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**Regular Meeting:** Sun., March 11 at 2:00 pm – South Rm., St. Helen’s Christian Living Center  
**Council Meeting:** Sat., March 17 at 9:30 am – Arby’s on west side of Rt 1 at 16<sup>th</sup> Place, Vero Beach.

**Agenda and Schedule for Meeting:**

- 2:00 Meeting called to order. Opening Prayer, Reports, Old/New Business
- 2:20 Blessing of our donations to the Food Pantry
- 2:25 Ongoing Formation: Fred will give a talk on “Humility and St. Francis of Assisi.” Discussion: How Francis’s humility has influenced our own lives.
- 3:00 Refreshments and break
- 3:20 Liturgy of the Hours for the Third Sunday of Lent
- 4:00 Closing Prayer and dismissal

**Refreshment Committee:**

- Snacks:** Donna Haro and Elaine Matthews
- Beverages:** Ed O’Donnell

**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:** Fred Schaeffer, SFO  
**Formation Team:** Eugene Caldarone, SFO  
**Webmaster/Editor:** Fred Schaeffer, SFO

**Remember in your prayers:** Julia McHugh, Jennie Donlin, George Thomas, Jerry Carey, Donna Haro, John Matthews, Fred Schaeffer, 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:** As Franciscans, we all want to emulate his life; but sometimes, we become so involved in the business, the trials and the joys of our lives, we lose track of the qualities of his life that attracted us to him. We will be having talks and discussions on these qualities to refresh our minds, our souls, and our hearts. To be closer to God through Francis is our goal. We all look forward to a fuller, richer life in the Spirit. God bless you.

**Upcoming Events:** First Professions at St. Padre Pio, SFO Community, Jensen Beach, Saturday, April 14, 2007

As the Sponsoring Fraternity<sup>1</sup> of the newly-forming St. Padre Pio, SFO Community, in Jensen Beach, Florida, we are inviting you to attend our first Celebration of Profession, Saturday, April 14, 2007, held at St. Martin De Porres Church, Jensen Beach. The Ritual Mass will take place at 11 am., Father Thomas Murphy, OFM, celebrant. For those interested, father will offer two talks as well. We will begin with coffee at 9:30 am, first talk, Mass, lunch, and then the second talk. Closing will be at 2 pm. Please let us know how many are planning to attend so we can have a count for the lunch. Many thanks for your prayers and caring.

Our Fraternal love,  
Mary Varvaro, SFO, Minister (1-772-220-4732)

(1) Per Mrs. Pam Nagle, SFO (Feb. 18, 2007) and at the request of Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM (Office of Spiritual Assistant, Secular Franciscan Order, for Holy Name Province), Divine Mercy SFO Fraternity of Vero Beach, FL is the Sponsoring Fraternity of St. Padre Pio SFO Community. *Let’s all try to be witnesses at these first professions that are so important to a newly forming community.* /Fred Schaeffer, SFO, editor.

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

### **Year One: The life of St. Elizabeth**

#### **Month 3. Marriage**

Elizabeth understood that marriage was not just a means to happiness or personal fulfillment, but a vocation, as serious as the religious vocation, and a means by which she was called to achieve holiness.

Our love of those close to us is the root of our understanding of love in general, and of how we are to love God. This is true of married love, for, as the Second Vatican Council tells us, this love "wells up from the fountain of divine love," that is, it has its origin in God; the Council adds that "authentic married love is caught up into divine love" (GS., no. 48).

Little attention has been devoted to marriage in the lives of the saints; in fact, Elizabeth is one of the very few married people canonized until just recently. She was happily married to Ludwig IV of Thuringia, who is also popularly considered a saint.

Elizabeth lived her married love as a means to love of God. One of her closest friends, Isentrude, her lady-in-waiting at court, said that she and her husband "lived in marriage in a way worthy of praise. They loved each other with a wonderful affection, gently inviting and strengthening each other in the praise and service of God."

They were saints not because they had no problems, but because they overcame their problems. One was that they lived in a very immoral atmosphere at court, amid many temptations, which the writers of the time don't try to hide from us. But they were resolute in avoiding these traps. Ludwig's men actually expressed their surprise to him that he was not unfaithful to his wife. He replied, "Never mention these words to me again: I have a wife, with whom I am bound to keep faith." Elizabeth also had to deal with some long separations from her husband, who traveled very frequently on behalf of the emperor. When he was away, she withdrew from court parties and entertainments and spent her time in prayer, to withdraw from any worldly distractions and temptations.

Like all other married women, Elizabeth had to balance her work, her children and her attention to her husband with her duties to God.

Elizabeth's awareness of the injustice caused by riches, and her desire for a simpler life sometimes came into conflict with her love for her husband. The officials her husband employed extorted unfair taxes in kind from the people. Elizabeth, out of conscience, would not eat any of the foods that came from this source. In doing so, she at least implicitly accused her husband's government of injustice. Ludwig respected his wife's conscience and supported this choice, promising that he would soon change the situation.

Elizabeth lived her love for her family faithfully within her love for God, through the way she and her husband practiced faithfulness in marriage, their respect for each other, their devotion to the same faith, and their daily work. Elizabeth and Ludwig put God at the center of their married lives. They teach us how to live this love as well. They fulfilled St. Paul's words:

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

Gospel: [Jesus said]: "From the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' For this reason a man shall leave his mother and father and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Mt. 19:5-6).

"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:34-35).

## *Changes You Need to Make in Your Life*

Submitted by Susan Solloway, SFO

Memo from God:

Effective immediately, please be aware that there are changes you need to make in your life. These changes need to be completed in order that I may fulfill my promises to you -- to grant you peace, joy and happiness in this life. I apologize for any inconvenience, but after all that I am doing, this seems very little to ask of you. I know, I already gave you the 10 Commandments. Keep them. But follow these guidelines, also.

