



AVE MARIA

The Newsletter of Our Lady Queen of Angels Fraternity
Secular Franciscan Order
at St. Anthony of Padua Church, Rocky Point, NY

July-September, 2011

Penance

The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, It seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards I delayed a little and left the world.

Testament, 1226

However we choose to look at Franciscan Spirituality- be it by its option for the poverty or simplicity or humility of Christ in the Gospels or by its recognition of the mystical presence of Christ in all of Creation or its identification with Him crucified, the bottom line for its application is the practice of penance. For sure, the idea of penance was, at the time of Francis (and now) integral to understanding and living the Gospels. We can see this in Francis' use of the Gospel passages in determining his personal vocation. Penance here implies more than three Hail Marys and forgiveness of sins.

This idea of penance is not the same as the one we generally recognize today as the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the performance of a specific act or acts of atonement although it certainly includes these. Penance in this context is something greater and encompasses much more. It is more akin to the monastic *conversatio mori*, a personal turning away or conversion of values, from a life of worldliness, selfishness and dissipation to one centered on the Word, Jesus, as accepted in the Gospels. The practice of *private penance* in the former is a necessary act which is often based upon the literal fear of the Lord, the Ten Command-

ments. The latter is *voluntary*, done willingly out of love and a desire for perfection or to please God. It is essentially understood as a way of life. All of one's actions, then, dedicated as they are to God, are acts of penance and virtue which merit grace. When Jesus spoke the words; "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" in Matthew 4:17, this, I think, is what He had in mind. And this type of penance is what Francis and his followers chose for themselves. For the lay penitents, Bernard of Bessa expressed it well: *The intention of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance is to live honorably in their residences and to busy themselves with pious actions and to flee from the vanities of the world.* (*To Live As Francis Lived*, Foley, OFM et al. Reflection 2.)

This was Francis' orientation when he wrote these words at the beginning of his Testament. Penance was his way of life. Furthermore, his association with lepers was intended as more than an act of charity or justice or a sin offering. It was an act of love and a personal identification with these outcasts as he "repented," or gave up his life of vanity and worldly pursuits in favor of one identified with Jesus. (*conversatio*). This was one aspect of his personal conversion. He was no longer identifying himself with *the world* but with Christ crucified and the Gospels. When Francis took the Tau as his 'signature,' he was well aware of its significance as a sign of the outcast. Interestingly, he does not stop with lepers. He adds: "And afterwards, I delayed a little and left the world." One writer asks whether these first words of the Testament might have symbolized or represented Francis' period of formation; his novitiate.

This understanding of the word is im-

portant for us Seculars. When we made our Act of Profession, we agreed to this life of penance as expressed in the Gospels, outlined by Francis and interpreted by the Rule. It became our *way of life*. While it appears simple enough on paper, its application can and does become complicated as we move through our daily routines. Values and individual personalities as well as human strengths and weaknesses inevitably color our actions. This is why formation and fraternity are so important. We need yardsticks by which to live.

Francis did leave us a few of the basics on which to build that life. In the Prologue of the Rule he opens: *All who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with all their strength and love their neighbors as themselves and hate their bodies with their vices and sins, and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and produce worthy fruits of penance... Oh how happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things and persevere in doing them...*

These words are a brief for our journey as SFO's. Francis gives us a flexible outline in these short paragraphs. There are no specifics. He paints with a broad brush. There are few details, no "cans" or "cannots" as in some other rules. It is our job to fill in the blanks. Francis did what was given him to do. We must now find our way. By these words Francis has given us the compass. It is our job to find our way to him and the Gospels.

PAX et BONUM

*National Prayer for Vocations
to the Secular Franciscan Order*

O, Good and Gracious God,
God of mercy, compassion, generosity, and love,
As we live our lives today in the model of St. Francis,

choosing daily to live the Gospel life,
Help us to help others hear Your call.
Help us to help others to recognize
their vocation as a Secular Franciscan
that You have already planted in their heart.
Help us, so that together we all may work
to bring the Gospel to life.
Amen!

Marian R. Crosby, SFO
NAFRA Chapter 2010
Scottsdale, AZ,

Pope Benedict's Intentions

July

That Christians may contribute to alleviating the material and spiritual suffering of AIDS patients, especially in the poorest countries.
For the religious who work in mission territories, that they may be witnesses of the joy of the Gospel and living signs of the love of Christ.

August

World Youth Day. That World Youth Day in Madrid may encourage young people throughout the world to have their lives rooted and built up in Christ.

Western Christians. That Western Christians may be open to the action of the Holy Spirit and rediscover the freshness and enthusiasm of their faith.

September

Teachers. That all teachers may know how to communicate the love of truth and instill authentic moral and spiritual values.

Church in Asia That the Christian communities in Asia may proclaim the Gospel with fervor, witnessing to its beauty with the joy of faith.

*Novena Prayer for Darfur,
Orissa and Pakistan*

Merciful Father, Prince of Peace, Spirit of Wisdom, and Compassion, please look upon our brothers and sisters in Darfur, Orissa and Pakistan.

