



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

May the Lord give you Peace!

By Fr Chuck Faso, OFM (www.frchuckofm.org)

St Francis of Assisi and the Eucharist



October 4 is the feast of St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226). What an influence this Poverello, this little Poor Man of Assisi, has had on all the world – all faiths, all denominations,

believers and those still searching. San Francesco (St Francis in Italian) son of a wealthy cloth merchant, choose to be poor like Christ – the Christ St Francis found and loved in the Crib, on the Cross, and on the Altar. During the last twenty years of his life, St Francis walked from village to village, city to city, as an itinerant preacher of the Good News of the Gospel, a traveling evangelist like Jesus. During the first year of his conversion - of his selling all he had, giving it to the poor, and following the poor crucified Christ - other young men of Assisi joined him.

Like Francis, they also had wealth, prestige, power and like Francis, they were not happy and had no peace in their hearts. Soon Francis and his band of twelve clothed in poor, rough robes with a cord around their waists and hoods on their heads, danced and sang their way for a hundred miles to Rome to seek the Pope's advice, permission and blessing to live the Gospel in this new way. The first sentence in the Rule of Life of 1223 (that we Friars still follow today) begins with the words: "The Rule and Life of the Friars Minor (the Lesser Brothers) is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity."



Today in the world there are some thirty thousand Franciscan Friars who are committed to live the Gospel in fraternity as Brothers to one another and as Brothers to every person we meet because every person is our brother, our sister. We Friars



(from the Latin word Frater meaning Brother) have developed into three branches of the same one Order of Friars: the Conventual Friars, the Capuchin Friars and Friars Minor (the Friars at St Peter's in the Loop of Chicago). The Franciscan Order also consists of the Poor Clares (cloistered Sisters founded by St Clare of Assisi) and the Third Order Regular (Sisters and Brothers and Priests) and Third Order Secular (Lay people who live and work in the world and promise to live the Gospel in their state of life according to the spirit of St Francis).

Of the many aspects of St Francis life – his love of Creation, of the poor, of his constant search for the balance between quiet prayer and active preaching, etc – I would like to focus on his love of the Eucharist and then continue my reflections from the last three months on the Eucharistic Prayer.



One of our Friars of the Sacred Heart Province, Fr Mark Heggner, OFM, wrote a pamphlet on St Francis and the Eucharist. I must have read it forty years ago. Fr Mark who headed up the Franciscan Herald Press and was very instrumental in the beginning of the Mayslake Village in Oak Brook IL, began his writing

with this statement: “St Francis of Assisi began a Eucharistic Revolution in the Middle Ages.” In his Last Will and Testament, St Francis wrote: “And the Lord gave me such faith in churches that I would pray with simplicity in this way and say: ‘We adore You, Lord Jesus Christ, in all Your churches throughout the whole world and we bless You because by Your holy cross you have redeemed the world.’”



We Friars have the custom of praying those words of Francis every time we enter or leave a church. I have developed a practice when I am driving and see a church even in the distance, to pray those words of St Francis and express my faith in the Lord’s Eucharistic Presence in that particular Catholic Church. This becomes quite a challenge driving through Chicago, especially as I drive the Kennedy north of the Loop – every few blocks stands another Catholic Church. Rush Hour allows me to pray more devotionally those words of adoration and praise of Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament in those many churches.

On the evening of October 3rd, Franciscans everywhere gather in prayer to celebrate and remember St Francis’ death, his Transitus – his Passing from this life through the door of death into everlasting life to the fullness of life promised him in Baptism and when he vowed himself to Gospel living.

This Transitus Service consists of readings of his last hours surrounded by his Brothers at the Portiuncula in Assisi in 1226. There are chants that we sing, reflections that can be given and shared, candles lighted and held. We know from the accounts of his dying that Francis asked for the Gospel of John chapter 17 to be read to him. This Chapter 17 is Jesus last words before going to the Garden of Gethsemane to begin his Passion and Death. Jesus last words were prayers for his disciples, that they stay faithful and strong.



May this feast of St Francis on October 4th and all through this month help all of us to grow in our understanding and love for Jesus present in the Eucharist! May St Francis guide our steps to a closer



union with Christ present on our altars. Happy and Blessed feast of St Francis to you all!

(October is a good month to read a biography of St Francis. The St Peter’s Gift Shop has many biographies, DVDs, CDs, of St Francis for sale.)

Eucharist Prayer Reflection (continued)

With St Francis’ love for the Mass and the Holy Eucharist, let us continue our reflections of these several past months on the core of the Mass, the Eucharist Prayer. This Prayer of the whole Church (all 13 official Eucharist Prayers in the USA) is a Prayer of Thanksgiving and Praise, of Transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, of intercessions for all the church and all the world. The Eucharistic Prayer is directed to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, Through Christ-With Christ-In Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

After the Preface and Holy Holy Holy, we continue to tell God why we are thanking and praising God today, at this particular gathering. So we all can make this our litany of thanksgiving by silently saying after each phrase the priest says: “We thank you, God.”

Then the priest makes a gesture, the ancient gesture of blessing – the extending of hands over the bread and wine. This gesture of the imposition of hands has been restored by the Vatican Council to all the sacraments. At this moment we all join the priest in our hearts in asking God to send the Holy Spirit on these gift of bread and wine “so that they may become the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus the Christ.” Here is our theology and faith in God’s transforming presence and power. The Holy Spirit transforms the bread and wine into the presence of Christ. I was ordained to lead God’s people in prayer to God for the Holy Spirit to do what the Holy Spirit alone can do so well – make something new, create something holy, change Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. In answer to our prayer, the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the priest changes and transforms and makes new, as if for the first time, the saving presence of Christ.



