



AVE MARIA

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

December, 2010

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

“As Jesus was the true worshiper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do.”

(SFO Rule Article 8)

I do not think that there is a better time of the year to concentrate on this particular article of our Rule. It is at this time-Advent, the beginning of the Liturgical Year-that we should be focused on first principles, on Jesus, Himself, our Alpha and source of faith. And we do this through our personal relationship with Him in prayer.

Society tells us to look outward, to relatives and friends, to gift giving and charitable offerings; in short, material generosity. While these may be worthy occupations, without faith, they miss the core message of the Season: living in anticipation of Jesus coming. Somehow, it gets lost amidst the lights, carols, wrapping paper, food and gestures of good will. In the final analysis, Advent and Christmas are all about this faith in the Incarnation of a God-Man. And that, for we Franciscans, should be the paramount message.

Article 8, above, defines for us who we are: *so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do.* Margaret Car-

ney, OSF expresses it in this manner: *Prayer is a way of life for us — all the time and everywhere.* It is more than words.

In a sense, Advent and Christmas, then, are uniquely Franciscan. The description that Celano gives us of that first cheche is full of prayer and contemplation. As the Liturgy was celebrated, Francis *stood before the manger, uttering sighs, overcome with love, and filled with a wonderful happiness.* Francis prayed the Gospel and meditated on its message.

Focused as we are on the Incarnation and Birth of the child, Jesus, there is an innocence to this aspect of Franciscan spirituality. It is full of hope, full of an optimism which spills over into the world, sees it as good and as a reflection of God, Himself. It is simple and uncomplicated. It is, as Ilia Delio says *encountering the God of overflowing love in the person of Jesus Christ and end(ing) with embodying that love in one’s own life, becoming a new Incarnation.* No formulas or routines here; just basking in the glow of God’s love and bringing it to others!

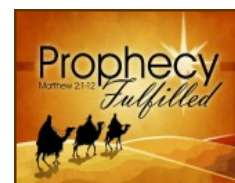
There is nothing complicated about living out this prayer in our daily lives; about proclaiming the Gospel by how we manage our

lives in our daily routines. It seems to me that this is prayer/contemplation in action. *let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do !* Prayer and contemplation, then, are not necessarily fixed rituals. They should be all we are — *all the time and everywhere!* We pray with more than our words and our minds. We pray with our entire being in all that we say, think, do and are!

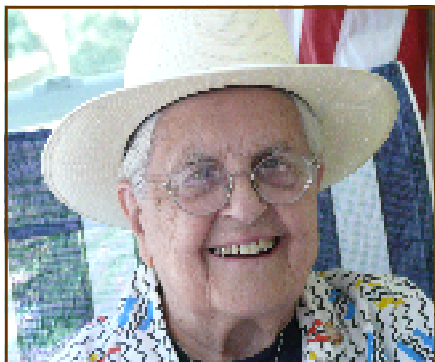
Advent and Christmas, then, are seasons during which, we Franciscans, should be looking to return to this *first principle* of Franciscan spirituality: faith in Jesus and **Re-incarnating** Him in our lives through the Gospel. This is our mandate and, through it, seeing God’s Love in all things and all people is both our prayer and our apostolate. This is Francis’ message to us, his followers.

May we have a blessed Advent full of hope; and a fulfilling Christmas, full of Joy!

Pax et Bonum



“Lead me out of my prison, that I may give thanks to your name” (Psalm 142)



In March of 2004, on the occasion of her 90th birthday, **Vita Alaimo**, in the joy of the moment, relishing the attention, described for us her zest for life. For her, it was a gift to be embraced, to be savored.

She was at her irrepressible best, the very top of her game telling family stories and describing all of the good things that God had given her and the even better things to come. Vita loved where she was and wanted to live forever. In full control, she was our *Unsinkable Molly Brown*!

In August, 2010, in her 96th year, while lying in a bed at Mather Memorial Hospital, days before she was to be transported to the Nursing Center, yet ever the optimist, she described to me how she was looking forward to her new life; how she intended to involve herself, closer to family, spending her time with others, children specifically. Vita loved children. If there was any emptiness in her life, any frustration, it might have been her unfulfilled desire to teach. She often spoke of it. Yet, even as she was declining, she saw a future. The *Molly* in her, never gave up hope.

