

www.franciscan-sfo.org

Regular Meeting: Sunday, October 12, at 2:00 PM—North Room of the Parish Center, followed by the Council Meeting.

Agenda and Schedule for Meeting:

- 2:00 Opening Prayer, Reports, Old/New Business
- 2:20 Blessing of our donations to the Food Pantry
- 2:25 Ongoing formation: Elizabeth of Hungary --- Helen Caldarone
Discernment --- Fred Schaeffer
- 3:10 Refreshments and break
- 3:30 Liturgy of the Hours
- 4:00 Closing Prayer and dismissal
- 4:15 Council Meeting

Refreshment Committee:

Snacks: Helen Caldarone and Sarah Hardy

Beverages: Donna Haro

Upcoming Events: "Journey into God," retreat with Andre Cerino, OFM, and Josef Raischl, SFO, to be held at the Franciscan Center in Tampa, March 20-29, 2009. There is no other information at this time.

Remember in your prayers: Julia McHugh, Jennie Donlin†, Donna Haro, John Matthews, Fred Schaeffer, Marie Fee, Jack Solloway, and all professed Franciscans in our Florida region who are ill, as well as those members of our Fraternity who cannot attend our meetings regularly.

From the Minister's Desk: October is the month of the Holy Rosary. Our Blessed Mother said to Blessed Allan. "When you say your Rosary the angels rejoice, the Blessed Trinity delights in it, my Son finds joy in it too, and I, myself, am happier than you can possibly imagine. After the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, there is nothing in the Church that I love as much as the Holy Rosary." Our Lady has made fifteen promises to those who recite the Rosary.

I know that we all recite the Rosary everyday, but, sometimes it's good to be reminded how important it is to the Blessed Mother and her Son, and to all those that we remember in our prayers. Stay close to the Blessed Mother through the prayer that she has given us. Go in peace.

† Our sister, Jennie Donlin, SFO, passed away on Wednesday, September 24. Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon her. May her soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace. Amen.

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary,
pray for us!



Divine Mercy Fraternity
 Secular Franciscan Order
 Vero Beach, Florida

Minister: Peggy Rysdyke, SFO
Vice-Minister: Donna M. Haro, SFO
Secretary: Elizabeth Smith, SFO
Treasurer: Sarah Hardy, SFO
Formation Director: Helen Caldarone, SFO
Councillors-at-Large: Ed O'Donnell, SFO,
 Fred Schaeffer, SFO, and Kathleen Van Buskirk, SFO
Spir. Assitant: *vacant*
Vocation Director: Kathleen Van Buskirk, SFO
Commissioners
 Work: Donna M. Haro, SFO
 Family: Eugene Caldarone, SFO
 Peace and Justice: John Matthews, SFO
 Youth: Pauline Pavlick, SFO
 Ecology: Fred Schaeffer, SFO
 Other: Webmaster/Ed. Fred Schaeffer, SFO

Was St. Francis a dreamer?

The answer to the question which forms the title of this reflection is, Yes! St. Francis of Assisi was a dreamer, but he was also a very practical man. He may have started to dream about something, but he usually came forth with a conclusion. The Third Order (Secular Franciscan Order), was a grand dream of St. Francis, and it is through this order that lay people, men and women, married or single, have the opportunity to achieve something of great beauty: Heaven.

In the days of Saint Francis, most lay people were not educated, unlike the clergy and those in religious orders. Whether that prevented them from getting into Heaven, we'll never know, but St. Francis made it possible for lay people, through the SFO, to pledge their lives to God, and be of service to all people. We are to evangelize Catholicism, Christianity, and God's love... and as Franciscans, we have been given a spiritual instrument to feed those who hunger for the Good News of Jesus Christ. Thanks to St. Francis, we have found a way to live a holy life, and to pass what we learn along the way, to many other people. So perhaps we are dreamers, too.

In Pope Pius XI's Encyclical Letter "Rite Expiatis" (1926), he writes: "It would appear that in no one has the image of Christ our Lord and the ideal of Gospel life has been more faithfully and strikingly expressed than in Francis. For this reason, while he called himself "the Herald of the Great King," he has justly been styled "the second Christ," because he appeared like Christ reborn to his contemporaries no less then, to later ages, with the result that he lives today in the eyes of men and will live unto all posterity."

In reflecting on the Holy Rule of the SFO, when read carefully, one inalterably comes to the conclusion that Christ is reborn through those who master daily conversion, the way St. Francis intended for us, through a life of humility and penance, where He increases, and we decrease. Going from Gospel to Life, and from Life to Gospel is living in obedience. Our Lord "humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death on the Cross". Through your profession, you have pledged yourself to follow Jesus and Saint Francis! If we love Our Lord, you will find his commandments easy to follow. Like Jesus and Francis we must be moderate, charitable, grateful, givers of good examples, if you want to reach for it through prayer.

