
Regular Meeting: Sun., September 9, at 2:00 PM—South Rm. St. Helen's Christian Living Center.

Council Meeting: Sat. September 15, at 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: St. Francis and the Eagle by
Donna Haro
- 3:10 Refreshments and break
- 3:30 Liturgy of the Hours
- 4:00 Closing Prayer and dismissal

Refreshment Committee:

Snacks: Pauline Pavlick and Pat Riordan

Beverages: Peggy Rysdyke

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, Father Richard, 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.

Liturgy of the Hours: Please remember to bring your Liturgy of the Hours prayer book to the September meeting, as we will no longer be handing out copies. Helen will be giving instructions in the use of the Liturgy of the Hours prayer book after the meeting for those of us who need a refresher, and also for those who are new to this prayer.

From the Minister's Desk: As I write this Canticle it is the Feast of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Article 9 of the SFO rule states:

The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to his every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.

Our Queen Mother is the perfect example of dying to self. She has shown us through her humility and obedience the path to eternal life. Let us pray to be more like her and as a result closer to her Son. God bless you. ☩

Love for Jesus

"Love cannot triumph unless it becomes the one passion of our life. Without such a passion we may produce isolated acts of love; but our life is not really won or consecrated to an ideal. Unless we have a passionate love for our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament, we shall accomplish nothing. Certainly, our Lord loves us passionately in the Eucharist; He loves us blindly without a thought for Himself, devoting Himself entirely for our good. We should love Him as He loves us."

St. Peter Julian Eymard

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

Year One: The life of St. Elizabeth

Month 9. Elizabeth is driven from court

Elizabeth was not left alone with her grief for long, but soon experienced a violent upheaval in her life. As Isentrude, a witness at her canonization process, said: "After her husband's death, Elizabeth was ejected from the castle and all the possessions of her dower, by some of her husband's vassals."

The reason for this has never been completely explained, but the persecution was very likely due to Elizabeth's previously public shunning of the food gathered from the peasants by her husband's officials; she had as good as accused them of theft and corruption. Indeed, her actions had been widely criticized at court and among the Thuringian nobility. During her lifetime, Elizabeth had used the revenues from the land her husband had given her as a dower to provide herself with licit food. After his death, some of these officials perhaps decided to prevent Elisabeth from using that dower in retaliation. Her brother-in-law, Heinrich, now ruling Thuringia as regent for Elizabeth and Ludwig's five-year-old son, may have been involved.

Historians have disagreed about whether Elizabeth was physically expelled from the castle; some have interpreted it as meaning that she felt morally compelled to leave because without that income from her dower, she would have been compelled to violate her conscience by eating the forbidden food. But the first interpretation is more in line with the earliest sources.

After leaving the castle, Elizabeth spent the first night in a storage shed where pigs were kept. Perhaps out of fear of the officials, no one would give her and her children shelter. She eventually found a poor dwelling. She suffered privation, mockery and persecution from those of her own class, but she did not indulge in feelings of resentment. She knew uncertainty and fear about the future, but trusted in God.

A poor woman, to whom she had once given charity, pushed her into the mud, but she merely laughed and washed her clothes. It was during this time that she had a vision of Christ, who appeared to be inviting her to follow him. She replied: "So then, Lord, You want to be with me and I want to be with You and I never want to be separated from You."

Spiritual reflection:

Elizabeth followed the example of Jesus in returning evil with good:

"But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

bleed those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Lk. 6:27-28).

Elizabeth's experience of suffering was what brought her to Christ and to sharing His sufferings. Personal experience of poverty led her to a greater understanding of poverty as complete dependence on God and others.

Gospel: Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:10)

Year One: The life of St. Elizabeth

Month 10. Her penitential and prayer life

During her husband's lifetime, Elizabeth had vowed to preserve continence should she survive him. But now she desired a total renunciation. On Good Friday, March 24, 1228, Elizabeth placed her hand on the altar of the chapel of the Friars Minor in Eisenach, renouncing "the pomp of the world, her own will, and everything that Our Lord counsels us to renounce in His Gospel." Some months after that, she was clothed in a simple poor gray habit and professed as a penitent in Marburg. Once again some Franciscan friars were present. Her ladies-in-waiting, Guda and Isentrude, were professed with her, as were two poor women, Irmingard and Elisabeth. They lived the penitential life together.

The Pope who canonized Elizabeth, Gregory IX, wrote: "She clothed herself in the religious habit, in which she did not fail, until her last day, to celebrate within herself the mystery of the Passion of the Lord."

Elizabeth was now able to fulfill her desire to live in poverty. Indeed she loved poverty so completely, that she told her Franciscan confessor, Brother Gerard, that she would like to live completely dependent on alms, like the lepers.

Elizabeth was devoted to the active life of charity and compassion, but she was equally devoted to a life of prayer. Her confessor, Conrad of Marburg, said: "In spite of these works of the active life, I say before God that I have rarely seen a more contemplative woman. For some men and women religious frequently saw her as she was coming from her secret prayers, with her face wondrously radiant, as though sunbeams were coming from her eyes."

Spiritual reflection:

The meaning of the life of penance is a continual turning toward God. Through it, we renounce the old life of selfishness, and undergo a death to self to live a new life with God. Elizabeth undertook this life of penance seriously and sought to die completely to self to live for God.

She did this while living in the world rather than in the cloister. Life in the world, however, should not kill the life of prayer. In fact, constant prayer is necessary to maintain our relationship with God when we are faced with the distractions of the world. Elizabeth shows us that prayer and contemplation are indeed possible while we are engaged in the active life.

Gospel: "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me (Luke 9:23).

ON THE VANITIES OF THE WORLD: *Blessed Beatrice of Silva, virgin, II Order, founder. (September 1)*

1. Consider the danger to which the vanities of the world expose us. Honors and riches arouse the lower passions and tempt us to pride and forgetfulness of God. Blessed Beatrice was well advised when she rid herself of all vanities and chose a life of renunciation. The words of Holy Scripture can be applied to many who have indulged in worldly vanities: "As much as she has glorified herself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give to her" (Rev. 18:7). -- Do not let yourself be ensnared.
2. The vanities of the world are transient. It is written: "Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain" (Prov 31:30). What will be the end of all worldly vanities? "Of earth they were made and into earth they returned altogether" (Eccl 3:20). Therefore, the Wise Man says: "Why is earth and ashes proud? (Eccl 10:9). Blessed Beatrice acted wisely when she bade farewell to all vanities. -- Frequently recall the words the Church uses on Ash Wednesday: "Remember. O man, that you are dust and unto dust you shall return."
3. Consider that to devote oneself to the infinite Good is the best thing we can do. Blessed Beatrice did that. All for God, that was her maxim. She found in it interior peace and satisfaction, during her sojourn on earth, and in the next world the possession of the highest Good in eternal bliss. Thomas a Kempis is correct when he says "All is vanity but love God and serve Him alone." The Franciscan pope, Clement XIV, wrote at the time of his elevation to the cardinalate: "I count this dignity as an accumulation of letters of the alphabet for an epitaph that is of no use to him who lies beneath it." *from: The Franciscan Book of Saints*, ed. by Fr. Marion Habig, ofm., © 1959 Franciscan Herald Press