

May 2016  
"The Canticle"

Divine Mercy Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order, Vero Beach, Florida (dmf-ofs.org)

**Regular Meeting: Sunday, May 15, 2016, 3rd Sunday, at 2:00pm, in the South Room of the Christian Living Center, St. Helen Church.**

**Agenda and Schedule - Regular Meeting**

- 2:00 Opening Prayer, Reports, Old & New Business
- 2:15 Blessing of Donations to the Food Pantry
- 2:20 OFS Rule 9 - Ed O'Donnell & Donna Haro.
- 2:50 Refreshments and Break
- 3:10 Franciscan Crown Rosary (pray at May Crowning)\*
- 3:35 Liturgy of the Hours
- 4:00 Closing Prayers and Dismissal

(\* ) May Crowning outside behind Christian Living Ctr.

**Council Meeting, Sat. May 21, at 9am, St. John of the Cross. (Officers & Councilors only. Questions, see Fred)**

**Refreshment Committee:**

*Snacks: Helen & Gene Caldarone*  
*Beverages: Donna Haro*

**Fraternity Officers/Council Members**  
*(exp. 3 years from Jan. 10, 2016)*

Minister: Fred Schaeffer, OFS  
 Vice-Minister: Helen Caldarone, OFS  
 Secretary: Jean McGovern, OFS  
 Treasurer: Gene Caldarone, OFS  
 Formation Director: Donna Haro, OFS

**Councilors-at-large:**

1. Edward O'Donnell, OFS
2. Jack Reddy, OFS
3. Stanley Widing, OFS



**Remember in your prayers:** Virginia Davis, Fred Schaeffer, Marie Fee, Susan Solloway, K. van Buskirk, Pat Riordan, Stanley Widing, Elizabeth & Layle Smith, John Matthews, Deacon Blake, and all professed Franciscans in our Florida region who are ill, as well as those members of our Fraternity who cannot attend our meetings regularly.

**Anniversaries:** Marguerite Ann Rysdyke, OFS— 05-03-2003

**From the Minister's Desk:** In honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we celebrate in the months of May and October, we've attached this scholarly article by fra. Alexis Bugnolo (see next page, written with love. It is really a report on his research but written with love. Also, in May it is traditional to have a May Crowning. We have a beautiful statue of Mary in a little arbor in the backyard of the Christian Living Center, so the Fraternity will participate in a 'crowning' ceremony.

Fred Schaeffer, OFS  
Fraternity Minister

**Day of Recollection: June 10 at St. John of the Cross parish. More info in next "Canticle"**



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### The Marian Dedication of St. Francis of Assisi

*(This document has been released to the public domain by the author.)*

From: <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/patriarcha/mdevot.html>

"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: that grace may be added to thy head, and a chain of gold to thy neck." (Prov. 1:8-9) "For God hath made the father honorable to the children: and seeking the judgment of the mothers, hath confirmed it upon the children." (Ecclus 3:2-3). With these words the Divine Author of Sacred Scripture speaks to all the families of the human race, teaching them the filial devotion all ought to have. Moreso does he speak to us, to whom St. Francis of Assisi says: "Hear the voice of your father! Great things have we promised ...". It is good and proper therefore to look to St. Francis and consider more profoundly his life and virtue. As Our Lord Jesus Christ says, "When perfected the disciple will become like his teacher." May the Lord of grace grant us His assistance to see and learn from the devotion of our Seraphic Patriarch.