But our order isn't a society of saints, not by any means. When we start out as Secular Franciscans, there is nothing saintly about us. Perhaps after many years as a Franciscan, others may say we have become a holy person, but that's not for us to say. In other words, brother John can never say of himself that he's holy. Because the minute he claims to be holy, he's committed a sin of pride! And that's so un-Franciscan.

The SFO is a religious order for lay people. We differ from the First and Second Order of St. Francis, because we do not live in community in the same way they do. Our Community, is the Fraternity, and we do not formally meet every day, but many of us see each other daily. As Franciscans we are never alone. God is with us, so is Saint Francis. And, our Franciscan sisters and brothers are with us too, in prayer, and in spirit. We are all on a pilgrimage, together. This is a pilgrimage dreamed of by our Seraphic Father, St. Francis. We are all striving to get into Heaven, and we know that St. Francis gave us a definite way to accomplish the task and reach the end goal. It is OK to dream of Heaven!

As I have written previously in these reflections, some people have no idea what Heaven could be. We know that in Heaven, we will be with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and with the Angels and Saints, and of course, with Our Lady, and with Saint Francis and all those who followed him. There will be a lot of people there. As people of a modern culture, we undoubtedly ask ourselves what about our dogs and cats, will they be there? And, are there sports in Heaven? I have no idea whatsoever, but it seems to me that when we are with the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, we will be so filled with His love that we do not need anything else to stimulate our sense of Joy.

Once in a very deep meditation I saw an image of what Heaven could be. But I cannot describe it. The image projected an idea rather than something recognizable. It seemed like a Globe, consisting of thousands of people with God in the center. These people were Spirit. It conveyed that no one lacked anything, there was no more pain and anguish. There was only pure Joy. What else do we need? Nothing! As Franciscans we are on this pilgrimage of holiness, this highway to sanctification. Dream of it. Do your share and God will help you. He will bless you and keep you eternally. He will show his face to you in the sanctuary of the saints. He will turn His countenance to you and give you eternal rest in eternal peace. ♦

Source: "Following Saint Francis, No. 2 Virtues" Chapter 10 "Practical Dreams of Heaven." © 1964, Franciscan Publishers, Pulaski WI. What I wrote, above, followed the general ideas given in Chapter 10, but was rewritten, except for a longer quotation in the last part of the final paragraph. This is a series of (then) 50¢ booklets, which I found in a Second Hand book store here. They used to be part of Third Order formation texts in the 1960's.

Pope John Paul II writes about the Apparitions at Fatima:

“The call to repentance is a motherly one. At the same time it is strong and decisive. The love that “rejoices in the truth” (1 Cor. 13) is capable of being clear-cut and firm. The call to repentance is linked, as always, with a call to prayer. In harmony with the tradition of many centuries, the Lady of the message indicates the Rosary, which can rightly be defined as “Mary’s prayer,” the prayer in which she feels particularly united with us.

“She herself prays with us. The Rosary prayer embraces the problems of the Church, of the See of Saint Peter, the problems of the whole world. In it we also remember sinners, that they may be converted and saved, and the souls in purgatory.

“The words of the message were addressed to children, ages seven to ten. Children, like Bernadette of Lourdes, are particularly privileged in these apparitions of the Mother of God. Hence, the fact that also her language is simple, within the limits of their understanding. The children of Fatima became partners in dialogue with the Lady of the message and collaborators with her.

“When Jesus on the Cross said: “Woman, behold, your son,” (Jn 19:26) in a new way He opened His mother’s Heart, the Immaculate Heart, and revealed to it the new dimensions and extent of the love to which she was called in the Holy Spirit by the power of the sacrifice of the Cross. . . .

“In the light of a mother’s love, we understand the whole message of the Lady of Fatima. The greatest obstacle to man’s journey toward God is sin, perseverance in sin and, finally, denial of God. The deliberate blotting out of God from the world of human thought. The detachment from Him of the whole of man’s earthly activity. The rejection of God by man.

“In reality, the eternal salvation of man is only in God. Man’s rejection of God, if it becomes definitive, leads logically to God’s rejection of man, to damnation. (Mt. 7:23;10:33)

“Can the Mother, who . . . desires everyone’s salvation, keep silence on what undermines the very basis of their salvation? No, she cannot.

“So, while the message of Our Lady of Fatima is a motherly one, it is also strong and decisive. It sounds severe. It sounds like John the Baptist speaking on the banks of the Jordan. It invites to repentance. It gives a warning. It calls to prayer. It recommends the Rosary.

“The message is addressed to every human being. The love of the Savior’s Mother reaches every place touched by the work of salvation. Her care extends to every individual of our time and to all the societies, nations and peoples. Societies menaced by apostasy, threatened by moral degradation. The collapse of morality involves the collapse of societies.”

Let us get into the habit of praying the Rosary every day! It is our Mother’s wish.