



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)

Feast of St Francis of Assisi!

October 4th is the feast of St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of Italy, patron saint of ecologists and the environment. He has been loved and beloved by peoples of every age and culture and religious conviction. This young rich man of thirteenth century Italy lived his life



after the example of Jesus the Christ. After twenty-five years of enjoying the pleasures of Medieval Life, he experienced a deep ache, longing, hunger for more, much more. He thought and hoped that the glories of war against neighboring Perugia and joining an army about to fight for the Pope, would banish his hunger and heart-ache. Neither proved to salve his pain.

As we all do in times of emptiness and darkness, pain and desperate loneliness, Francis turn to God in prayer. At San Damiano Chapel outside of Assisi, Francis prayed fervently before the image of the Crucified Lord Jesus:

“Most High and glorious God,
 enlighten the darkness of my heart
 and give me truer faith,
 more certain hope, and perfect charity,
 sense and knowledge of you,
 so that I may carry out
 your holy and true command
 for my life.”

Then Francis heard, felt, experienced the voice and presence of Jesus, saying: “Va, Francesco.....” “Go and repair my Church for as you see it is falling into ruin.”



That is all Francis needed to hear – he had a plan, a direction, a purpose, a vision, a mission. At first, he re-built chapels that were literally falling down. Then the true meaning of the Lord's commission came to him: not stones, but living stones, not buildings but living people. Taking nothing for his journey, as the Gospel commands, Francis went forth like Jesus from village to village preaching the Good News of God's love for all. The Lord revealed a greeting that he was to use when he met people on the journey: “May the Lord give you peace.” (Next time you answer the phone, don't say: Hello; say “May the Lord give you peace!” You may hear a click at the other end, but they will call back.)

Francis imagined himself as the Herald of the Great King! the Troubadour of the greatest story ever told! a brother to every person he met and to every creature in God's good creation! Whether he was washing and nursing lepers or speaking to Sultan Malek al-Kamil in Damietta, Egypt, he knew who he was, a sinner loved and forgiven by God.

For 800 years, men and women from all walks of life have joined Francis in his journey and dream of living the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The three branches of the First Order of the Lesser Brothers – friars (brothers) and minor (lesser): the Friars Minor, the Conventuals, and the Capuchins; the Second Order of the Poor Clares founded by St Clare of



Assisi; the Third Order, Secular (lay people) and Regular (Sisters and TOR Friars).

All follow a Rule of Life: Rule of 1223 for the Friars, Rule of 1253 for the Poor Clares, Rule of

1978 for the Secular Franciscans, and the Rule of 1982 for the Third Order Regular.

The *Core Values of our Franciscan Vision and Way of life* by which all Franciscans live the journey of Gospel Living are these: Conversion, Poverty, Contemplation and Prayer, Minority/Humble Service, and Itinerancy (on the move, not tied to one place of living or ministry, or way of thinking.) These core values flow from the life and ministry of Jesus as proclaimed in the four Gospels.

Conversion! - the basis of the other core values. God's amazing grace continually tugs at our hearts and minds to turn from all darkness and sin and turn to the generous love of our forgiving God. We do not do this just once in our lives, but continually. (In case you were wondering, there will be another Ash Wednesday next March.) St Francis experienced at least six graced events of conversion in his young life between 1206 and 1209: while in prison for a year in Perugia, during his convalescence for another year at his home in Assisi, the dream while marching with the Papal army, his meeting with the leper – instead of riding the opposite direction, he dismounted and embraced the leper while giving him a coin and a kiss, his bitterness and horror at seeing lepers turned into an ecstatic sweetness - before his father, the bishop and all the town people, he stripped his clothes off and naked declared his trust in God his Father, and hearing Christ's voice from the cross in San Damiano of Assisi. Such grace-filled moments and events happened throughout his life. The same happens in our lives, if we only have a "Leb Shemeah – a Listening Heart."

Poverty! Who wants to be poor? There was/is a war against poverty. Francis' poverty like Jesus was about living in trust of God's generous care and love. This calls us not to appropriate anything as our own,

except as Francis wrote, "our sins and imperfections." Gospel poverty calls us to be generous as God is generous, to share and not hold onto things, ideas, attitudes. "Who moved that flower pot?" can express an ownership, an act of appropriating and making my own even a flower pot. Ah! To let go and be free. Poverty leads to freedom – freedom to serve others.

