

Regular Meeting: Sun., June 10, 2:00 PM – South Rm., St. Helen's Christian Living Center.

Council Meeting: Sat., June 16, 9:30 AM – Arby's on west side of Rt. 1, at 16th Place, Vero Beach.

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: Donna will speak on St. Francis and the Eucharist
- 3:00 Refreshments and break
- 3:20 Liturgy of the Hours
- 4:00 Closing Prayer and dismissal

Refreshment Committee:

Snacks: Elizabeth Smith and Gene Caldarone

Beverages: Helen Caldarone

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. Please pray for Marie Fee who has broken her shoulder.

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: Fr. Richard P. LaCorte, SFO
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



Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Artist, unknown.

Annual Regional Fraternity Meeting:

Memorial Weekend Helen, Fred and I participated in a spiritually enriching retreat at the San Pedro Retreat Center in Winter Park. It was a celebration of the life of Elizabeth of Hungary. There were several talks on the God-centered life that she lived, and how her example can be a model for us in our own lives. She was completely self-less, caring only about God and His will in her life.

Meeting with other Franciscans and sharing with them the work of our fraternities was beneficial and allowed us to bond with one another. I hope that more fraternity members will be able to join us next year.

From the Minister's Desk:

In today's society sacrifice is a dirty word. We don't want to cause ourselves any kind of inconvenience. And yet, Elizabeth of Hungary gave everything she had to the poor, including herself. Jesus sacrificed Himself completely on the Cross for us. Let us consider Jesus and Elizabeth the next time that someone wants to invade our comfort zone.

May we all be bathed in the Blood of Christ and come our sparkling clean.

A Flame Within: Reflection on the Soul

Jesus said to the crowds: *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."* (in Jn. 6)

Last night, I was watching an old rerun of "The Nun's Story," This is a story, based on Kathryn Hulme's best-selling novel, *The Nun's Story*." The lead actress was Audrey Hepburn, who portrays Sister Luke in a Belgian Convent of a contemplative order of nuns. Filmed in 1959, when it was totally out of the question to leave any order after a religious has made perpetual profession, the movie is the story of a young nun who enthusiastically enters this monastic order, the daughter of a famous surgeon, goes to the missions in the Congo, to be a Surgical Assistant to the Surgeon (played by Peter Finch) at a local Congolese hospital, and, eventually, leaves the order entirely.

The sensation of the movie is that she leaves after having made final profession. If you are a discerning Catholic, you will readily see the real reason why she finds it necessary to leave... she put God second place, after herself. One cannot do this in ordinary life, but in particular in a vowed life, placing God in second place will douse that flame within: the fire will go out. Having been in a contemplative order, I have experienced the very stumbling block shown in the portrayal of Sister Luke's experiences in religious life. When the bell rang to stop work, she used to go on until finished with a patient. One can't do this in religious life. Similarly, in my experience, when the hour came to start Midday Prayer, I knew intellectually that I had to stop right then, but very often I didn't. That's disobedient for a religious with a Vow of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty. It's a fault that (in the movie) was reported during a Chapter of Faults (where religious gather together and voice their shortcomings). Thus, if a superior becomes aware that a sister commits this same fault day after day, there will be dialogue, and something will be done to help her realize that God comes first.

The life within, in the soul, is a life of strong conviction for some, and a very fragile life for others. Either the flame burns brightly, or it is pinched off by human pride. Pride (egotism) is the cause of much evil that goes on in this world. It is also the leading cause that dedicated people leave convents, monasteries, and other orders, or even the church. When that flame burns brightly, all is well, and the relationship between a soul and Our Lord will evolve into a beautiful and holy relationship. When that flame begins to flicker, the relationship will lessen, and, when the flame goes out, there will not be a relationship anymore. When the life of the soul ceases, sin follows almost immediately, because we have lost the continual war with Satan. People have told me, 'oh, he does not bother me'... watch out, that's an attitude of inviting Satan to wreak havoc in your soul. It isn't nice to tell anyone to go to Hell. But do tell Satan to return to Hell and burn to a crisp. In other words, don't let him and his powers and principalities anywhere near your soul - that soul is reserved for a special relationship with Jesus, a strong relationship of total love with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That means God ALWAYS comes first. And that also means, when the proverbial bell rings, we stop what we are doing and we withdraw into our "secret room" to pay homage to a loving brother and friend, Jesus Christ. If we do this consistently, we will never run out on God and He will reward us, if not in this life, then certainly in the next.

A soul where that flame burns brightly is never without temptations. It takes suffering on the part of most people to maintain this total immersion in obedience, chastity and poverty. It can be a very rocky pilgrimage, on a path strewn with many boulders. God, however, loves a well-fought fight. He does not award spiritual slouching. He looks for dedication, zeal, and the strong will to please Him. He loves conquerors, He identifies with those who will give this fight their 100% effort. God is also a very forgiving Master. When we have erred, we confess our sins, and we promise to do better. We can say we love God, but do we really? Do our actions, our striving to obey Him, indicate willingness to try harder, or is it only a half-hearted effort. The great Saint Bonaventure, in so many words, said ... If you love God, you do not sin. If you still sin, you do not love God enough! That's really what this is all about. It is the nitty-gritty of the matter, not loving God enough. We all sin, some are apt to say. But what are you doing about it... are you trying to sin less, or are you a spiritual couch potato?

Within a strong sense of obedience, it is possible to live in a continual state of Chastity and Poverty. Obedience is the gateway that keeps our will, tainted by Original Sin, out of the equation. People who are nuns, sisters, and monks, brothers or priests living in a religious order, and also, professed members of lay orders (e.g. Secular Franciscans), know that living in excess is wrong. It is an attraction to material things that keep our thoughts away from what is happening around us. There is so much suffering, there are so many people away from the Church, who need our prayerful help. A dedicated soul is a valuable commodity, that far outweighs any artificial road to fame, lavish living, or material things as such. And Chastity ... it is easy to understand why this is one of the Evangelical Counsels, but even for lay people, married or single, who belong to Secular Institutes, there is a need for chaste living. The rewards, even in this life, are overwhelming. Being at total peace with God is a happy relationship, a contemplative or meditative relationship, and subsequently those who enjoy this state of the soul, will be beneficial to society, evenly friendly to all, regardless of differences between themselves and others. They will bring into this world, a continual smile, a compassionate heart, and they will be seen as an image of Christ. May the Lord bless you and may He show His face to you. May He bless you, and your family.