

November 2009



The Franciscan Legionnaire

Newsletter of the Friars Legion of St. Peter's Church in the Loop
110 W. Madison St., Chicago, IL 60602 ❖ Phone: 312-372-5111
E-mail: FriarsLegion@aol.com ❖ Web Site: www.stpetersloop.org

Peace and Everything Good!

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Paz y Bien! (Spanish)

Pace e Bene! (Italian)

This Franciscan greeting has echoed throughout the world for centuries. St Francis of Assisi in his youth fought in a war, was defeated in battle, and was a prisoner of war for a year. This experience impacted greatly on his view of life. From marching off to war, Francis became a Herald for Peace and non-violence. Francis learned that a person must first have peace inside: "While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart."



(St Francis tamed the wolf of Gubbio by offering a word and gesture of peace.)

Non-violence is of the essence of the Gospel proclamation. Much of St Francis' writings, especially the Rules of Life he wrote for Friars and Laity are based on the Sermon on the Mount, Chapter 5-6-7 of Matthew's Gospel. Here are some verses from these chapters:

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land...Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied...Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy...Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God...You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment...If you bring your gift to the altar and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift...You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well...You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same?...If you forgive others their

transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions...Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.”



(Sermon on the Mount: Matthew’s Gospel, Chapters 5-6-7)

Sounds familiar, I hope. How would our lives look if we truly lived according to the Plan of Jesus, his Plan for a new World Order? What would happen to our thinking and speaking, our acting and our walking in this world as God’s beloved sons and daughters if we would read from the Sermon on the Mount each day? (I have those three chapters on my website: www.frchuckofm.org so click on that address anytime for a read from the Sermon on the Mount.) Or keep your Bible open to Matthew 5.

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), the great Hindu non-violent leader in India, read every day from Chapters 5-6-7 of Matthew’s Gospel. He called the Sermon on the Mount the greatest statement of non-violence ever written.



Here are some quotes from Gandhi that were inspired by the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus:

What difference does it make to the dead, the

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| orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy? |
| The moment the slave resolves that he will no longer be a slave, his fetters fall. He frees himself and shows the way to others. Freedom and slavery are mental states. |
| Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. |
| In my humble opinion, non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as is cooperation with good. |
| Hatred can be overcome only by love. |
| Love never claims, it ever gives; love never suffers, never resents, never revenges itself. Where there is love there is life; hatred leads to destruction. |
| You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty. |
| An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. |
| A coward is incapable of exhibiting love; it is the prerogative of the brave. |

What are our favorite quotes that move us, guide us, challenge us in our journey as Gospel People? Let me know and I will share them in this newsletter.

Fr. Chuck Faso OFM at cfaso@earthlink.net

(Here’s a website where you can check quotes of many men and women:
www.allgreatquotes.com)

St. Damian of Molokai

On October 11, 2009, Pope Benedict canonized five new Saints – from Spain, Poland, Belgium, and France. One of the new Saints is Fr. Damian de Veuster, SS.CC – a member of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary a missionary congregation of priests and brothers. He joined the Congregation in Leuven, Belgium in 1860.



(Fr. Damian in 1865)

During his seminary studies, he would pray every day before a picture of the patron of missionaries, St Francis Xavier. Three years later Damian was set to Hawaii to be ordained in the Cathedral of Honolulu.

For ten years Damian ministered on the island of Hawaii as he established nine parishes. During that time, foreign traders and sailors brought diseases to Hawaii. Thousands died of influenza, syphilis and other ailments which had never before affected them. This included the plight of leprosy or Hansen's Disease. At the time, leprosy was thought to be incurable and highly contagious (We now know that 95% of the general population has immunity.). In 1865, fearful of its spread, the Hawaii Legislature passed the "Act to Prevent the Spread of Leprosy" which quarantined people with Hansen's Disease to settlement colonies known as Kalaupapa and Kalawao, on a peninsula on the island of Moloka'i.