Contemplation/Prayer! As St Clare wrote to St Agnes of Prague: "Gaze upon Jesus, consider Him, contemplate Him, as you desire to imitate Him." Francis came to realize that prayer is first God action in our life and secondly, our response. Prayer is not what we say first to God. No. First God speaks to and touches our hearts and minds, then we respond with awe, praise, thanks, and petition. Francis' life became his response to God's embrace of love.



Minority! Simply, like Jesus washing the feet of his apostles at the Last Supper, Francis wore "his apron" of humble service to all – rich and poor, the powerless and the powerful. The Rules of Life that guide all Franciscans calls us to lives of humble service.

Itinerancy! - from the Latin "iter", meaning a journey, a trip, on the road. Like Jesus, St Francis was on move, from village to village, from one ministry to another, from one idea to another. In many ways, my favorite childhood song in the 1940's which was composed by Cole Porter, sung by Gene Autry and Roy Rogers expresses Itinerancy: "Oh give me land, lots of land under starry skies above – Don't Fence me in! Let me ride through the wide open country that I love, Don't Fence me in!" And so we are open and free to go and love all our brothers and sisters, whomever God calls us to serve.

Every year during October, I commit to reading a book on the life and spirituality of St Francis. You may want to do the same. St Peter's bookstore has a comprehensive selection of books on matters Franciscan. May the celebration of the Feast of St Francis be for you and your family a joy-filled blessing of peace! May the Lord give you peace!

Violence and Vengeance

There has to be a way out of the stupidity of violence and vengeance! When both of us are blind, we both fall into the pit, as Jesus says. Vengeance seems so logical, but it doesn't really work. It doesn't advance human history, or finally our own agenda. It only delays and disguises the problem. The devil is now on both sides.

The wonder of the resurrection stories in the Gospels is that Jesus exhibits no vengeful attitude toward the authorities of his cowardly followers. He is not even judgmental toward them. Afterwards, his followers never call for any kind of holy war against those who killed their leader, which is almost unknown in world history. Something new has clearly transpired. This is not the common or expected story line. A new Spirit is abroad.

Even Gandhi and Martin Luther King said that they learned their nonviolence from Jesus, but most of us church people are still catching up with him.

800th Anniversary of Poor Clares

This year, 2011-2012, all Franciscans are celebrating the 800th Anniversary of Women living the Gospel in a new way. This year celebrates the specific incident of St Clare leaving her home in Assisi on Palm Sunday in 1212 to join St Francis and the Friars at Our Lady of the Angels Portiuncola in the valley below Assisi.

There Francis cut her hair and robed her in the poor tunic and cord as the Friars wore. Thus was born the Poor Clares and indeed all the Sisters of the



Franciscan Congregations throughout the world. Each month, I will include words from or about St Clare. Together, St Francis and St Clare are the co-founders of the Franciscan Movement

Quotes from St Clare of Assisi:

"Place your mind before the mirror of eternity! Place your soul in the brilliance of glory! And transform your entire being into the image of the Godhead Itself through contemplation."

"Christ is the splendor of eternal glory, the brightness of eternal light, and the mirror without cloud."

"Gaze upon Jesus, consider Him, contemplate Him, as you desire to imitate Him."

"Totally love Him, Who gave Himself totally for your love."



Your Personal Financial Considerations

Retirees face longevity and reinvestment risks. The right strategy can help you enjoy your retirement years. Here are some questions you might want to consider in shaping a financially comfortable retirement.

- 1) What options do I have to maximize Social Security benefits?
- 2) How can I supplement my Social Security and my pension?
- 3) How can I allocate my investments to help reduce risk while maximizing return potential?
- 4) If you could get a strong income in retirement, how long would you like it to last?
- 5) How much of your retirement savings can you afford to lose?
- 6) How important are guarantees to you?
- 7) If you could get a guaranteed income for the rest of your life, how much of that income would you like to guarantee?

- 8) Is income for life that is safe, predictable and guaranteed of prime importance to you?
- 9) Have you considered strategies to make the most of your "just in case" funds?
- 10) Is your Single Sum meeting your legacy needs for family and/or your favorite charity?

If you would like a free meeting to discuss any of the above considerations or other ideas/strategies you would like to pursue, 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)