Vita was no ordinary woman. Educated during the height of the Great Depression, all she asked of her parents was the nickel a day for transportation to and from university. The rest she managed on her own. She was intelligent, strong willed and blessed with a simple dignity and good common sense. No dilemma escaped her determination to conquer any challenge on her own terms. In the last few years of her life, coping with infirmity was not easy. Her independence compromised, she vacillated, fretted about her fate. Yet, the *Molly* in her refused to yield to age and her last words to Alicia and I after placement were: “This place is not for me.” Otherwise stated: too removed from life and friends, and, though necessary, isolated, she was lonely. Vita loved attention.

She remained on our fraternity council until age 94.

We spent many an hour with her sharing lunches and listening to those famous stories of yesteryear. She once said that she liked going to lunch with Alicia and I because she did not have to pay! Forever frugal :-). The last time we visited at her home, when I rose to leave, she instructed me to sit back down; she was not yet finished with the visit! You did not challenge Vita. I learned that lesson at fraternity gatherings. She would have her way.

On the morning of November 21, the Feast of Christ the King, the last Sunday of the Liturgical Year, our own *Unsinkable Molly Brown*, our own eternal optimist, yielded up her spirit to the God to whom she gave thanks for all of the gifts and graces in her long lifetime. Vita was thankful for what he had given her. She said that frequently. She also said that she was ready to relinquish it whenever the good Lord asked. The Lord asked on that Sunday and she responded. For no one told Vita what to do or when to do it. In a sense it was fitting that she should leave this mortal life for an immortal one at this time of the year; when new beginnings are on the horizon. The days are declining; the Liturgical readings are of the end times and yet rebirth is in the air; Advent and Incarnation. Vita loved God. And we loved Vita all the more for that faith. She will be missed. God gave her life. May he now give her life in its fullness; in his bosom and in the arms of Francis.

Pray for Vita. Pray for us all.

**The Peace Prayer of St. Francis
(Vita’s Favorite Prayer)**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.

**It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.**

Amen .

FRATERNITY UPDATES

On Saturday, December 4th, New Pentecost Fraternity will be sponsoring the second annual Advent Day of Recollection at St. Anthony High School. The donation to cover expenses is \$15.00. If you plan to attend, see Pete or Alicia.

We will again be celebrating our Christmas Party together with New Pentecost Fraternity on January 9, 2011 at 1:00 PM. It will be held at St. Matthew's Parish Hall next to the church. If you have any questions or need transportation contact Pete or Alicia. Consider bringing a "covered dish" instead of gold, frankincense or myrrh. 😊

IMPORTANT NOTE: Beginning in February, 2011, our fraternity gatherings will be changed from the 4th to the 3rd Sunday of the month. Please be aware that our first gathering will be Sunday, February 20th after the 12:00 Mass.

Loretta Slawinski had surgery for repair of the Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm. She is doing well.

Also remember in your prayers Carol Grant who is also experiencing some physical problems which have placed her at Stony Brook Hospital.

Pray For Recently Deceased:

Dominic Terrone, SFO
 Cecilia Soto, SFO
 Patricia Walsh
 Ann Ray, SFO
 Br. Victor Fischer, OSF
 William Sembler, SFO
 Vita Alaimo, SFO
 Nancy Cangelosi
 Carl Best

Calendar for December:

8. Feast of the Immaculate Conception
 12. Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
 15. Bl. Mary Francis Schervier, III Order
 25. Feast of the nativity of Our Lord

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

We ask you to Pray For:

Fran Martyn, Illness
 Vinnie Ascione - illness
 Joseph Ascione - illness
 Albert Veranth - illness, Sp. Int.
 Br. Ed Bacon, OSF, Illness
 Br. Patrick Murphy, OSF, Illness
 Clare Oakes, SFO Illness
 Ellie Lazarus, Illness
 Terri Campbell, Illness
 Barbara Hansen, SFO, Illness
 Marie Scalisi, SFO, Illness
 Mary Walsh, Illness
 Paul Reamer, SFO, Illness
 Pio Paniccia, SFO, Illness