



AVE MARIA

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

March, 2010

Fraternity & Vocation

The decision to live by a religious rule of life such as ours, is a personal response to God's call. It originates in him and not in us. It is critical to grasp this fact firmly; to fix it in our minds and recall it frequently. We should understand that we are the 'object' of God's call; the 'soil' and not the 'sower.' When this fact is fully understood and transplanted into our spirituality, it changes our view of the world. We must understand that the "Call" is a pure gift OF God and FOR God. He initiates it and, through the action of the Holy Spirit, directs its fulfillment. We are summoned by God to a deeper personal union, as we see in the Rule, through the call to fraternity. This is the means to God's end, His purpose, part of His plan of redemption for each of us as well as the group, the Order and the Church at large. Because it is His seed, it is not to be treated lightly. It is not an afterthought to a life of grace but is central to it. For what He is saying is simply this: Here are the means by which I intend to make you holy, as I Am Holy. I have chosen you!

We must believe in this. It should be the driving force, the engine that moves us on the path to sanctity. If we believe in this, it will impact how we view our fra-

ternity, our Order, the Rule and each and every sister and brother. All of us exist for God's glory; even those among us who 'rub us the wrong way.'

The Rule expresses God's wish for us and the fraternity is our spiritual home. It is the source of grace. It is, according to Fr. Benet Fonck, OFM: **"(I)n community (that) we keep alive our growth in God's Presence and prepare ourselves adequately for communicating the Gospel and building the Kingdom of God."** Father further adds that, for Francis and Clare: **"fraternity (was) meant to be the sacrament of the Franciscan gospel life..."** Can the importance of fraternal life be explained any more emphatically or clearly than in these words? While fraternity is not meant to replace spouse and family, if properly viewed and practiced, it will support it.

A Franciscan without a fraternity is a Franciscan in name only for he or she is separated from a major source of grace, a channel of sanctity and the very means by which he or she is articulated to the Universal Church. Patti Normille tells us that: "Secular Franciscans may have an identity within their communities, but most do not possess a distinct,

visible identity outside those associations." All the more reason to value the fraternity. For us, it is our spiritual source. "Behold how good and how wonderful it is..."

Who can account for a vocation? Why did God choose us? I do not think that these are questions we can answer. However there are others to which a reply will one day be required: How have I responded to the Call? Have I been true to its principles and practices? This 'Calling' is our *talent*; our gift of grace. How will He find it? In what condition? Will it be multiplied or will it be buried? I suspect that there will be no other choices. May God grant us the grace to know, love and cherish this gift of His love always.

HAPPY EASTER!



Pax et Bonum

IMPORTANT FRATERNITY NOTICE

Our usual fraternity gathering for the fourth Sunday in May (May 28th) will be replaced by a joint fraternity gathering on May 16th with New Pentecost Fraternity at St. Matthew's in DixHills. We will join New Pentecost for their usual gathering at 1:00 PM at which time their Spiritual Assistant, Brother Louis Miritello, OSF, will offer us a conference on the Blessed Mother. We will be arranging transportation for those of you who need a ride. Speak with Alicia or Peter-331-7680. As a courtesy, we will bring along refreshments. We urge everyone to attend.

REGIONAL and FRATERNITY UPDATES

Vita Alaimo continues to thrive in her retirement. We met with her for lunch a few weeks back.

Remember in your prayers **Carol Grant** and **Loretta Slawinski** who are experiencing some health problems in retirement.

Our next **Fraternity Gathering** will be on **March 28 after the 12:00 Mass**. Be certain to bring along your copy of ***Imitating the Life of St. Francis***. We will continue our discussion of Session Five, pp 24-32

Regional elections will be held at the Spring, 2010 Regional Business Meeting on **April 24**. If you wish to attend, let Alicia or Peter know.

The **Regional Retreat** for **2010** will again be held at **Cor Maria, Sag Harbor, April 13-15**. The cost is \$170.00

Our **Fraternity Day of Recollection** will be held at **Villa Immaculata on June 5**. **Brother Ed Bacon, O.S.F.** will again be our facilitator. This day will take the place of our regular gathering. Try to attend. The cost will be \$10.00 per person.

Franciscans Living In Community (F.L.I.C.) will again be held at St. Alphonsus Retreat Center, Esopus, NY. If anyone is interested, contact Pete or Bob Campbell at (516) 599-4256

The **Regional picnic** will be held at **Elwood Park in East Northport on Saturday, June 26**. Let Pete or Alicia know if you plan to attend. There is no charge. Just bring your appetite.

