

Regular Meeting: Sun., Nov. 13th - South Rm., St. Helen's Christian Living Ctr., 2 pm.

Council meeting: Sat., Nov. 19th - Hibiscus Café in Vero Beach at 9 am.

Agenda and Schedule for meeting:

- 1:30 pm - Initial Formation sessions before the meeting.
- 2:00 - Meeting called to order. Opening Prayer, Reports, Old/New Business.
- 2:25 - A Blessing of our donations to the Food Pantry
- 2:30 - Fred will open a discussion and formation lesson on a Franciscan approach to Advent observance.
- 2:35 - In recognition of the Feast of All Franciscan Saints (Nov. 29th), Peggy and Jennie will present short talks on St. Elizabeth of Hungary (11/17) and St. Frances of Rome (). We will also have available copies of biographies of many of the Saints and blesseds whose lives have been included in our study of the Articles of the SFO Rule.
- 3:10 - Refreshments and break
- 3:25 - Liturgy of the Hours for 33rd Sunday in Ord. Time; Franciscan Crown Rosary
- 4:00 - Closing Prayer and Dismissal

Refreshment Committee for Nov.: Pat Riordan and Peggy Rysdyke- Snacks
Fred Schaeffer - Soda and/or fruit drinks

Fraternity Apostolate: Please place your donations to the Food Pantry on our meeting table when you arrive. Thank you for your faithfulness and generosity.

Remember in your prayers: Please pray for Fred who has been diagnosed in the early stages of Parkinson's disease; and, Gene and I ask your prayers for our daughter and her fiancé as their wedding day approaches on November 12th.

- Please pray for all our members especially those who find it difficult (for health or family reasons) to attend our monthly meetings regularly. May God, in His goodness, grant them, and all of us, the grace to do His Will in spite of everything.

From the Minister's Desk: Perhaps many of you find the lives of Franciscan Saints and Blesseds as inspiring to read as I do. I hope so because we're going to focus attention on as many of them as possible not only at our November meeting but also in future meetings. Each of you will be asked to research a Franciscan Saint or Blessed of your own choosing or, if you prefer, we will have a list of possible candidates for you to select from. When your research is finished, we will schedule you to give a report to the fraternity.

These wonderful Franciscans who have preceded us in living the Rule of St. Francis of Assisi will become a part of our lives and, by their example, will deepen our understanding of how to live the Gospel in the spirit of Sts. Francis and Clare.

From the Vice-Minister's Desk: In a Liturgical Season, such as Advent, it is customary to emphasize "Spiritual Reading." Spiritual reading is a way to deepen ourselves in the lives of Saints and Blesseds. In light of what Helen wrote, above, asking each one of us to talk, at some date in the future, about a Franciscan Saint or Blessed, is also a way to get us to do some spiritual reading. To motivate our minds to higher things. Spiritual reading doesn't stop with holy people, but should continue with various Franciscan and other texts that can enlighten us to be better people. After all, we strive to become saints. That takes a lot of daily inner conversion and spiritual effort. So **learn** from those who are in Heaven.

Minister: Helen Caldarone, SFO
Vice-Minister: Fred Schaeffer, SFO
Secretary: Jennie Donlin, SFO
Treasurer: Sarah Hardy, SFO
Formation Director: Gene Caldarone, SFO
Councillors-at-Large
George Thomas, SFO
Marguerite Rysdyke, SFO
Spiritual Assisitant
Fr. Richard P. LaCorte, SFO
Webmaster/Editor: Fred Schaeffer, SFO
Commissioners
Work: Jack Solloway, SFO
Family: Susan Solloway, SFO
Peace and Justice: Sarah Hardy, SFO
Youth: (vacant)
Ecology: Fred Schaeffer, SFO

Formation

Assistant Director: Donna M. Haro, SFO
Team Member: Caroline DiGennaro, SFO
Team Member: Carmela LaMartina SFO
Team Member: Jennie Donlin, SFO

A Franciscan approach to Advent observance.

The focus of Advent is preparation for the coming of the Lord -- both in commemoration of His Nativity and His coming again at the end of time. Though most Christians see this time of year as a part of the "Christmas Season," it isn't; the Christmas season does not begin until the first Mass at Christmas Eve.

The mood of Advent is one of spiritual preparation, and the gaudy "Christmas" commercialism that surrounds it in the Western world should be overcome as much as possible. The singing of Christmas carols (which comes earlier and earlier each year), the talk of "Christmas" as a present reality, the decorated trees and the parties -- these things are "out of season" for Catholics; we should strive to keep the Season of Advent holy and penitential, always remembering, as they say, that "He is the reason for the Season."

Secular Franciscans, once called the "Order of Penitents," can make their Advent Season very special in a very personal way. Penance must be filled with a spirit of gratitude and joy, not pessimism. Through the cross we share in Christ's Resurrection. That's a privilege he grants to those he loves.

We know that suffering, pain, disappointments and fatigue are a part of everyday life. St. Francis has shown us that these sufferings are an opportunity to share an intimacy with Jesus in His mission of salvation. So take this time of Advent, and really look for daily opportunities to share this intimacy with Jesus' suffering. St. Francis of Assisi is such a great inspiration when it comes to penance. Let's make sure that we recognize Advent for what it really is, a time of preparation for the coming of Our Lord. Some people believe that the Christmas season begins around Thanksgiving... that's a worldly perception, and Franciscans know better than that. Shove all this worldliness to the sidelines, and go on with the real preparation for Christmas.

Advent is a great time to practice daily conversion; for Franciscans however, this is something we should be doing every day of the year. After all, we strive for perfection and that takes a great deal of daily effort. Spiritual reading helps us tremendously in keeping us going in the right direction.

*Fred Schaeffer, SFO
Nov. 3, 2005*