We humbly pray:

For those who have been subjected to violence: women, children, young and old men, we ask for healing, consolation and relief of further suffering.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

For those who have done violence, we ask for healing, forgiveness and the grace of conversion.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

For those in authority throughout the world, we ask wisdom, creativity, compassion and courage in addressing this situation.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

Lord Jesus, Your Sacred Heart burns for love of all your people. Please place in our hearts that same love and inspire us to have the courage, wisdom and ingenuity to take what measures we can personally to relieve the suffering in Darfur, Orissa and Pakistan. We pray this in the Name of Jesus, our Lord, through the intercession of the sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Memorare

Remember, O Most gracious Virgin Mary that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto you O Virgin of virgins my Mother; to you do I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer me. Amen

*Fraternity & Regional News:***Fraternity Updates**

Upcoming Fraternity Gatherings: Next Fraternity Gathering will be on September 18th.

Please keep in mind that sometime during the year, the fraternity will have its triennial elections as well as fraternity and pastoral visits in all probability conducted by Regional Minister, Joan Geiger, and Regional Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Matthias Wesnofske. No specific dates have been selected yet.

On May 12-15, Alicia accompanied Regional Minister, Joan Geiger, in attending the NAFRA conference in Belleville, IL. on "Forming the Formators." Group conferences are in the process of being formed the first two being on November 19 and December 10. The specific locations are not determined.

Regional Updates

FLIC 2011 (Franciscans Living In Community) will be held August 8-11 (Monday thru Thursday lunch) at Mount Alvernia, Wappinger Falls NY. Cost is \$250. To register, send \$25 deposit to Bob Campbell, 135 Centre Ave, East Rockaway NY 11518.

Day of Recollection sponsored by St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity, N. Patchogue on **Saturday, August 27 9:30-3:00 PM at Our Lady of the Island Shrine**, Eastport. Director Fr. Matthias. Bring your lunch or buy it at the shrine cafeteria. Fee is \$10.00. For information please call: 631-475-3426. **DIRECTIONS to the Shrine:**Traveling East, take the L. I. Expressway to Exit 70. At the stop sign turn right. Continue for two miles to Eastport-Manor Road. Take this road 1/2 mile to the Shrine's entrance. -OR- Sunrise Highway to exit 61. Keep to the left. At the stop sign turn left (be careful as it is a 4 lane,divided road). Cross over Highway 51 at the traffic light. The Shrine's entrance is 2 miles on your left.

Also, on **August 27, New Pentecost Fraternity** will again conduct its annual **Help Suffolk Picnic for undomiciled families** currently in emergency residence at Help Suffolk , Brookhaven Ave., Bellport. If you wish to make a contribution to the effort either by volunteering to assist or donating goods, see or call Alicia 331-7680. School supplies or basic foods are welcome as well as cash. The fraternity will make a contribution to this effort.

St. Helen's Fraternity, Howard Beach, will hold its annual "**Getting to Know You Picnic**" at Forest Park, Woodhaven on September 17 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Alicia and Peter will probably attend. If you wish to come along, let us know: 331-7680.

Please see page 2 for prayers which we are being asked to recite for various intentions. While the Novena for Darfur, Orissa and Pakistan were intended for March of this year, it is worthwhile to continue them at your convenience. Also, there are certainly other areas of the world where our prayers are needed-Libya, Syria, Yemen, Egypt, South Sudan come to mind. Feel free to substitute or add.

Franciscan Calendar for

July:

- 21. St. Lawrence of Brindisi, I Order
- 23. St. Bridget, III Order
- 23. Bl. Cunegundes, II Order
- 24. Bl. Louise of Savoy, II Order
- 27. Bl. Mary Magdaline Martinegro, II Order

August:

- 2. Our Lady of the Angels (Portiuncula)
- 8. Holy Father St. Dominic, Founder, O.P.
- 11. Holy Mother St. Clare of Assisi
- 14. St. Maximilian Kolbe I Order
- 21. St. Pius X, Pope, III Order
- 24. St. Louis IX, King, III Order and patron

September

- 4. St. Rose of Viterbo, III Order
- 17. Stigmata of our Holy Father Francis
- 18. St. Joseph of Cupertino, I Order
- 21. St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, I Order
- 23. Finding of the Body of St. Clare

We ask you to Pray For:

- Vinnie Ascione - illness
- Joseph Ascione - illness
- Loretta Slawinski, SFO, Illness
- Carol Grant, SFO, Illness
- Br. Patrick Murphy, OSF, Illness
- Terri Campbell, Illness
- Marie Scalisi, SFO, Illness
- Pio Paniccia, SFO, Illness
- Br. Ed Bacon, OSF
- Gertrude Crean, SFO
- Fred Rigolini, SFO

Happy Birthday:

- Margaret Goodwin, 7/30
- Loretta Slawinski, 8/2
- Alicia D'Amato, 8/23
- Mary Mihalitsianos, 8/25

Our Recently Deceased:

- Anne Scully, SFO, Bl. John XXIII

+ Memento +

Our Fraternity Deceased:

- Nicholas Alaimo
- Vita Alaimo
- Jennie Bongiorno
- George Erick
- Charles Hensel
- Anne C. Lambert
- Ellen Maloney
- Monica McCaffrey
- Louis Minerva
- Mary Ruocco
- Mary Lou Stegle
- "Perry" Sicurezza
- Rose Slawinski

The Last Word:

United by their vocation as "brothers and sisters of penance," and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls "conversion." Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.

The RULE, Chapter 2, Item 7