For St. Francis the Blessed Virgin Mary was Mother, Advocate and Queen. St. Bonaventure bears witness that St. Francis honored Her as Mother, when he says: "He loved with an unspeakable affection the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, forasmuch as that She had made the Lord of glory our Brother, and that through Her we have obtained mercy." (Leg. Maj. IX,3) For who can make the Lord our Brother, if She not also be our Mother? And again, this Doctor of the Church recounts that even before his perfect conversion the Seraphic Father had devotion for Her as Queen, for speaking of the Portiuncula, he says: "When the man of God beheld it thus abandoned, by reason of the ardent devotion that he had toward the Sovereign Lady of the world, he took up abode there, that he might diligently labor to repair it." (Leg. Maj II,8) That there can be no doubt that Saint Francis took this Mother and Queen as Advocate too, St. Bonaventure writes in the first place, "In Her, after Christ, he put his chief trust, making Her his own patron and that of his Brethren ...", adding moreover that which verified what he said: "...and in Her honor he fasted most devoutly from the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul unto the Feast of the Assumption." (Leg. Maj. IX, 3) and states the matter even more clearly, where he says, "Now Francis, the servant of God, abiding at the church of the Virgin Mother of God, with continuous sighing besought Her that had conceived the Word full of grace and truth that She would deign to become his Advocate." (Leg. Maj. III,1) This devotion of the Poverello was not without great fruit, for the Seraphic Doctor writes, "...and by the merits of the Mother of Mercy, he did himself conceive and give birth unto the spirit of Gospel truth," (Leg. Maj. III, 1) recounting immediately afterwards the taking up of the Apostolic life by Francis on the Feast of Matthias in the year 1208 A.D..

Now this devotion of St. Francis was no small thing; for this reason St. Bonaventure considered it no small thing. For there is an intimate link of charity that unites the whole life of this Herald of the Great King in unity. And this link which has lain hidden in plain view can clearly be seen by the historical circumstances of St. Francis' life. The Lord spoke to him from the Cross of San Damiano sometime in January of 1206 A.D. [K. Esser, *Gli Scritti di San Francesco*, Ed. Messagero Padova, 1995, p. 458; cf. A. Vincinelli, *Gli Scritti di S. Francesco*, Verona, 1955, p. 217]. Shortly thereafter, St. Bonaventure reports that the Saint dwelt continually at Churches (Leg. Maj. II-III). It is a moral certainly therefore, on the basis of what the Seraphic Doctor says in his *Legenda Major*, (III,1), that the Saint had the habit of attending to the Gospel readings at Mass. It is unreasonable to suppose therefore that the Saint listened attentively also to the Gospel before his dramatic final conversion on February 24, 1208 A.D.? Certainly not. And what therefore could be more appropriate and consistent with the Saint's devotion than that Gospel which he undoubtedly heard just a month before that marvelous day.

This is the Gospel of the Second Sunday after Epiphany, in which the Blessed Virgin Mary speaks to the servants—and St. Francis considered himself a servant—"And the Mother of Jesus said to Him: They have no

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wine. And He said: What is this to me or to thee? My hour has not yet come. And she said to the servants: Do whatever He tells you." (John 2:3-5) It would be remarkable if this Gospel would be understood in any other manner than that which St. John the Evangelist understood it, for he added, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee; and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in him." (John 2:11) Indeed in the narrative of the Gospel, this beginning of miracles is the line of demarcation of discipleship. Thereafter the Apostles followed the Lord and took up the Apostolic life which He taught them. Thereafter, the Poverello too would follow the Lord.

Now like the beloved Apostle, St. Francis too "believed in Him." Like the beloved Apostle, St. Francis too had heard His word from the Cross. To the former Apostle—and to us—it was said, "Behold thy Mother!" (John 19:27) To the latter apostle—and to us—it was said, "Francis, Francis, go and rebuild My house which, as you see, is falling utterly in ruin." (Leg. Maj. II,1). It would not be surprising therefore, that this religious who has been long praised by the Popes as a "thoroughly Catholic and apostolic man," would interpret private revelation in harmony with public. The Crucified spoke in time to St. Francis; would he not interpret it in harmony with that which the Crucified spoke in time for Francis? The Crucified spoke long ago; and the Apostle "took Her into his own." The Crucified spoke ages later; and Francis is manifested as a devotee of the Most Glorious Virgin Mother. There is a parallel here; and it is not difficult to see.

Now it would be an extraordinary thing if, in the heart of such a Saint who was so devoted to the Mother of Christ, this Gospel of Cana would not bear fruit. That he was a man of the Gospel who strove to put literally into practice the Gospel word, all his biographers have testified. Would he not do the same with this Gospel? He has taken Her as Mother, as St. Bonaventure testifies; would he not also take this word, "Do whatever He tells you" as the word of his Mother? He has taken Her as Queen, as the Seraphic Doctor testifies; would he not also take this word as the command of his Sovereign Lady? He has taken Her as his Advocate and the Advocate of his brothers, as that Minister general of old bears witness; would he not take this evangelical counsel as Her advice?

