



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! From Steubenville, Ohio

Hello from Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio. I am writing this January issue of the Legionnaire in the Friary of the TORs (the Third Order Regular), Franciscan Friars who founded this University. I was invited by Fr Richard Davis, TOR, the Vice President of University and Local Minister of the Friary to preach the Advent Day of Recollection to the twenty-five friars who live and teach, minister and serve the 2500 students. I flew from Chicago to Pittsburgh PA, then drove twenty-minutes to the very hilly and beautiful campus. The students are all gone on Christmas break. A quiet, empty college campus is very strange – no students, no one walking to the library, dorms or classroom. I was here for the first time in September of 2011 to visit. I have heard of this University for decades and had never visited the campus.



I checked their website. The first words that appear are: “*Academically excellent. Passionately Catholic. Study in a supportive atmosphere that demands your best. Learn from highly respected, faith-filled faculty. Live what you believe at Franciscan University.*” The Third Order Regular Friars founded this University sixty years ago. Their first words to the interested students are inviting and challenging: Embrace your unique talents and gifts. Spur your mind to enlightenment. Help your convictions gain strength. Let your life serve as a witness to the world.

Your knowledge — illuminated by faith — comes alive and leads you confidently into the world when you study at Franciscan University of Steubenville. Here, your exceptional education is grounded in a passionately Catholic faith tradition that takes you beyond yourself and into the community where you can evangelize and transform the culture.

Grow in wisdom, faith, maturity, strength, purpose, and dedication at Franciscan University. How you live your life — where you go, what you do, who you are — builds on the life of Christ within you and what you embrace while you're here. With the solid foundation of faith and



reason you create at Franciscan University, you are the message the world is waiting for!”

As I walked the campus in September and as I spent these three days here with the Friars who teach and run the University, I found the above words of invitation and challenge to be true. I asked several students why they attend this University.

The response was the same: “I wanted to be in an atmosphere where I can live my Catholic faith and enjoy learning and sharing the faith with others.” I was truly impressed by the prayerfulness, cheerfulness, openness of the students and friars.

How good it is to know of and experience a place of learning so committed to Franciscan values and spirituality and to learning and loving the Catholic Faith. Through the United States and world there are many Franciscan Colleges and Universities. For example, in Illinois, there are two Franciscan Universities: University of St Francis in Joliet founded in 1920 by the Congregation of the Third Order of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate (www.stfrancis.edu) and Quincy University in Quincy IL (www.quincy.edu) founded in 1860 by the Franciscan Friars of Sacred Heart Province, the same Province that staffs St Peter's in the Loop. To be invited to preach to the Friars of Franciscan University (www.franciscan.edu) was a gift to me. May the Lord bless the Friars and students in Steubenville.

A New Year-A New Beginning

Time again to learn to say a new number, a new year: 2012! How did we arrive at this year so quickly! But here we are. For all that happened in 2011, may we say THANKS! And for all that will happen in the New Year, let us say YES! Good days and not so good days! Days with pain and days with peace! Days with joy and days with sorrows! Days of anger and days of calm! Days of learning and days of teaching! Deaths and births, successes and failures, disappointments and happy

surprises make up the journey of life. Let's accept and embrace what comes and with God's grace find good and meaning in all of it.



Brother Loyola who served for many years in the front office of St Peter's would sign his messages on our bulletin board with the phrase: "In the struggle!" I always thought that was so great. To be faithful to the journey, wherever it takes you. Staying in the struggle and not denying it, running from it – is what holiness is

about. To live out of the truth that God is present with us always. Jesus said: Take up your cross daily! Jesus did not say: Take up your cross on Tuesdays and Fridays. No, daily. Jesus never said that we would love our cross, would get so excited about the cross that was waiting for us as we begin each day. Stay in the struggle of carrying the cross. And being faithful is the key of happiness.