### 1. QUIT WORRYING

Life has dealt you a blow and all you do is sit and worry. Have you forgotten that I am here to take all your burdens and carry them for you? Or do you just enjoy fretting over every little thing that comes your way?

### 2. PUT IT ON THE LIST

Something needs to be done or taken care of. Put it on the list. No, not YOUR list. Put it on MY to-do list. Let ME be the one to take care of the problem. I can't help you until you turn it over to me. And although my to-do-list is long, I am after all, God. I can take care of anything you put into my hands. In fact, if the truth were ever really known, I take care of a lot of things for you that you never even realize.

### 3. TRUST ME

Once you've given your burdens to me, quit trying to take them back. Trust in me. Have the faith that I will take care of all your needs, your problems and your trials. Problems with the kids? Put them on my list. Problem with finances? Put it on my list. Problems with your emotional roller coaster? For my sake, put it on my list.

I want to help you. All you have to do is ask.

### 4. LEAVE IT ALONE

Don't wake up one morning and say, "Well, I'm feeling much stronger now, I think I can handle it from here." Why do you think you are feeling stronger now? It's simple. You gave me your burdens and I'm taking care of them. I also renew your strength and cover you in my peace. Don't you know that if I give you these problems back, you will be right back where you started? Leave them with me and forget about them. Just let me do my job.

### 5. TALK TO ME

I want you to forget a lot of things. Forget what was making you crazy. Forget the worry and the fretting because you know I'm in control. But, there's one thing I pray you never forget. Please don't forget to talk to me - OFTEN! I love you. I want to hear your voice. I want you to include me in on the things going on in your life. I want to hear you talk about your friends and family. Prayer is simply you having a conversation with me. I want to be your dearest friend.

### 6. HAVE FAITH

I see a lot of things from up here that you can't see from where you are. Have faith in me that I know what I'm doing. Trust me, you wouldn't want the view from my eyes. I will continue to care for you, watch over you, and meet your needs. You only have to trust me. Although I have a much bigger task than you, it seems as if you have so much trouble just doing your simple part. How hard can trust be? After all, did you trust that when you sat in that chair that you are sitting in right now, that it wouldn't fall as you sat in it? That is the type of trust I'm talking about...have faith in things unseen.

### 7. SHARE

You were taught to share when you were only two years old. When did you forget? That rule still applies. Share with those who are less fortunate than you. Share your joy with those who need encouragement. Share your laughter with those who haven't heard any in such a long time. Share your tears with those who have forgotten how to cry. Share your faith with those who have none.

### 8. BE PATIENT

I managed to fix it so in just one lifetime you could have so many diverse experiences. You grow from a child to an adult, have children, change jobs many times, learn many trades, travel to so many places, meet thousands of people, and experience so much. How can you be so impatient then when it takes me a little longer than you expect to handle

something on my to-do-list? Trust in my timing, for my timing is perfect. Just because I created the entire universe in only six days, everyone thinks I should always rush, rush, rush.

#### 9. BE KIND

Be kind to others, for I love them just as much as I love you. They may not dress like you, or talk like you, or live the same way you do, but I still love you all. Please try to get along, for my sake. I created each of you different in some way. It would be too boring if you were all identical. Please know I love each of your differences.

#### 10. LOVE YOURSELF

As much as I love you, how can you not love yourself? You were created by me for one reason only - to be loved, and to love in return. I am a God of Love. Love me. Love your neighbors. But also love yourself. It makes my heart ache when I see you so angry with yourself when things go wrong. You are very precious to me. Don't ever forget that!

I Love You,  
God

### **We are called for each other.**

by Fred Schaeffer, SFO

We are called for each other as we continue our journey together, that journey of life, made out of deep faith. Faith is the cornerstone of our relationship with God for when we have unwavering faith, we have begun eternal life.

There are many different beginnings in life. When we begin a new job or move to a different place. We get married, or, we become a Secular Franciscan... or we become a Franciscan friar ... all new beginnings! All the beginnings to a new journey, a new adventure, a new relationship, begin with God.

New beginnings can bring anxiety and some fear; we're uncertain what the future will bring, or we're anxious that things just won't work out even though we know deep down that things always work out as long as we trust in God. I spoke to a woman who is unemployed. She told me that she didn't worry, because she had faith. She believed in God. She knew that God will never leave us in the lurch, and she was perfectly calm. As I looked at her, there was a soft glow in her face, deep confidence, a smile... I knew in my heart that she didn't need help - God was with her and she was in good hands. She was safe.

It is clear that we're called for each other, you and God. That's a vertical relationship; but there is also a horizontal relationship here, as we're called for each other, for our sisters and brothers. St. Francis called us together, to live the evangelical life... living the Gospel and, especially, giving witness to many who search for God's Word, His truth, and His light. Notice I didn't add "as a Franciscan," because all baptized Christians have this responsibility. And because He has called us, He has already given us the grace to accomplish all this.

2007 is about two months old. It seems the condition of the world is precarious at best. Let us reflect that in our Soul, every day is, "a day blessed by the Lord." It is time to prepare for the future, by getting our spiritual house in order, so to speak. *"Jesus Christ, the one savior of the world, yesterday, today, and forever"* (Heb. 13:8) is our All in all. It's a new beginning but it is only by reading and studying the Word, that you can live the Gospel, and that you can *give witness*. If you studied Scripture, particularly the New Testament, during your SFO meetings, more people would flock to your meetings, especially if you advertised it. Your fraternity will grow! I will pray every day that Divine Mercy Fraternity will grow stronger yet!

Relying on our Lord with confidence is a continual act of **humility**. Totally abandon yourself in Him, and He will watch over you. Amen.

2/16/2003