



The Franciscan Legionnaire

Newsletter of the Friars Legion of St. Peter's Church in the Loop

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May the Lord Give you Peace!

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

Poor Clares Celebrate 800 Years

From April 16, 2011 to August 11, 2012, the Poor Clares – the Second Order of St Francis – are celebrating the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Poor Clares by St Clare of Assisi. On Palm Sunday in 1212, Clare Offreducio secretly left her noble home in Assisi, walked down Mt Subasio for three miles to the Portiuncola (August 2 feast). There Francis and the Brothers welcomed her, cut her hair and robed her in the simple tunic and cord of a Franciscan.



A Poor Clare is a nun who lives in a cloister, in one monastery for her whole life. She takes solemn vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. A Poor Clare Nun is not a Benedictine, Dominican, Visitation or Carmelite nun. She is a Poor Clare nun. There is a difference between these other beautiful orders and Poor Clares. No, not all nuns are alike.

The gifts that Poor Clares nuns bring to the Church - gifts of prayer, simplicity, community and joy. Each Poor Clare community is autonomous. Not all Poor Clares dress alike, work alike or keep the same daily schedule. If you go from monastery to monastery you will feel the spirit of Joy and Communal gifting of each other - you will experience the warm bond of Joy, Simplicity and happiness of being a Franciscan. Poor Clares Monasteries are individual and unique as is each sister in them.

The Poor Clare Sisters number over 20,000 sisters throughout the world in 16 federations and in over 70

countries. Most monasteries have from four to thirteen members. Some have larger communities but the Poor Clare charism is one of family and St. Clare guided us that small communities were much better to keep this family spirit than larger ones. So when a community gets to a certain number a new monastery is begun.

For this month of St Clare, I asked Fr Bob Hutmacher, Director of Worship at St Peter's, to share his thoughts of St Clare and to tell us what is happening at St Peter's in the Loop for the feast of St Clare on August 11th. I have also included prayers and stories of St Clare gathered by the Poor Clares in Boston. May St Clare (Chiara, in Italian which means clear, bright, radiant) lighten our path to the heart of Jesus! -- Fr Chuck Faso, OFM

St. Clare and the Lord's Healing Embrace

Fr. Bob Hutmacher, OFM

We've probably all used the phrase "it must be a miracle" to describe things which cannot be explained. St. Gregory the Great did the Church a great favor when he described a miracle as "the work of God." That pretty much covers everything around us, doesn't it? Encounters with the Divine within the natural realm of life have often been a mainstay of hagiography, the lives of saints. If a particular saint had a miracle attributed to her or his intercession, that saint only grew in popularity and fame. "The saint was seen as the intermediary, the one who opened the way to God for the world, and miracles were the clearest manifestation of this key function." [Marco Bartoli, *Clare of Assisi*, p. 158]

On **August 11** we remember **St. Clare of Assisi**, friend of Francis and foundress of the Second Order of the Franciscan family, the Poor Clares. This year we celebrate her feast by incorporating **The Rite of Anointing of the Sick** into the **Solemn Liturgy** at

11:40 a.m. There is a very good reason for doing so. Lady Clare was, has been and continues to be, for many, a wonderful intermediary for the Lord's healing.

Born in 1194, Clare had lived a communal life of prayer and charity with other noble women in the Offreduccio family's neighborhood in the upper tiers of Assisi. There were five knights in their extended family, a sign of tremendous wealth. Clare's father died when she was a child; the whole family was held captive in Perugia (like Francis) so both saints knew the realities of war and being prisoners of war, though for different reasons. She witnessed how Francis publicly professed Gospel simplicity, heard him preach and saw him care for lepers. Clare discerned that God called her to join this penitential movement, sold the family properties in her name, gave the proceeds to the poor and left home on the night of Palm Sunday, 1212. Eventually her two sisters, Agnes and Beatrice, and their mother, Ortolana, joined her at San Damiano. Because they all sold their land holdings (and the power inherent in them), the Offreduccio family faded into history within five generations. An amazing story, isn't it? But there's more...

The burning desire to follow the poor, crucified Christ in the footsteps of Francis compelled her to stand up to five popes in her lifetime, insisting that God wanted her and the Poor Ladies to live in strict poverty, owning nothing. Until her time, the hierarchy believed women were too weak to fend for themselves, to beg or farm to support an entire community. Clare is the first woman in Church history to write a rule for women religious, insistent that the Ladies own absolutely nothing. Pope Alexander IV sanctioned her rule of life August 9, 1253 and gave it to her the next day. Pleased that her Rule of Life was finally accepted for ages to come, Clare died in peace on August 11. She, like Francis, was canonized just 2 years later. That alone is a great testimony to her personal holiness and impact on people. Still amazed? There's more...

For the last 28 years of her life Clare was an invalid, bed-ridden yet strong in her commitment to the ideals of Francis, absorbed in the love of her Spouse, the Crucified Jesus. Despite her own maladies, Clare allowed God to heal others through her intercession. *The Acts of the Process of Canonization* contains 20

eyewitnesses of miracles Clare brought about through prayer and making the Sign of the Cross over people during her life and after her death. Those healed included some ill sisters in her community, a seriously ill child, a mentally disturbed friar who was freed from his suffering, a childless couple who conceived because of her blessing and many more. Today, Lady Clare continues to be a model of feminine strength and one saint I've referred many people to for God's healing. I've learned to see and appreciate many events as "the work of God." Though miracles often involve an individual, they also have a communal dimension.

There are many accounts in the four Gospels wherein people literally ran after Jesus, hoping to see a miracle or even be the recipient of his healing. Jesus turned away from all fame or glory so people could see and believe that it was the power of God working through him. God's salvation was at hand in Christ.