The Seraphic Patriarch was such a son, such a subject, such a client. Surely then he took this word and put it into practice, as a diligent listener of the Gospel. But one may ask, if such is the case where is the proof in fact? Suppositions, but where the fact? Do you want proof of fact where there is moral certainty. One knows another more by moral certainty than proof of fact; for even in court what a man is known to be often excused the appearance of clear evidence to the contrary. But that you may have proof of fact: behold the Rule of St. Francis; behold the conversion of St. Francis.

Immediately after the mention of St. Francis' pleading for Her to become his Advocate, St. Bonaventure testifies: "and by the merits of the Mother of Mercy, he did himself conceive and give birth unto the spirit of Gospel truth. For while on a day he was devoutly hearing the Mass of the Apostles, that Gospel was read aloud wherein Christ gave unto His disciples that were sent forth to preach the Gospel pattern of life, to wit, that they should possess neither gold, nor silver, nor money in their purses, nor scrip for their journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves. Hearing this, and understanding it, and committing it to memory, the lover of Apostolic poverty was at once filled with joy unspeakable. 'This,' said he, 'is what I desire, yea, this is what I long for with my whole heart.'" (Leg. Maj. III,1)

The Regula Bullata is too the proof of St. Francis' Marian Dedication. But not only the proof but also its living embodiment. The Mother says, "Do whatever He tells you," and He who "was obedient to death, death upon the Cross," says, "Take nothing with you on the way; neither gold nor silver," and "There are some who have made themselves so for the sake of the Kingdom"; but it is St. Francis who precepts, "This is the rule and life of the friars minor: to live in obedience, without anything of their own, and in chastity." (Reg. Bul. I) And again, more

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specifically, "I firmly command all the friars, that in no manner are they to receive coins or money, ..." (Reg. Bul. IV)

The Rule is thus the embodiment of this very intense and high-minded dedication of the Poverello to the Mother of Christ. For just as Our Lord and Master taught, "By their deeds you shall know them," so by the Rule is St. Francis known. Thus by the consistency of Gospel, history and rule, certainty is had as to the heart and mind and spirit of St. Francis.

This therefore is the reason for the efficacy of the Rule and of the Order. To embrace the Rule of St. Francis is to approach most closely to the will of the Immaculate Virgin, to the will of Christ, to unite oneself most immediately to the Mediation of Christ and the Mother of God, to be enabled to participate most intimately and intensely in the Mission of the Redeemer and the Corredemptrix. Hence it is that the observance of the Rule of St. Francis is The Necessary Means for the restoration of the Universal Church. For if the Church is to be restored, it must be conformed to Christ and to His Immaculate Mother; to their will and their holiness of life, to their life of perfection and to their manner of mission.

O what a beautiful and wonderful thing the Rule is! It is the will of the Immaculate, the perfect consecration to the Mother of God! The instrument of the restoration of the Church! A spiritual wonder! A supernatural mystery! An enigma of sanctity to those outside; and a portal of holiness for those within! What a stunning and altogether extraordinary son of the Immaculate Virgin, our Father Francis was! Not since the Apostles was the like seen; and in the Order hence, may his likeness be seen again and again!

May both Mother and son obtain for us the true grace of faith and penance, humility and devotion, that we may attain to that Kingdom where Her Son lives and reigns and is glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

Author believed to be: Frà Alexis Bugnolo who is a Franciscan Brother of private vows, of the strict observance. Editor and Publisher of The Franciscan Archive: A WWW Resource on All Things Franciscan, where he publishes English Translations of works by Peter Lombard, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, John Duns Scotus, Peter Reginaldetus, Lawrence of Brindisi, Francis of Assisi, and Papal Documents from the 12th to 20th Centuries. An extremely useful website for all Franciscans. See: <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/>