Over 8000 people were sent to the Kalaupapa peninsula from 1866 to 1969. They were quarantined with few supplies and healthcare. While Bishop believed that the lepers at the very least needed a priest to minister to their needs,

he realized that this assignment could potentially be a death sentence, and so did not want to send any one person "in the name of obedience". After prayerful thought, four priests volunteered. The idea was the volunteers would take turns assisting the distressed.

Father Damien was the first to volunteer and on May 10, 1873, Father Damien arrived at the secluded settlement at Kalaupapa, where Bishop Maigret presented him to the 816 lepers living there as "one who will be a father to you, and who loves you so much that he does not hesitate to become one of you; to live and die with you." Damien's first course of action was to build a church and establish the Parish of Saint Philomena. His role was not limited to being a priest: he dressed ulcers, built homes and beds, built coffins and dug graves.

Under his leadership, basic laws were enforced, shacks became painted houses, working farms were organized and schools were erected. At his own request, and that of the lepers, Father Damien remained on Molokai.

Damian wrote in his diary, in December 1884, that he soaked his feet in boiling water, as usual. One evening he felt no heat. He knew then that he had contracted leprosy. He continued to work vigorously in building homes and ministering to the sick. He died April 15, 1889.



(Fr Damian in 1888)

Gandhi claimed Damian to have been an inspiration for his own social campaigns in India that led to the freedom of his people and secured aid for those that needed it. Gandhi said

in 1971: “The political and journalistic world can boast of very few heroes who can compare to Fr. Damian. It is worthwhile to look for the source of such heroism.”

I have preached retreats and parish missions on all five of the major islands of Hawaii – Kauai, Oahu, Maui, Hawaii, and Molokai. Twenty-five people with Hansen’s Disease still live on Moloka’i. Twelve are Catholic. How moved I was by their faith and devotion as I presided at Sunday Mass for them. After mass, they all gave me big Aloha/Mahalo (Thank You) hugs.

A relic of St Damian – a bone from his foot – is traveling from Rome back to Hawaii where it will be find a lasting home in the Cathedral of Honolulu where he was ordained a priest. The first stop of the relic on October 13 was at the Cathedral in Detroit, Michigan. A friend of mine and I drove there for the reception of the relic on the evening of the 13th and for the four services in the Cathedral on the 14th. Hundreds of people were present throughout the day for two Masses, Midday Prayer, and for Anointing of the Sick. The relic was taken to San Francisco and then to all the islands of Hawaii.

Now all the Church can be inspired by this Saint of compassion for the sick and those cast aside. May his prayers and intercession for us stretch our hearts to feel compassion for all in need. St Damian of Moloka’i, pray for us!

Welcome Fr. Kurt, Pastor

On October 30, 2009, Fr. Kurt Hartrich OFM was installed as the new Pastor of St Peter’s. Fr. Kurt was two years ahead of me in the seminary. We taught together at our High School seminary. Fr Kurt has been pastor at three of our parishes and was our Provincial for eight years. He brings much energy and joy. Welcome, Fr. Kurt!

Happy All Saints Day!
May the Dead live in God!

**APPLICATION FOR YEAR-LONG
MEMORIAL CANDLE**

(Please print, leaving a space between each word.)

To be lit in honor of:

Living_____ Deceased_____

Requested by:

Date candle is to be lit: Immediately_____
Specific
Date_____

The offering for the Memorial Candle is \$150.00. Please enclose a check for the full amount with this form.

**APPLICATION FOR PERPETUAL
ENROLLMENT IN THE FRIARS
LEGION**

(Please print, leaving a space between each word.)

Please Enroll:

as a Perpetual Member of the Saint Peter’s Friars Legion.

Living_____ Deceased_____

Your Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip Code:

OFFERING: Individual, \$25.00_____
Family, \$100.00_____ *(Immediate family, parents and children)*