Clare, following Francis, did bring people God's healing by making the Sign of the Cross and praying with them. The healing brought about through her intercession was for the Church at large, though, not just for individuals. Any wonders were strictly the work of God and every witness in *The Process of Canonization* proclaimed that fact. "It is still Christ who works miracles through his saints, not that they can work miracles on their own." (Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*.) Even though cloistered, this holy woman renewed the Church by revealing the saving presence of God, by letting ordinary people know that God's extraordinary power was for everyone. She and Francis brought new life to an ossified Church; in very significant ways they brought hope and light into medieval darkness.

The Sacrament of Anointing was once understood to be only for the dying – Extreme Unction, or "the Last Rites." The Sacrament was revised in 1972 by Pope Paul VI. The dynamic of God continuously restoring individuals and the community to wholeness through Christ is the foundation of this beautiful Sacrament. The introduction to Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick states: *all baptized Christians share in this*

ministry of mutual charity within the Body of Christ by doing all they can to help the sick return to health, by showing love for the sick, and by celebrating the Sacraments with them. The priest anoints the sick in the name of the whole community. Karl Rahner defined a Sacrament as an encounter with God; the Sacrament of Anointing reveals how tender, loving and healing our Creator is. Even the formula used demonstrates that: [On the forehead] *Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit.* [On the palms] *May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.* Though the priest anoints palms and foreheads of individuals, God enlivens the entire Christian community in yet another Sacrament of forgiveness and restoration. When even one of us is healed, all of us are given more of God's life.



Please join us **August 11** to celebrate Lady Clare and the Lord's healing. If you are in need of his healing, approach this Sacrament. Who can be anointed? Read the other article about Anointing in this bulletin. We ask those to be anointed to follow our ushers and be seated in every other pew marked with pink; the priests will come to those who wish to be anointed. This **Solemn Mass of St. Clare and Anointing of the Sick** is at **11:40 a.m.** There will not be a Mass at 12:15 p.m. so we may celebrate her feast and this Sacrament with dignity and grace. "Let them pray over the sick and anoint them in the name of the Lord. This prayer, made in faith, will save the sick ones." (James 5) May Clare and Francis bring you peace and all good things.

Fr. Bob Hutmacher OFM

Letters of St. Clare to Agnes of Prague

There are four manuscripts of communication between Clare and Agnes, a princess of Bohemia who was called to found the Poor Clare monastery in Prague, renounce royal marriage and enter the Order herself. These letters offer us a window into the heart of Clare, a woman in love with God and "little plant of St. Francis."

From the 2nd Letter to Agnes, 1235

Look upon Him who became contemptible for you, and follow Him, making yourself contemptible in this world for Him. Most noble Queen, gaze, consider, contemplate, desiring to imitate your Spouse, who though more beautiful than the children of the world, became, for your salvation, the lowest of men, was despised, struck, scourged untold times throughout His body, and then died amid the suffering of the Cross. If you suffer with Him, you will reign with Him, weeping with Him, you will rejoice with Him; dying on the cross of tribulation with Him, you will possess heavenly mansions with Him among the splendor of the saints and in the Book of Life your name will be called glorious among the people.

From the 4th Letter to Agnes, 1253

Happy, indeed, is she to whom it is given to drink at this banquet so that she might cling with her whole heart to Him whose beauty the hosts of heaven admire...since He is the radiance of eternal glory, He is the brightness of eternal light and the mirror without blemish. Gaze upon that mirror each day, O Queen and Spouse of Jesus Christ, and continually study your face in it, that you may adorn yourself completely, within and without, covered and arrayed in needlework and adorned with flowers and garments of all the virtues, as is becoming, the daughter and dearest bride of the Most High King. O Queen of our Heavenly King, may you be inflamed ever more strongly in the fire of love! As you further contemplate His ineffable delights, riches and perpetual honors, may you cry out from the great desire and love of your heart: Draw me after you,* let us run in the fragrance of your perfumes, O Heavenly Spouse! I will run and not tire, until You bring me into the wine cellar, until Your left hand is under my head and Your right hand will embrace me happily, You will kiss me with the happiest kiss of Your mouth."

**The Song of Songs*

Financial Considerations

Today pre and post retirees are increasingly concerned about running out of money during their lifetime. During pre-retirement, most people focus on accumulating assets for retirement. Once they retire, effective strategies to distribute and manage accumulated assets is of equal importance so that as a retiree one can maintain one's financial independence.

To help you to develop custom solutions toward financial well being during retirement, you may want to consider the following:

- * Cover basic expenses
- * Get a guaranteed income for life to meet income shortfall from pension and Social Security
- * Maximize your required minimum distribution income from your qualified plans
- * Maximize your CD income
- * Hedge against inflation
- * Accumulate assets on a tax deferred basis
- * Provide funds to heirs generally income tax free
- * Minimize estate taxes
- * Leave a legacy
- * Protect income in case you need Long-Term Care
- * Make a charitable bequest

As you can see, there is much to consider and ponder over. To help you with this very important process, St. Peter's Church offers you a free *no obligation* service. For more information and a review of your current plan, call Peter Wells at 847-543-4886.

Leaving a Legacy for St. Peter

Church in the Loop

St. Peter Church in the Loop is a sacred space where much healing and spiritual comfort and rejuvenation occur. Would you please consider leaving a legacy in your will or estate plan for St. Peter Church in the Loop? Would you like to leave St. Peter Church say \$10,000 or \$25,000 or \$50,000 or more from your current assets or *create* such an asset for a fraction of the ultimate gift? For ideas on how to create your dream gift to St. Peter Church in the Loop call Peter Wells at 847-543-4886.



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)