Next follows the Institution Narrative, the story of what Jesus said and did at the last supper in the Upper Room, the Cenacle. This is the narration of Jesus' words and actions as found in some of the Gospels and in St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. These actions and words that have been whispered in secret and proclaimed in magnificent Cathedrals, on the hoods of jeeps in war and on the simple altar in a poor chapel. These actions and words have given Christians the courage and strength to face torture and death as Jesus did - his body given up for us and his blood poured out for us.



The question that needs be asked to help us understand better this Institution Narrative is this: To whom does the priest tell the story of what Jesus said and did at the Last Supper? To whom do we tell the story of the Last Supper, for the

Institution Narrative is part of the Eucharistic Prayer. Most people answer this question from their experience at mass, from what it looks like. Namely, it looks like the priest is telling us the congregation what Jesus said and did with bread and wine.

The answer is found in the text itself in a little word that is often not heard. The word is "YOU". As the text states: "Before Jesus was given up to death, a death he freely accepted, he took bread and gave YOU thanks and praise. He gave it to his disciples and said: Take and eat, this is my body which will be given up for you." Question: Who is the YOU that Jesus gave thanks to? Of course, the YOU is God the Father. So, we all are telling God the Father what Jesus said and did at the Last Supper. The priest in our name tells God the Father what Jesus said and did during that final meal before his passion and death. All of us gathered around the altar are telling God this story through the leadership of the priest. The priest is not telling us in the pews this story of Jesus words and actions. We with the priest are telling this story to God. (The Father loves to hear stories about his Son Jesus.)

Eucharistic Prayer I (the Roman Canon) states this fact clearly: "Jesus took bread into his sacred hands, and looking up to you, his almighty Father, he gave YOU thanks and praise..." The same can be said when the priest picks up the chalice filled with wine. We with the priest, are telling God the Father what Jesus said



over the cup of wine and what he did with that cup – He gave it to his disciples and said: Take this and drink from it: This is the cup of my blood...."

The Introduction to the Sacramentary in 1969 stated clearly that the entire Eucharistic Prayer is consecratory. The entire Eucharistic Prayer is a unit, is a whole prayer that transforms and changes us and bread and wine, that expresses our thanks and praise to God, that asks God for blessings for all the world.

Next month, I will continue with this reflection on the prayer that follows the Institution Narrative, namely the Anamnesis – the Remembering Prayer: "In memory of his death and resurrection..." This remembering of his dying and rising is the heart and high point of the entire Eucharistic Prayer.

Turn in your missalette in church or in your missal or Magnificat to any of the Eucharistic Prayers. Pray them as your own prayer. Pray them aloud. Make them your own prayer. What a difference that will make for you on Sunday at Mass.

"The Lord be with you.. Lift up your hearts....Let us give thanks to the Lord our God."

Your Personal Financial Considerations

Most of us would like to leave a legacy for our loved ones and/or for St. Peter Church in the Loop. The question, however, is how does one go about doing this? Here are some initial ideas.

- 1) Leave a percentage in your will to different family members and St. Peter Church.
- 2) If you are taking a required minimum from your Qualified Accounts, you may use all or part of it to purchase a sizable life insurance policy and designate family members and St. Peter Church as beneficiaries of the policy.
- 3) If you have financial assets (like CDs etc.) that you don't need to live off of, you could leverage up these assets through life insurance and ultimately leave much larger sums to family and St. Peter Church. If done correctly, you could have access to the principal should you have need of it.
- 4) If you have old life insurance policies, you may add

St. Peter Church as full or partial beneficiary.

5) If you have a need for Long Term Care Insurance, you could leverage up certain of your assets to provide for you own Long Term Care costs and leave residual benefits for St. Peter Church.

6) As a more advanced tool for estate planning, a Charitable Remainder Unit Trust to benefit both family and St. Peter Church might be worth considering.

7) If none of the above work for you or you want to do something special and extra for St. Peter Church, you can buy a life insurance policy and make St. Peter Church owner and beneficiary of the policy. You may receive a tax deduction for the premium of the policy. Regarding the tax deduction, consult your tax preparer.

If you would like a free consultation on either 1) any of the above ideas or 2) other creative ways of leaving a legacy for your family or St. Peter Church, call Peter Wells at 847-543-4886.

From Rio Rancho, New Mexico

Since I left ministry at St Peter’s in the Loop in 1998, I have been a full time, on the road, itinerant preacher. I have preached parish missions and retreats throughout the USA, and also in Canada, in Ireland, in Singapore and Malaysia. For the last two and a half years, my

preaching has been to fellow Franciscans – Friars, Poor Clares, Sisters and Secular Franciscans. As I write this October issue of the Legionnaire, I am Rio Rancho, New Mexico. I am meeting with two Felician Franciscan Sisters for four days. We have been asked to preach ten retreats to all the Felician Franciscan Sisters in the United States and in Canada. These eight hundred vowed women belonged to one of eight Provinces. As of November 2009, they are now one province. They asked me to preach all ten retreats to all the sisters during 2011. I suggested that we have a team of a few sisters and me. So now we are four: one Sister from Chicago, two Sisters from Rio Rancho, NM, and I. The first retreat begins January 2, 2011, in Lodi, New Jersey.

The FELICIAN SISTERS officially known as the CONGREGATION OF SISTERS OF ST. FELIX OF CANTALICE THIRD ORDER REGULAR OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI (CSSF) is a religious institute of pontifical right whose members profess public vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience and follow the evangelical way of life in common. The aim of the community is to cooperate with Christ in the spiritual renewal of the world. As an apostolic congregation, the Felician Sisters fulfill their mission in the Church through contemplation and action. They are ministering in USA, Canada, Kenya, Poland, Italy.

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)