
Regular Meeting: Sun. August, 12, 2:00 PM—South Rm. St. Helen's Christian Living Center.

Council Meeting: Sat. August 18, 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 Member Sharing how God is working in our lives
- 2.35 Ongoing Formation: DVD and lecture on the life of St. Clare by Donna Haro in honor of the Feast of St. Clare, Aug. 11.
- 3:10 Refreshments and break
- 3:30 Liturgy of the Hours
- 4:00 Closing Prayer and dismissal

Refreshment Committee:

Snacks: Adele Lamour and Elaine Matthews

Beverages: John Matthews

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. Assisitant: 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

Remember in your prayers: Julia McHugh, Jennie Donlin, Jerry Carey, Donna Haro, John Matthews, Fred Schaeffer, Marie Fee, Jack Solloway, 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: I'm sorry that I won't be able to be with you at the August meeting, but I'm going on an all expense paid vacation with my husband's family. I'll be with you in spirit.

As we look at the Life of St. Claire, we see a life of obedience and complete submission to the will of God, a life of selflessness. We, as Franciscans, strive to achieve these goals. There are times that we fail, but, that is unimportant. What's important is that we get right back up and get back on the path. Jesus is all merciful. May the peace of Jesus be with us all. ☺

GEORGE F. THOMAS, SFO
1930 -2007

George F. Thomas, SFO, 77, died July 25, 2007, at Indian River Medical Center.

He was born in Brooklyn, NY and moved to Vero Beach in 1989 from Bedford, NY. Before his retirement, he was the Sales Manager for Readers Digest Publishing Company of New York. He was professed in the Secular Franciscan Order, Divine Mercy Fraternity, Vero Beach, on October 12, 1996. He was also a member of the Knights of Columbus in Virginia, and Toastmasters International (New York)

He is survived by his sons, Richard B. Thomas of Vero Beach, John A. Thomas (Chicago, IL) and George Thomas of Leominster, MA.; brother Mark Thomas, and sister, Maryann Mattaliano, and two grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be sent to Catholic Charities, 9995 North Military Trail, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410.

It is always sad to lose a friend and brother, but George goes way back with us. He really helped Corrine McCarthy, SFO, in the early days in 1992-1993 with his beloved wife Trudy Thomas, SFO in the founding of our Fraternity. May he rest in peace.

The Mystic: St. Francis of Assisi

by Fred Schaeffer, SFO

What is a Mystic? Well, there are many definitions, none of which suit me. We could simply state that mysticism is the philosophy and practice of a direct experience of God. St. Francis had an innocence that is difficult to find in today's world. By upbringing, not really a lover of the environment, he regarded every tree as an individual creation of God. As G.K. Chesterton¹ says so well, "In a word, we talk about a man who cannot see the wood for the trees. St. Francis was a man who did not want to see the wood for the trees. He wanted to see each tree as a separate and almost a sacred thing, being a child of God and therefore a brother and sister of man."

Francis's "Canticle of the Creatures" tells us a lot about his uniqueness as a mystic. Some call him an "impossible dreamer," but make no mistake about this; he wasn't a simpleton or a fool. He had a deep, innate Faith in God, honed to a finer point than most of us. According to Chesterton, "For St. Francis nothing was ever in the background. We might say that his mind had no background, except perhaps that divine darkness out of which the divine love had called up every colored creature one by one. He saw everything as dramatic, distinct from its setting, not all of a piece like a picture but in action like a play. A bird went by him like an arrow; something with a story and a purpose, though it was a purpose of life and not a purpose of death."

"St. Francis was a mystic, but he believed in mysticism and not in mystification. As a mystic he was the mortal enemy of all those mystics who melt away the edges of things and dissolve an entity into an environment. He was a mystic of the daylight and the darkness; but not a mystic of the twilight. He was the very contrary of that sort of oriental visionary who is only a mystic because he is too much of a skeptic to be a materialist. St. Francis was emphatically a realist, using the word realist in its much more real medieval sense."

There are few people, of the modern world in the 21st Century, who are not materialists. There are even fewer people who are so pure of thought that they always have something good to say about other people. Most of us, today, suffer. We suffer because we cannot have what the other person has, and we suffer because of sickness. St. Francis was sick, too, but he knew his pain was the pain of the Cross, and he lived with Christ in a mystical relationship that made it easy to see why he is always pictured at the Cross, supporting Christ, and Vice-versa.

We need but to read "The Little Flowers of Saint Francis," to find examples of Francis's mysticism. St. Clare is also a great mystic. As were many great saints. St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, and St. Therese of the Child Jesus, were mystics because of their pure and direct relationship with Jesus. Some of the elderly, retired friars, still live this simple direct relationship with Jesus. I pray that there are more of them.

(1) "St. Francis of Assisi" G.K. Chesterton, Image Book edition 1957, ©1924, by George H. Doran Company

Order of Saint Clare

by Fred S. Schaeffer, SFO

The Franciscan family consists of friars, nuns and lay people. The Second Order of Saint Francis is known as the Poor Clares, or formally, OSC - Order of Saint Clare. It has been my privilege to meet some of these good people and so I have learned that the OSC is the contemplative branch of the Franciscan family.