Blessed Theresa of Calcutta was asked by a reporter how did it feel to be so successful – every- where Mother went, people recognized her. Mother Theresa responded: I was not called to be successful, but to be faithful! No one knows what this New Year will bring to each of us, to our county, to our world. What we do know is that there is an ever faithful God who is with us always to be our strength and comfort, our wisdom and joy. My blessing to you as we begin this new year is a blessing I heard a priest give at St Martha's in Morton Grove IL: May the Lord be above you to inspire you and be beneath you to support you! May the Lord go ahead of you to guide you and be behind you to protect you! May the Lord be at your side to accompany you today, tomorrow and always. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit! Amen
Happy New Year!

Francis and Clare: Two Names, Two Legends

This year of 2012 marks the 800th Anniversary of the Founding of the Order of Poor Clares by St Clare of Assisi with the guidance and example of St Francis of Assisi. Our General Minister in Rome, Fr Jose Rodriguez Carballo, OFM, wrote a letter to Poor Clares throughout the world. The Poor Clare Sisters number over 15,000 sisters throughout the world in 16 federations and in over 70 countries. His words are an inspiration and a fount of knowledge about St Clare's spirituality. St Clare died in 1253 in Assisi at the age of 59.

Here is the first part of Fr. Jose Carballo's letter:

Dear Poor Clares,
May the Lord give you Peace!

On April 16, in communion with all the daughters of Saint Clare present in the world we solemnly inaugurated in Assisi the celebrations of the VIII Centenary of the Conversion of Clare of Assisi and the Founding of the Order of Poor Clares. This event began with the celebration of First Vespers of Palm Sunday, presided over by the Bishop of Assisi, Msgr. Domenico Sorrentino, in the Cathedral of St. Rufino. This was followed by a pilgrimage toward the Porziuncula at St. Mary of the Angels, where the young Clare, having fled her "house, city and family, "sought refuge in order to consecrate herself to the Lord "before the altar of Mary" (cf. *LegCl* 8). There, she embraced the *way of life* that Francis showed her (cf. *TestCl* 5)



and which was later blessed by Pope Innocent IV, when he approved the *Rule* of the Order of Poor Clares. The pilgrimage, which was attended by a large number of Franciscan Brothers, women and men Religious as well as many lay people, made a stop in those places where the Poor Clares preserve and reflect the *purpose* of life of Clare. These places were the Protomonastery and the Monasteries of both St. Quirico and St. Colette.

This was really an emotional time because of the event being recalled, namely, the Consecration of Clare, the cutting of her hair by Francis himself, and the Founding of the Poor Clares. Emotions were further heightened by the night pilgrimage from Assisi to Saint Mary of the Angels, which were inspired by songs and the reading of texts from Clare's life and writings; it was also illuminated by the thrilling lights of the torches and for the prolonged stay at the Porziuncula, where "the Mother of Mercies "brought about the Order of Friars Minor and the Poor Clares (cf. *LegCl* 8).

At the Porziuncula, on behalf of all, I thanked the *Father of Mercies* (cf. *TestCl* 2) for having inspired Francis to live according to the way of the Holy Gospel (cf. *TestCl* 5) and for having called Clare to be seduced by "the most beautiful of the sons of men" (*IIICl* 20), to the point of drawing her "mind, heart and soul" to Him (*IIICl*

20) constantly and forever. At the same time, I thanked him for the countless Poor Clares who, in these 800 years of history, followed Christ according to the *way of life* lived out and proposed by Clare of Assisi. In this way the prophecy of Pope Alexander IV was fulfilled, he who described the charism of this “new woman” of the valley of Spoleto, as “a tall tree, with many branches, directed toward heaven, which in the field of the Church produced sweet fruit and to whose pleasant and friendly shade many come from everywhere and still come to taste its fruits” (*Bull of Canonization of St. Clare* 31). In fact, at the death of Clare there were 115 monasteries in Italy and 50 outside of Italy. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, there were 413 monasteries. Today, the monasteries in the world number about 1000 with almost 15,000 sisters - all born of the *Little Plant of Francis*.

