

December 2009



The Franciscan Legionnaire

Newsletter of the Friars Legion of St. Peter's Church in the Loop
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Peace and Everything Good!

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!
Silent Night! Holy Night!
People look East, the time is near!
O Little Town of Bethlehem!

The December-January season of Advent-Christmas is upon us! The days continue to shorten as the darkness of winter nights lengthen and seemingly conquer day by day the hope that daylight offers. The cold suffocates the warmth into the hard frozen earth. Our living outside and free is limited to the warmth of our homes as we wrap ourselves in sweaters and blankets. The windows and doors are closed and locked. We too shut down and turn inward.

News of war in Afghanistan and Iraq and many other places with its death and destruction mounting, the struggles for employment and survival, housing and health-care issues, marriage problems, personal losses of loved ones - increase our pain and darkness.....And so the long list of dark evils and problems surround us like the December cold darkness.

Do we need still a Savior? Do we need to be saved? And so we sing from deep in our souls:

O Come, O Come, Emanuel! – We are Israel, God's people today who “mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.” The Good News is for us – the Savior is coming to us and for us, today!

Who is this Savior?

He is Emmanuel, Wisdom from on High, the Great Lord of might, the Rod of Jesse's stem, the Key of David, the Dayspring from on high, the Desire of nations! These are the Savior's titles that we sing about during this darkened time of the year.

And what is this Savior to do for us as individuals, as couples, as families, as nations?

This ninth century Chant hymn that we sing again and again gives voice to our hopes to slow down the darkening world with its injustices and wars, both international and gang wars, and also in hopes to woo back light into our lives.



This Emmanuel-God-with-us Savior will ransom captive Israel, will show the path of knowledge and teach us Wisdom, will deliver us from every foe and give us victory o'er the grave, will open wide our heavenly home and make safe the way that leads on high and close

the path to misery. This Savior will cheer us by drawing nigh, disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death's dark shadow put to flight. And finally, this God in our flesh will bid our sad divisions cease and be for us our King of Peace. For this we all need to pray in song:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

These weeks of Advent can be confusing to our senses. *In our Churches* we see purple bows and candles as part of our Advent Wreath and we sing hymns only sung during these weeks of battle between darkness and light, of sadness and joy, losing to the dark evils of our world and yet holding on to the hope our faith announces.

Outside Church, we are bombarded with lights and sights of Santa's and decorated trees, of Christmas cards received and sent, of gifts bought and still to buy, as if Christmas were here already and still not yet. And maybe the two different worlds help and remind, lift up and keep us in the reality of our world.

In our history as Church, some countries entered a *six week period of Advent* to prepare for Baptisms on January 6 – the feast of God's manifestation in Jesus to the Magi, at the Baptism in the Jordan, and at the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee. This was a time of preparing, of longing, of purifying, of getting ready to be a member of the Body of Christ..

The Romans were quite aware of days getting shorter and dark nights consuming the light of day. This was a time to name one's fears and enemies, one's disappointments and failures. And so it seemed that all was lost: the gods of evil and darkness were going to conquer the world. Then on Dec. 22 and on Dec. 23, on Dec. 24 – hope was beginning to be restored for the light of the day was arriving earlier and departing later, a little more, each day. Which meant the God of Goodness and Light was victorious over the Battle with Darkness.

Celebrations were prepared. Bonfires on the hills of Rome announced on December 25th the Good News that the Saving Good God of Light was victorious. Singing, feasting, dancing, expressed the relief and gratitude in the hearts of the Romans.

When Christians in Rome experienced these December 25th Roman celebrations, they recognized their own experience of darkness conquered and hope restored victorious in the Birth of Jesus the Savior! (325 AD)

***Come, O long expected Jesus
Born to set your people free.
From our fears and sins release us,
Free us from captivity.***

***Born your people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King!
Born to reign in us forever,
Now your gracious Kingdom bring***

We are accompanied these weeks of Advent by the voices of the prophets Isaiah and John the Baptist and the music of Handel's Messiah.

***Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People,
Speak of peace now – says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness
Mourning 'neath their sorrow's load.
Speak unto Jerusalem of the peace that waits...
Tell of all the sins I cover, and that war-fare
now is over! (Isaiah)***

***On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh.
Awake and hearken for he brings
Glad tidings of the King of kings.***

***Then cleansed be every heart from sin
Make straight the way for God within
And let each heart prepare a home
Where such a mighty guest may come.***

Advent Season and Christmas Season are one seven week season of hoping-longing and of fulfillment in the presence of the One so longed

for. Our hearts are drawn to a helpless infant lying in a manger who reaches out to us with innocence and joy to heal our troubled hearts. A brilliant star pierces the darkness that covers the world and breaks open a heavenly choir of angels who sing forth a hope-stirring message of Peace on Earth. Such good news can shatter our fears and prejudices, our angers and bitterness and all that keeps us distant from one another, close by or across the world.

