

Regular Meeting: Sun., Feb. 11th at 2 pm – South Rm., St. Helen’s Christian Living Ctr.

Council Meeting: Sat., Feb 17th at 9:15am-Arby’s on west side of Rt. #1 at 16th Pl., in Vero.

Agenda and Schedule for Meeting:

2:00 Meeting called to order. Opening Prayer, Reports, Old/New Business.

2:20 A blessing of our donations to the Food Pantry.

2:25 Ongoing Formation: Since Ash Wednesday is February 21st, our talk and discussion will be on Penance.

3:00 Refreshments and break.

3:20 Liturgy of the Hours - Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

4:00 Closing Prayer and dismissal.

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
Kathleen Van Buskirk, SFO
Spiritual Assisitant
Fr. Richard P. LaCorte, SFO
Commissioners
Work: (vacant)
Family: (vacant)
Peace and Justice: (vacant)
Youth: (vacant)
Ecology: (vacant)
Formation Team: Eugene Caldarone, SFO
Webmaster/Editor: Fred Schaeffer, SFO

Refreshment Committee for this meeting:

Snacks: Kathleen Van Buskirk

Beverages: Peggy Rysdyke

Remember in your prayers: Julia McHugh, Jennie Donlin, George Thomas, Jerry Carey, Donna Haro, John Mathews, Fred Schaeffer, and all professed Franciscans in our Florida region who are ill as well as for the members of our fraternity who cannot attend our meetings regularly.

Upcoming Dates to remember: 1. Sat., Feb 10, 2007 – “Miracle of the Eucharist,” an all day Retreat and Luncheon hosted by St. Andrew Frat., at the Cross Creek Country Club in Ft. Myers. Guest speakers will be Bob and Penny Lord of EWTN. \$30.00. Call for reservations: Lori (239)768-2919 or Elizabeth (239)574-4289.

2. Sat., Feb. 24, 2007 – Meeting at San Pedro Center in Winter Haven for Formation Ministers, newly elected officers and those newly professed in the past 2 years. Brown bag lunch will be provided. The meeting will be from 9:30am until 2:00pm.

From the Minister’s Desk: A new year with newly elected officers has begun. We look forward to this year in anticipation of what the Lord’s plan is for our fraternity. We see many opportunities for spiritual growth as we live the Gospel life according to Francis and Claire. Helen has paved the way with her many years of faithful service, and I was relieved to see that she is continuing this service as Formation Director. Welcome to all of the newly elected officers. God bless our fraternity.

Canticle Editor’s Message:

For those of you who have Internet, the General Minister of S.F.O., Mrs. Encarnación del Pozo, OFS (*OFS means SFO in Italian, Spanish and in Latin*) has set up a two-year program on St. Elizabeth of Hungary, whose Feast Day we celebrated on November 17, 2006. We will continue to honor her for the next two years. This is a combined Franciscan idea and all the various Orders within the Franciscan Family are in on it. In this and the next issues of The Canticle, I will bring you the chapters from the Ciofs website. We’re a little behind, so in the space allotted, I’ve done the first **two** months. Please read this stuff, and keep these issues of the Canticle for later reference. Thanks! Fred Schaeffer, SFO
See other side.

Formation program for the Eighth Centenary of St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-2007)

Year One: The life of St. Elizabeth

Month 1. St. Elizabeth's birth family and first home.

Each saint is an individual who comes from a particular family and particular culture. The variety of cultures in which holy lives are found helps enrich our understanding of the universality of the Gospel.

St. Elizabeth's human history was part of her history as a saint. She was from the Magyar people in Eastern Europe, the daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary. She was born in 1207, not much more than 200 years after her father's people first accepted Christianity. One of her ancestors was King Stephen I, the first Christian king of Hungary (975-1038), who was later declared a saint. His son, St. Emeric (1007-1031), is also regarded as a saint.

Elizabeth was also of German ancestry: her mother was Gertrude of Andechs-Meran. Her mother's sister, Hedwig (1174-1243), who was married to Henry, the Duke of Silesia, was also a saint. Clearly, there was an abundance of holy ancestors and a rich family tradition for Elizabeth to imitate.

When she was only four years old, Elizabeth had to leave the family of her birth behind, because she had just been betrothed by her parents to Ludwig IV, the future Landgraf of Thuringia, who was then just eleven. Farkasius and David, two priests or almoners, went with her to her new homeland, to remind her of her heritage.

Elizabeth's glory as a saint was to come from leaving her home for Thuringia, where she was to become renowned for her work with the poor and destitute, and where she achieved sanctity with the husband God had chosen for her. But she did not forget her family of origin, and went back to visit Hungary as a young married woman. But after her husband's death, rather than go home, she chose to live in her new country, where she could fulfill the choice of life she had made on behalf of the poor.

Spiritual reflection:

God's promises to the Israelites were given through a human culture and ancestry. Abraham left his homeland to fulfill the plan that God had for him. In return, God promised him, "I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing" (Gen 12:1-2). Elizabeth experienced this same call, and her life also became a blessing for future generations.

Month 2. Her youth at the court of Thuringia.

Elizabeth grew up at Wartburg castle overlooking the town of Eisenach with her future husband, Ludwig, and his brothers and sister. At that time the Wartburg housed one of the wealthiest, most brilliant courts in Europe, and the atmosphere there was a worldly one.

But Elizabeth very early became aware of God and was drawn to him by love. She was fascinated by the chapel of the castle and would find every excuse she could, even while playing a game, to enter and genuflect before the altar. Even though she was raised in wealth and luxury, she also became aware of her duties toward her neighbor. When she won something in a game, she would share it with children who were poor.

Elizabeth's growing love for God led her want to sacrifice for Him. She would leave the game or dance after one round and "give the rest to God." She stopped wearing some of her finery as a sacrifice. Even at this early age she began the process of conversion and penance that is at the heart of Christianity and the Franciscan vocation.

Spiritual reflection:

The foundation for our future life is laid in our childhood and youth. Holiness also begins in childhood, for learning to give oneself to God is a lifelong process. It was summed up by St. Paul: "I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect" (Romans 12:1). Continually, throughout her life, Elizabeth sought to give herself to God in this way. Gospel: "I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, listens to my words, and acts on them. That one is like a person building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when the flood came, the river burst against that house but could not shake it because it had been well built" (Lk 6:47-48).