

Divine Mercy Fraternity
Secular Franciscan Order
Vero Beach, Florida

The Canticle
November 2007

www.franciscan-sfo.org

Regular Meeting: Sun., November 11, at 2:00 PM—South Rm. St. Helen's Christian Living Center.

Council Meeting: Sat., November 17, 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: Helen will continue the discussion on the Admonitions of St. Francis
- 3:10 Refreshments and break
- 3:30 Liturgy of the Hours
- 4:00 Closing Prayer and dismissal

Refreshment Committee:

Snacks: Kathleen Van Buskirk and Marie Louis-Jacques

Beverages: Gene Caldarone

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, 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.

Upcoming Events:

National Fraternity Workshop on Formation: held January 17-20 at San Pedro. Fee: \$258 double occupancy. Registration forms available for all interested.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary: At the December meeting we will begin to discuss the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary and how her life can influence the way we live our lives today.

From the Minister's Desk:

As we approach Thanksgiving, let us remember to thank God in all circumstances. It is not difficult to thank Him for our blessings. Our thanks during these times flow easily and joyously. Thanking Him during times of trouble and pain is not easy. But, looking at these times as challenges that He puts into our lives to help us grow closer to Him enables us to change our attitude and to accept the crosses that He lovingly send us. Can our suffering be any greater than His? God bless you!

From the Editor/Webmaster's Desk:

Beginning with this issue we plan to e-mail a ".pdf" file of the Canticle to all those who have a computer and use email. This saves work for Fred and money for the Fraternity. If you have email and Fred doesn't know about it, please let him know. Thanks!

Quiet moments with Jesus

- Dusk settled over the gardens. Birds swarmed toward their nightly roost. I slowly walked along the paths, oblivious to other people, meditating on the Evening Chant of Vespers. It was quiet and Jesus walked with me. He was in my thoughts. The beauty of the moment touched me.
- On another occasion, I was sitting in a Cathedral. This also was a quiet time. The sounds of the great organ slowly accelerated into a mighty crescendo, and as slowly as it had begun, the Fugue came to a soft and mesmerizing end. Quiet regained, I was alone with God.
- One cold January, on retreat at the Trappist Monastery in Kentucky, Gethsemane, we were encouraged to get some fresh air into our lungs. Packed up in a parka, hat and gloves, I walked outside, toward the nearest farm entrance on the other side. A thermometer attached to a barn read 5 degrees (F.), but that only bothered me for a little while. It had snowed the night before and there was a pristine white covering the world around me. Slowly, I prayed the Our Father, with full attention. Jesus was with me, and I felt the cold no more.
- A similar scene also comes to mind. In the Netherlands, when I was about 10 or 11, I took long bicycle rides on days off. I remember being somewhere south of town in the fields. It had snowed that morning, and there was a mist over the fields that stretched very far. Then I heard a lonely bell, and indeed, a small steeple was visible... the bells rang at the Consecration of Holy Mass - a wonderful custom. I knew Jesus was with us, as He was with me in the Spiritual Communion I whispered.
- Experiencing a touch of God is often associated with a moment of beauty. Seeing a very elderly person deep in prayer, kneeling erect, not slouching, that too is a moment of beauty. The beauty was that this soul knew Jesus.
- Then again, children playing in the garden, totally unaware of anything that went on beyond their patch of green. The beauty of true love of God only as a child can love a parent. God is a parent, too.
- The memory of daily Eucharistic Adoration, is a moment of beauty. In my monastic years, sitting quietly in front Jesus, listening to my Master, as He was present in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, the Real Presence... truly a touch of God. A moment of holiness. A moment of quiet, of devotion, of total concentration on He who is beauty itself.
- I long for quiet time with Jesus. So hard to find. You sit in Church and invariably someone comes over to share his or her day. That's OK, they are lonely too, but the moment of quiet is gone. Charity toward others is more important than my quiet moment. There will be another time. I hope it is soon.
- There are various Franciscan practices of withdrawing from the hustle and bustle of the day. Old, and particularly traditional friaries used to have small houses on the property, hermitages. If we wanted to get away, we'd overnight in one of those places. It was like a mini-retreat. The particular ones I was thinking of had heat, but there were others that did not. Sometimes "roughing it" for a quiet evening with God can be a very beautiful

time, but if it is too cold, it becomes a distraction. But Franciscans turn right around and offer these times of distraction for a worthy cause. No time with God is wasted. He is always with us.

- As young children we're taught to say our prayers before going to bed. You kneel in front of your bed and you tell God you love Him, thank you Lord for the beautiful day, and hey Lord, please help Mom and Dad. Do we still pray like that now that we're 50, 60 or older? Well, errr... no. Either we do not pray before going to bed, or we pray Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours (particularly as Franciscans) half asleep already... we should have done this a bit earlier. The prayer of an obedient child is worth 100% more than our decrepit attempt at prayer, yet Jesus loves us equally. Another moment of beauty.
- The elderly priest, obviously arthritic, kneels for a long time, at the altar, adoring Jesus Christ at the conclusion of the prayers of the Consecration. The pain on the priests face is replaced by a glow of prayerful attention. That's a very big moment of beauty.
- A priest in the confessional, who is partially disabled due to a stroke, with great difficulty, arises to stand before me, place his hands on my head to give me absolution. That's a gesture that goes further than words and in that, there is much beauty.
- A toddler still in his mother's arms, in church, gazes around and when he sees someone, gives that person a most holy and innocent smile. Even though the child does not know the receiver of his moment of joy, his smile is a reflection of Jesus Himself.

Be at peace my friend, make time for Jesus so He can visit with you, too.

Fred Schaeffer, SFO

Prayer to the Holy Spirit (Hermann Schalück, OFM)

Today, O God, we pray: send us your Spirit, to be for us a burning and brilliant fire, to illumine our shadows and bring our love once again to life. May the Spirit be for us a breath of sweetness, consoling and soothing our timid agitation about the future. May the Spirit be a strong wind to fill our sails and set a daring course for us, guiding it towards new horizons. May the Spirit be a storm to clear the air, water to make new flowers bloom after the drought. O Lord of our life and of our history, may your Spirit enable us to experience at firsthand how the ancient mission, which you entrusted to us in truth, is still able to transform the world in these new times.

