

DIVINE MERCY FRATERNITY • SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

Vero Beach, Florida
www.franciscan-sfo.org

Regular Meeting: Sunday, Aug 8, 2010, at 2:00 PM, North Room of St. Helen's Parish Center. The Council Meeting to follow.

Agenda and Schedule for the Regular Meeting

- 2:00 Opening Prayer, Reports, Old/New Business
- 2:20 Blessing of the Donations to the Food Pantry
- 2:25 Ongoing Formation: Article 16 of the SFO Rule Book. Discussion to be lead by Andrea Cardoza, SFO
- 3:10 Refreshments and Break
- 3:30 Liturgy of Hours
- 3:50 Closing prayer and Dismissal
- 4:15 Council Meeting

Refreshment Committee:

Snacks: Sarah Hardy, Donna Haro
Beverages: Adele Lamour

Remember in your prayers: Fred Schaeffer, Marie Fee, Jack Solloway, Pat Riordan 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.

Upcoming Events:

1. St. Clare's Feast Day—St. Clare's Fraternity in Naples—August 14, 2010
2. The Padre Pio Community will have a social in honor of St. Clare at the house of Jeanne Geigler, August 14. (11-2)

From the Minister's Desk: August 2 is the Dedication of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Angels (Portiuncula). According to tradition, this chapel was built by pilgrims returning from the Holy Land in honor of the Blessed Virgin. It was one of the Churches repaired by St. Francis in response to Jesus request to rebuild His Church.

This Chapel was given to Francis by the Benedictines and became Francis' headquarters. It was also the Church where Clare first gave herself to the Lord. The Portiuncula is called the "Cradle of Franciscanism." A Plenary Indulgence may be gained, under the usual conditions, for visiting a Franciscan Church on the Feast of the Dedication (Aug. 2nd)

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Fraternity
Officers

Minister: Peggy Rysdyke, SFO
Vice-Minister: Donna M. Haro, SFO
Secretary: Helen Caldarone, SFO
Treasurer: Sarah Hardy, SFO

Formation Director: Eugene Caldarone, SFO
Councillors-at-Large: Kathleen Van Buskirk, SFO, Adele Lamour, SFO, Fred Schaeffer, SFO
Spir. Assisitant: *vacant*

Chapter Two - The Way of Life

Article 16 - The Gift of Work

Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community.

Discussion

- **Francis would often say “I want all my brothers to work and keep busy, and those who have no skills should learn some.”**
 - What useful values should we look for in the various types of work we do?
 - Can I identify how my various types of work and efforts are really designed to be of service to others, and not just to and for myself in a selfish manner? Explain how?
 - How do I ensure my efforts expended on work are constructive?
 - Why is it essential for the Christian to view work as “being of service”?
Why should I work even when I know it will not be appreciated?

- **Rather than just tolerating having to work, we should see work as “a gift” from God.**
 - If we take the opportunity to let our work be a gift what work would you consider your ideal “gift”?
 - How should the fact that you are a Secular Franciscan affect your work?
 - How do these motives to work enliven our spirit? If not, why not?
Should your Christianity, Catholicism, and Franciscan life ever be the cause of you changing jobs or changing circumstances at your present job? Give an example.

- **Francis did not believe the wages of a worker should be determined by him but rather left to another.**
 - Why would St Francis feel that way?
 - How should we react to that statement?
Why should others have a say in our wages?

Be Compassionate to All

In some recent columns I've written about caring for the poor, the homeless and others of very limited means. At times this is a very unpopular request. The American way (and that of most industrialized nations) is to be upward looking. For some people, the poor, sick, homeless, lonely and, for that matter, the unemployed, are in a category that is not "upward looking." Young people just entering the work force, are better educated these days. They have to be. In the 1960's when I began my career in the financial district of New York City, I did not have the benefit of higher education (couldn't afford it, for one thing), and my first major job was that of Teletype Operator (now done by computers) in a Wall Street firm. It was a good-paying job at the time, but nowadays to even get your foot into the door of these same type of corporations a college degree is required. Due to materialism, secularization and today's career recruitment, young people of today aim for middle-management and professional or technical positions.

You may wonder what all this has to do with having compassion for those who are not upwardly mobile. Well, actually a lot. You see, people who are upward in career outlook tend to stay in the social strata of the "better-off;" they no longer have time to even think about, much less associate themselves with, the downtrodden, the poor, the needy, the lonely, the sick. This is true for most trendy people unless they go to church and are able to see the light of the Gospel.

