

# THE CANTICLE

JANUARY 2011

*Divine Mercy Fraternity Secular  
Franciscan Order*

Vero Beach, Florida  
www.franciscan-sfo.org

## *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. Assitant: Rev.Mr. Richard Blake, SFO  
(when available)

**Regular Meeting:** Sunday, Jan. 9, 2011, at 2:00 PM, North Room of St. Helenø Parish Center. The Council Meeting to follow.

### **Agenda and Schedule - Regular Meeting**

- 2:00 Opening Prayer, Reports, Old/New Business
- 2:20 Blessing of the Donations to the Food Pantry
- 2:25 A Remembrance of the Poor Souls by Donna Haro, SFO
- 2:35 Ongoing Formation: Article 20 of the Franciscan Rule. Discussion to be led by  
Peggy Rysdyke, SFO
- 3:10 Refreshments and Break
- 3:25 The Crown Rosary
- 3:45 Liturgy of Hours
- 3:55 Closing prayer and Dismissal
- 4:15 Council Meeting

### **Refreshment Committee:**

Snacks: Sarah Hardy and Donna Haro  
Beverages: Adele

**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.

**From the Minister's Desk:** Francis had a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and we, as Franciscans, should honor the Blessed Mother in the same way. She has given us the gift of the Rosary, through St. Dominic and Blessed Alan de la Roche, and has made 15 Promises to Christians who recite the Rosary. These Promises may be found in the Pieta Prayer Book. Let us set aside a special time every day for the recitation of the Rosary. This can be our New Year's Resolution. May we be filled with the joy of the Lord all thru the New Year.

JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup> 6 BLESSED ANGELA OF FOLIGNO

Angela was born in 1248 of a prominent family in Foligno, three leagues from Assisi. As a young woman, and also as a wife and mother, she lived only for the world and its vain pleasures. But the grace of God intended to make of her a vessel of election for the comfort and salvation of many. A ray of the divine mercy touched her soul and so strongly affected her as to bring about a conversion.

At the command of her confessor she committed to writing the manner of her conversion in eighteen spiritual steps. "Enlightened by grace," she wrote in this account. "I realized my sinfulness; I was seized with a great fear of being damned, and I shed a flood of tears. I went to confession to be relieved of my sins, but through shame I concealed the most grievous ones, but still I went to Communion. Now my conscience tortured me day and night. I called upon St. Francis for help, and, moved by an inner impulse, I went into a church where a Franciscan Father was then preaching.

"I gathered courage to confess all my sins to him, and I did this immediately after the sermon. With zeal and perseverance I performed the penance he imposed, but my heart continued to be full of bitterness and shame. I recognized that the divine mercy has saved me from hell, hence I resolved to do rigorous penance; nothing seemed too difficult for me, because I felt I belonged in hell. I called upon the saints, and especially upon the Blessed Virgin, to intercede with God for me.

"It appeared to me now as if they has compassion on me, and I felt the fire of divine love enkindled within me so that I could pray as I never prayed before. I had also received a special grace to contemplate the cross in which Christ had suffered so much for my sins. Sorrow, love, and the desire to sacrifice everything for Him filled my soul."

About this time God harkened to the earnest desire of the penitent: her mother died, then her husband, and soon afterwards all her children. These tragic events were very painful to her; but she made the sacrifice with resignation to the will of God. Being freed from these ties, she dispossessed herself of all her temporal goods with the consent of her confessor, so that being poor herself, she might walk in the footsteps of her poor Savior. She also entered the Third Order of St. Francis, and presently found herself the superior and guide of others who followed in her path. Many women joined her, even to the point of taking the three vows. She encouraged them in works of charity, in nursing the sick, and in going personally from door to door to beg for the needs of the poor.

Meanwhile, Angela became still more immersed in the contemplation of the Passion of Christ, and she chose the Sorrowful Mother and the faithful disciple John as her patrons. The sight of the wounds which her Lord suffered for her sins urged her to the practice of still greater austerities. Once our Lord showed her that His Heart is a safe refuge in all the storms of life. She was soon to be in need of such a refuge. God permitted her to be afflicted with severe temptations. The most horrible and loathsome representations distressed her soul. The fire of concupiscence raged so furiously that she said: "I would rather have beheld myself surrounded with flames and permitted myself to be continually roasted that to endure such things." Still, she called out to God, "Glory be to Thee, O Lord! Thy cross is my resting place." These painful trials lasted over two years; but then the purified and tried servant of the Lord was filled with great consolation. **PAGE 2**

She obtained a marvelous insight into divine things and was very frequently found in ecstasy. For many years Holy Communion was her only food, until at last, completely purified, she entered into the eternal joy of the Supreme Good on January 4, 1309.

