFO; Marguerite Rysdyke, SFO;

Andrea Cardoza, SFO.

**Webmaster/Editor:** Fred Schaeffer, SFO

## The Desert Fathers knew....

Occasionally we hear something attributed to "the desert fathers." I didn't quite know who these desert fathers were so I looked it up and perhaps you'd like to know what I found.

At the time when St. Pachomius (292-346) and St. Anthony (ca. 251-356; he is thought to have lived 105 years) lived, there were thousands of monks in Egypt and Palestine whose names we do not know because this information was never recorded. But we do have certain writings, proverbial tales and stories from that time. These sayings were passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth and at some point they were committed to paper.

A number of people, fairly recently, have translated these writings into English. The desert fathers and mothers were sometimes somewhat radical but a great deal of wisdom has come from them. I found some of these proverbial writings quoted in a book I read while I was in the monastery, "Essential Monastic Wisdom" by Hugh Feiss, O.S.B., 1999, Harper San Francisco. I would like to quote just one of these: "If you are at your manual labor in your room and it comes time to pray, do not say: 'I will use up my supply of branches or finish weaving the little basket, and then I will rise,' but rise immediately and render to God the prayer that is owed him. Otherwise, little by little you come to neglect your prayer and your duty habitually, and your soul will become a wasteland devoid of every spiritual and bodily work. For right at the beginning your will is apparent." (*ibid*, p. 40)

This situation happens all the time in a monastery. A monk is working and then it is time to pray. Looks like these desert fathers foresaw that situation. There is a real possibility of work extending into prayertime in religious life. It's not a healthy habit.

What would your employer have to say when you extended your lunch period habitually into his work hours? What would your spouse say when there is never any food on the table when he/she returns from work? What would God say if I'm constantly late for prayer? Consistent lateness isn't good in any phase of society whether it be in the office, at home or at a prayer service. Habitually coming late for Sunday (and even, weekday) Holy Mass is not so good either. What are you telling Jesus? Are you telling Him that "doing your thing" (whatever that may be) is more important? If you have invited business consultants or very good friends you don't see often, for dinner, you'd be sure to be on time. But Jesus is the ultimate Guest—so before your spiritual life is negatively affected you should strive to be in Church on time. There is no question that if you come late once in a great while it would be OK but I know people who arrive just before the Gospel is read every time, and sometimes during the homily. Then there are also people who try to leave immediately after Holy Communion. They claim that they need to go to beat the traffic out of the Church parking lot. But why? Is anything we do more important than time with Jesus? Seems to me the desert fathers knew what they were talking about.

I was reminded of this just the other day. I was watching a movie on television. As movies go, these days, it was a pretty bad movie, but it passed the time. I knew I had not prayed Evening Prayer yet, and soon I would be half asleep... but I said, well, the movie is almost over, I'll just see it to the end. That's not a healthy practice for a Franciscan or anyone who loves Jesus. I did fall asleep (with the TV on) and woke up around 3AM, and then I was, of course, too tired for Evening Prayer. So I skipped it.

Let's try to put Jesus first, as the Desert Fathers did.

Fred Schaeffer, sfo