Unfortunately, due to the materialistic views of the times, it is more trendy for our young, educated worker to be able to speak about his or her philanthropic activity in a way it reflects positively on the person's stature. A person likes to techno-boast to his neighbor about his brand new car, his "state-of-the-art" house, computer or some other toy most of us cannot afford. He is likely to mention also that he was able to offset his taxes by means of a substantial donation to an organization helping society, the people he really wishes to have nothing to do with.

What our trendy and upwardly mobile persons fail to see in this day and age of corporate takeovers, all-too-frequent corporate demises due to Chapter 11 filings and other corporate disasters (e.g. the Steel industry in the U.S.) is that their technical, professional or mid-level management job can suddenly cease to exist and as a result they too could find themselves very rapidly going downward. Many people become homeless and need help. So those who are living the fast life should think at least a little about those who do not. All people are in need of compassion. Many an executive, with a high salary to match, feels lonely and outcast because people admire him for his money rather than for himself, as a person. I've known people who made big bucks but hated their work. Maybe I should say I've also known many more people who loved their work at the lower end of the pay-scale and they still had time for the needs of others. That's not at all surprising in light of the Gospel! We cannot all be Mother Teresa's, but we can care more than we do. Are we willing to spend time with those less fortunate than us and our social circle of friends? For a time I worked in a well-paying job in the international airline field and I made time each Saturday morning to do handyman's work (fixing worn out windows, fixing wooden benches, etc.) at a house for unemployed single women with children who were technically homeless. This house was run by the Sisters of Charity in Liberty City (Miami, Florida). These Saturdays were much better spent there than by having Saturday brunch at some fancy seaside restaurant. But that was many years ago. (See next page)

There is much suffering in the world; much unnecessary pain that can be forestalled by caring friends and neighbors. Can we be compassionate to the teenager who does not feel safe in his own home? We must. Can we listen to the senior who sits on the same bench all day at the park because he has no family left? We must. Can we listen to the tale of another's woe of a lonely life? We must! Can we see the suffering as people or persons rather than the recipients of some institutional care (e.g. Welfare, Food-stamps) or "taken care of by agencies who do that sort of thing?" We must see them as persons, as individuals because that's how Jesus sees us in His infinite love. No one is exempt from suffering. There are people in management positions in government who have cancer. Their high-level income doesn't help one iota to cure the disease. Our direct and personal compassion and love does and makes their suffering easier to bear. Then there is an awful disease no one wishes to talk about. It is AIDS. Never mind how they got it. That's over and done with. Now they need your compassion, and not our judgment. Pray for them as individuals and ask how you can be of help.

We need each other. That fact has nothing to do with the level of income, whether we came over on the Mayflower or some other conveyance, whether we are members of a country club or are a member of the working poor. At some time in our lives we need compassion. Should we be cold to people because they do not fit into our schedule and refuse to help the good soul who rings our doorbell in need? No! We must help. We're all in this together. Our Lord didn't turn the blind man away who sought His healing. People who love the Lord (no matter how they know Him) will not turn someone away who needs compassion or even some on-the-spot financial assistance. The poor girl, a mother of two, in that Liberty City house where I helped out... she had nothing of her own, not a cent to her name save the clothes on her back. She had received half a loaf of bread *and wondered if I wanted half of it*. She gave it to me with a smile that held a joy I cannot forget. There is great joy in giving and also in being compassionate.

God gave His only Son, Jesus, so that Jesus could redeem us from our sins, from our pitiful human suffering. We recall these earth-shaking events in Passion Week from Palm Sunday to Good Friday. And, don't forget Holy Thursday where He broke bread with His brothers and asked us to remember, to do it (breaking bread with) our brothers and sisters. We do this, as Catholics, when we receive Jesus in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, in the Real Presence (Jesus is there, right among us!) He gives us compassion for our suffering, we, in turn, bend over His Body as He is taken down from the Cross, each Good Friday in the Gospel and we adore Him for His great love. We also share these sentiments with others by being Christian to them, by loving them as He loves us. When we see each other as we ought, as individual persons, rather than as statistics and "those people," and treat them accordingly, share with each other, pray and counsel each other—then there will be peace on earth. Compassion is the Franciscan way!