Meaning of the Celebration

The celebrations, which run from April 16, 2011, to August 11, 2012, are meant to be a *favorable time* to revive the memory of what happened 800 years ago; to propose anew the spirituality of this remarkable woman; and especially to rediscover the timeliness of her message.

◦ *Reviving the memory.* “Through these women”, Francis said while repairing the Church of San Damiano, “glory will be given to our Father in heaven and in all the holy Church” (*TestCl* 14). Perhaps not even Francis himself was all that aware that the *way of life* embraced by Clare would be a means of support for the Petrine ministry and food for the mission of the Church – as Pope Gregory IX wrote to the *Little Plant of Francis* and the Poor Sisters of San Damiano in 1228. Clare’s life, “under the guidance of Francis,” wrote John Paul II, “was not hermitical though being cloistered and contemplative.” In the Bull of canonization, Alexander IV said, “Clare was silent, but her fame cried out.” Yes, her fame cried out because of the Gospel manner with which she brought Christ to those in the world and supported the wavering members; it cried out from her big heart, embracing every creature, even the most humble and forgotten among them, because it was marked by the benevolence of the Creator (cf. *BullCanCl* 4-5; *IIILCl* 8; *Proc* 7. 12).

◦ *Propose anew the spirituality of Clare.* In the message to the Poor Clares during the First International Conference of the Presidents of

the Order of St Clare (OSC) Federations, three years of preparation were proposed for these celebrations to study in-depth the following topics: vocation (2009), contemplation (2010), and poverty (2011). Yes, you have chosen a serious way to prepare to celebrate the Eighth Centenary. You have specified a precise path to re-appropriate the spirituality that sustains your life and proposed anew the whole “soul” of Clare to everyone. For my part, as your brother and servant, I have helped you along this path of going in-depth through the letters I wrote in 2008, 2009, and 2010, on the occasion of the Feast of our Sister Clare.



◦ *Rediscover her message.* Obviously her message must appeal first to you who have chosen to follow Christ according to the “mirror and example” of Clare of Assisi. In the Letter to the Conference of Ministers General of the Order and the TOR, I wrote to you on February 2, 2011. Some of the questions we asked were “What do we want to celebrate together: the memory of a Rule or the memory of the history of God forever with you in time and which continues to make you passionate to ‘observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of your own and in chastity? How can we return wholly to the light of the *way of life* that makes visible and credible before all of us that ‘for our sake the Son of God has become the way, which our most blessed father Francis, a true lover and imitator of Christ, showed and taught us by word and example?’” (*TestCl* 5) How can you still be a living memory in the Church and for the Franciscan family of that which we, as baptized, are called to live?”

As far as I’m concerned, I am fully convinced that the fascination of Clare lies in the evangelical life she embraced. What sustained her for 40 years in the cloister of a monastery was the Gospel. Once having fled from home and discovered the *path* indicated to her by Francis, Clare focused the Poor Clares’ *way of life* on “observing the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (*RC* 1, 2). The Gospel is what reveals the secret of Clare’s ‘youth’ and

her ability to be a benchmark for the Church and the world today. Dear Sisters, tell us with your lives what you contemplate and touch of the Word of Life as contained in the Gospel. Tell us with your existence that for all of us God is always love.
(to be continued next month)

- access to funds
- no risk to principal

To discuss this and other ideas that could benefit you, your family or St. Peter Church in the Loop, call Peter Wells at 847-543-4886.

Your Personal Financial Considerations

As we go through life, our financial needs and goals change. Your “safe,” “just in case” money could work more effectively for you with the following benefits:

- leveraged tax free benefits for Long-Term Care expenses
- guaranteed death benefit, generally federal income tax free to the beneficiary

(You might choose to leave a legacy for St. Peter Church in the Loop as a full or partial beneficiary.)

- lifetime money back guarantee
- create lifetime income options
- death benefit proceeds bypass probate

(unless the estate is named beneficiary of the policy)

- tax deferred cash value growth

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 nor 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)