People in Florida know a Poor Clare very well. She is Sr. Briege McKenna, OSC, a well-known, charismatic speaker. All of us know another Poor Clare, all over the world, Mother M. Angelica, founder of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Irondale, Alabama, and the greatest Catholic communications network, Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) which was launched on August 15, 1981. Now, in its 26th year, EWTN has become the largest religious media network in the world, transmitting programming 24 hours a day to more than 123 million homes in 140 countries and territories on more than 4,800 cable systems, wireless cable, Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS), low power TV and individual satellite users. And, when we cannot sleep there is EWTN-Radio, which is on short-wave. Their programs are also heard on certain AM/FM stations (Florida: Tallahassee, Pensacola, & Naples area). They can also be seen/heard via the Web on streaming audio and video.

In order to understand the sort of life Poor Clares live we need to first look at the life of other Franciscan religious who preach or teach or care for people directly in any number of ways. For example, Saint Francis and his friars were called to make God visible on earth by spreading the Good News of God's love to the whole world by bringing that love and care to those in need. Clare and her sisters went the more feminine way of giving themselves to the love of Christ Himself and their faith in the power of this love alone. That is the charism of her followers. Their life demands a total gift of self to God in the belief that by their union with God they can be a more fruitful means of effecting the spiritual balance of the entire world.



They are contemplatives but the fact that they are not externally engaged in charitable works does not mean they have renounced the Christian mission. They forfeit efficiency and immediate service in many areas, but have a definite mission within the Church; a job defined not by what they do but by what they are. Their apostolate is contained in the way they live - in the dedication demanded by the life itself. Years before they came into existence while Saint Francis was rebuilding the little church of St. Damian, he predicted that one day women would be there who would glorify God by their holy lives.

The Poor Clare Monastery I've visited in the mid-1990's (before they completed their present monastery; one of my visits was to the Groundbreaking), was the Monastery of St. Clare in Cincinnati, Ohio. They are located at 1505 Miles Road.

There are also Colettine Poor Clares. Nicolette (Colette) of Corbie was born in 1381, daughter of a carpenter. In 1406 Colette received permission from Pope Benedict XIII to undertake a reform of the three Orders of the Franciscan family. Unsuccessful in her attempt to bring reform to the monastery of her native Corbie, she finally succeeded in 1410 with the reform of the monastery at Besancon. Over the next three decades she founded sixteen houses where the reform took root. Her sisters were noted for their firm refusal of property ownership, whether individual or corporate, and for their emphasis on strict enclosure. There is a monastery of Colettines in Roswell, NM, Barhamsville, VA, and in Cleveland, OH, and there may be other locations.

Here is a list of Poor Clare houses in USA:

Alabama: Birmingham; Arizona: Phoenix; Colorado: Denver; Florida: Del Ray, Fort Meyers Beach, Largo; Indiana: Evansville, Kokomo; Illinois: Belleville, Minooka, Rockford; Louisiana: New Orleans; Massachusetts: Jamaica Plain; Michigan: Saginaw; Minnesota: Minneapolis; Montana: Great Falls; Nebraska: Omaha; New Jersey: New York; New Rochelle; Ohio: Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland – 1 & 2, Columbus; Pennsylvania: Langhorne; South Carolina: Greenville; Tennessee: Memphis; Texas: Brenham, Victoria; Virginia: Barhamsville; Washington, Spokane.

Let's keep our sisters in the Franciscan family in our prayers and thank Our Lord for giving the world this strong contemplative group in our family. Source of addresses and charism/spirituality description: various OSC websites. ☞

Formation program for the Eighth Centenary of St. Elizabeth of Hungary

Year One: The life of St. Elizabeth	Month 8. Widowhood
<p>Elizabeth's husband had planned for some time to go on crusade with the Emperor Frederick II, to free the Holy Land from Muslim control. He began his road south to embark in Italy in June 1227. Elizabeth rode to the very edge of his territories with him, because it was so hard to say goodbye. She was expecting their third child in less than three months.</p>	
<p>Ludwig was waiting in Otranto, Italy to embark for the Holy land when a serious epidemic spread through the crusaders' camp. He died of it on September 11, 1227. The news was brought to Elizabeth shortly after her daughter Gertrude's birth. When she heard that her husband was dead, she cried, "He is dead, dead, and the world and everything that is sweet in the world is dead to me!"</p>	
<p>By the time, some months later, when her husband's remains were brought back from Italy, she had accepted her loss as God's will, as a sacrifice, and prayed in these moving words: " Lord, I give you thanks for having mercifully consoled me by these bones of my husband which I have so much desired. Great as was my love for him, you know that I do not begrudge the sacrifice that my beloved and I made of himself to you for the liberation of the Holy Land. If I could have him, I would give the whole world for him, and go begging with him forever. But I call upon you to witness that, I would not want to redeem his life, even if it cost but a single hair, if it were against your will. Now I recommend myself and him to your grace. May your will for us be done."</p>	
<p>Elizabeth believed that our sacrifices to God should be made willingly and from a full heart: She said: "Give to the Lord what you have and gladly." She echoed Job's words: ""The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).</p>	
<p>Gospel: Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted (Mt. 5:4).</p>	