There will be a **Cenacle Series conference** sponsored by the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn. It is scheduled for **Saturday, May 1** at the boathouse on the property of **Camp Alvernia, Centerport**. The subject matter will be the **Office of the Passion of St. Francis of Assisi. It will be given by Fr. Andre Cirino, OFM**. The stipend is \$20.00. There will be some refreshments; however you are asked to bring your lunch. You may register by calling Camp Alvernia at 1-631-261-5730 or speak with either Alicia or Peter. If necessary, we'll make arrangements for transportation.

St. Lawrence of Brindisi will have their annual **Day of Recollection at Our Lady of the Island Shrine in Eastport on Saturday, August 28**. The fee is \$10.00. Fr. Matt will be the retreat master. Bring your lunch.

Dates to put on your calendar for 2010:

Fraternity Gatherings:

March 28 (Palm Sunday)
 April 18
 May 16 **SEE "IMPORTANT NOTICE" ON PAGE 2**
 June 5: Retreat Day at Villa Immaculata
 July 25
 August 28 Retreat Day at O.L. of the Island Shrine
 September 26
 October 24
 November 28
 December 4: Retreat Day at St. Anthony H.S

Council Meetings:

March 13
 April 10
 May 8
 June 12
 July 10
 No Council Meeting
 September 11
 October 9
 November 13
 No Council Meeting

ASH WEDNSDAY and LENT: A reflection

The following reflection on Ash Wednesday and Lent was offered to me by Albert Veranth, a friend and an inmate at the Correctional Facility at Hobbs, New Mexico. I have been communicating with Albert for about six years. I met him through a Trappist Monk of the Abbey of the Genesee in Western New York.

One of the qualities I have noticed about Albert is the intensity of his spirituality. Isolated from the outside world, God has become his life force, his sustaining nourishment, his "manna" in the desert. Jesus truly is his Savior. He has a deep and abiding faith in which his cell has become like that of a solitary monk. That intense faith, I believe is apparent in his words. Remember him in your prayers at Easter. He is remembering all of us. Albert is a lay Cistercian.

I have always loved the Ash Wednesday passage from the

prophet Joel. He issues a call, a reminder that Lent, indeed, is a special season. "Yet now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart..." Out of 365 days, forty are chosen in which we are called to make a special spiritual effort to attend to the unseen realities of God.

The Church reminds us that if we are to move forward spiritually we can do it best by making special efforts at special times. Often, if left to our own devices, these efforts will not be made. Those of us who adhere to a "rule of life," with its spiritual discipline, can become complacent. We can flow into a routine, and that routine can become easy. Perhaps we, even more than others, need to "rend our hearts."

So what is it that will tear at my heart during these days of Lent? Is it the reminder of my origins in the clay of the earth; that my life is a gift? Is it the reminder of my fallen nature, with its temptations

and wanderings, its lack of focus at times? Is it the strident call to humility, compassion and mercy? Ask me in forty days.

Donning Christ is not as simple as reaching into a closet and then putting on a shirt. A journey through the desert of life is fraught, mirages, dried out oases and deceiving detours. Rogue showers and flash floods spring up out of nowhere. Perils abound! This is Lent's annual reminder, that despite the difficulties, Lent's end is found in that joyful proclamation of the Easter Vigil, "Lumen Christi!" This is our spiritual GPS, though often, in our arrogance and self reliance we don't use it.

-Albert Veranth



Calendar for April:

- 2. St. Benedict the Black, I Order
- 16. St. Bernadette Soubirous, cord bearer
- 17. St. Benedict-Joseph Labre, cord-bearer
- 21. St. Conrad of Parzham, I order
- 23. Bl. Giles of Assisi, I Order
- 24. St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen I Order
- 28. Bl Luchesius, layman III Order

We ask you to Pray For:

- Bill Sosnicki, Illness
- Vinnie Ascione - illness
- Joseph Ascione - illness
- Betty Ruiz - illness
- Albert Veranth - illness
- Joseph Biddle - illness
- Br. Ed Bacon, OSF, Illness
- Br. Patrick Murphy, OSF, Illness

Pray for Our Deceased:

- Nicholas 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

Pray For Recently Deceased:

- Helen Marr
- Estelle Lascala

Happy Anniversary:

Vita Alaimo March 28, 1982

Happy Birthday to:

Vita Alaimo 3/15
 Carol Grant 3/24

The Last Word:

*O Happy Fault,
 O necessary sin of Adam,
 which gained for us so great
 a Redeemer!
 (from the Exultet)*