Pope Innocent XII approved the continual devotion paid to her at her tomb in Foligno. He beatified her in 1693.

#### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O God, Thou sweetness of hearts and light of the inhabitants of heaven, who didst refresh Blessed Angela, Thy servant, with a marvelous insight into heavenly things, grant us through her merits and intercession so to know Thee upon earth, that we may be found worthy to rejoice in the vision of Thy glory in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

from: *The Franciscan Book of Saints*, ed. by Marion Habig, ofm., © 1959 Franciscan Herald Press (Used with permission)

#### GENERAL AUDIENCE: SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF ANGELA OF FOLIGNO

VATICAN CITY, 13 OCT 2010 (VIS) - Benedict XVI dedicated his catechesis during this morning's general audience to the Italian Blessed Angela of Foligno (ca. 1248 - 1309). The audience was celebrated in St. Peter's Square in the presence of 25,000 people.

This great mediaeval mystic generally arouses admiration "for the heights she scaled in her experience of union with God", said the Pope. "However, perhaps too little attention has been given to her first steps, to her conversion and the journey that led her from her starting point of a 'great fear of hell', to her goal of complete union with the Trinity".

Angela was born into a rich family and received a worldly education. She married very young, had a number of children and lived a carefree life until dramatic events such as the violent earthquake of 1279 and the consequences of a war with the city of Perugia led her to question the meaning of her existence. In 1285 she received a vision of St. Francis of Assisi whom she asked for help in making a general confession of her sins. Three years later, her husband and children having all died, Angela sold her goods and in 1291 entered the Third Order of St. Francis.

Her story is recounted by her confessor in the "Book of Blessed Angela of Foligno". At the beginning of her spiritual itinerary the blessed felt the fear of hell for her sins. "This fear", the Pope explained, "reflected the kind of faith that Angela had at the moment of her conversion; a faith still poor in charity; that is, in love for God. Penance, fear of hell and atonement opened before Angela the prospect of the painful 'way of the cross', which ... would lead her to the 'way of love'".

"Angela felt she had to give something to God to make up for her sins, but she slowly came to realise that she had nothing to give Him; indeed, that she was 'nothing' before Him. She understood that it was not her will that could give her the love of God, because her will could give her 'nothing', it could only give her 'non-love'". Little by little "she came to a profound understanding of the central reality: that what would save her from her 'unworthiness' and from her 'deserving hell' would not be her 'union with God' or her possession of the 'truth', but the crucified Jesus, ... His love, ... and her self-identification and self-transformation in the love and suffering of the crucified Christ".

"Angela's conversion", the Holy Father concluded, "reached maturity only when in her heart she saw God's forgiveness as a gratuitous gift of the love of the Father, Who is the source of love". On her spiritual journey, "the move from conversion to mystical experience, from that which can be expressed to that which is inexpressible, came about through the crucified Christ. ... All her mystical experience thus tended to perfect 'likeness' with Him through increasingly profound and radical purifications and transformations. ... Such identification also meant living as Jesus lived, facing poverty, contempt and suffering. ... A sublime journey, the secret of which was constant prayer".

## Chapter Three - Life in Fraternity

### Article 20 – Secular Franciscan Order Structure

*The Secular Franciscan Order is divided into fraternities of various levels -- local, regional, national, and international. Each one has its own moral personality in the Church. These various fraternities are coordinated and united according to the norm of this rule and of the constitutions.*

#### Discussion

- List some of the ways the fraternity has helped your vocation grow?
- What is your definition of a fraternity? Does your definition coincide with the Rule?
- What are the various levels of Secular Franciscan Order structure?
- What is the purpose for these organizational levels of fraternities?
- Some people question why a program dedicated to living the Gospel needs to have all this structure; why is this reasonable and needed?



**Bl. Angela of Foligno**