St Francis of Assisi who lived in the midst of medieval wars between rich and poor, between Christianity and Islam, heard the cry of the poor and of “those who walked in darkness.” And he saw the great light in Christ Jesus.



Francis, recalling a visit he had made years before to Bethlehem, resolved to create the manger he had seen there. The ideal spot was a cave in nearby Greccio. He would find a baby, hay upon which to lay him, an ox and an ass to stand beside the manger. Word went out to the people of the town. At the appointed time they arrived carrying torches and candles. One of the friars began celebrating Mass while Francis himself gave the sermon. His biographer, Thomas of Celano, recalls that Francis stood before the manger, overwhelmed with love and filled with a wonderful happiness. (1223)

I pray that all of you will be blessed this Advent-Christmas season with much peace and joy, healing and hope. May Jesus the Christ, our Savior and friend, enter each of your hearts and your relationships with light to dispel any darkness or fear. Like the Shepherds, let us hasten to Bethlehem (House of Bread) to be nourished and strengthened for our journey back

to our homes and work with much Good News to share with all. *Merry Christmas! Buon Natale! Feliz Navidad!* - **Fr. Chuck Faso, OFM**

How Many Friars Live at St Peter's? **by Br. Herb Rempe, OFM**

My name is Brother Herb and I have lived here at St Peter's for almost ten years. For six of those years I was the Guardian of the community. (St Francis never used the word Superior to describe the Friar who served as leader of a local community; he was called the Guardian – one looks after the needs of the Brothers.) Frequently, I would say, “I don't know for sure how many friars live at St Peter's.” And frequently I would get some very funny looks. Let me try to tell you who lives here.

There are nine Priests who live here and work for St Peter's Church. There are seven Brothers who live here and work for St Peter's Church and Friary. All of these Friars are listed in the parish bulletin.

There are four Friars who work here full time and live in four separate communities in the Chicago area: Fr. Robert Hutmacher, Fr. Robert Pawell, Fr. Paul Gallagher, and Br. Clarence Klingert. Also, Fr. Lawrence Jagdfeld works here part time and lives in another community.

We have three Friars attached here and live in three different states: Fr. Larry Janezic, in Silver Springs MD, Fr. Robert Karris at St Bonaventure NY, and Fr Mario DiCicco in Berkeley CA. All of these men have a room here they call home.

We have two Friars who live here and teach at two different places: Br. Sam Danna at Loyola University and Fr Vaughn Fayle at Catholic Theological Union in Hyde Park-Chicago. One Friar, Fr. Arthur Anderson lives here while he writes his dissertation for his Canon Law degree for the Antonianum University in Rome, Italy.

We also have two formation programs here at St. Peter's and so we have three Friars living here and going to CTU for Theology Studies: Br. Duc Pham, Br. Thinh Van Tran, and Br. Ed McKenzie. All three are studying for the Priesthood.

We also have a pre-Candidate program for the Province here at St. Peter's. In this program we have three young men who live here and study English and other courses as needed. They are Alberto, Francisco, and Leopoldo. They all live here and study at various locations and have some private tutoring right here at St. Peter's.

We also have one Friar Guest from Brazil who is also here to study English. He is Fr. Alex da Silva from Brazil. It is very common for us to have as many as four or five Friars here at one time from foreign countries to study English or Theology.

Then on any given day we may have from one to five Friar guests from around the USA staying here for meetings. We also have two other Friars who neither live here nor work here but are listed at St. Peter's for canonical reasons.

So how many Friars live here at St Peter's? I am still not sure but they are all welcome and they all have a reason to call St Peter's home.

(PS from Fr. Chuck Faso: While I lived at St Peter's for almost twenty years (1978-1998), I heard quite often another question, namely, where do the Friars live. I would point to the ceiling of the Church and say: "Up there above the ceiling, in three floors of living space including bedrooms, a community room with an attached magazine library, a dining room and kitchen, a barber shop, a tailor shop for habit making, laundry for the friars to wash and dry their own clothes, guests rooms, a library, a meeting room, and a few TV rooms. Almost all these rooms surround a court yard. The four cars for the community are parked in the public garage on Madison and Wells.)

**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)*