

# "The Canticle"

## Divine Mercy Fraternity • Secular Franciscan Order • September 2018

### Regular Meeting:

The next meeting: **Sunday, September 9, 2018,**  
2:00 - 4:00 pm, at St. Helen Church, South Room,  
Vero Beach, Florida

### Agenda and Schedule

- 2:00 Opening, Reports, etc.
- 2:10 Formation Director (Donna):  
The Stigmata of St. Francis and St. (Padre) Pio
- 3:00 Break and Refreshments
- 3:15 Liturgy of the Hours, using, "Christian Prayer," followed by the Franciscan Crown, if time permits.
- 4:00 Closing Prayers and Dismissal

### Refreshments:

Snacks: Please bring what you can, if you are able.  
Drinks: no drinks are needed.

**Council Meeting:** Saturday, September 15 at St. John of the Cross (*see Fred*)

**Remember in your prayers:** All fraternity members, especially Marie, Fred, Stan and Virginia. Please pray for Nick (Joanne's husband) for healing.

**Anniversaries - August or September:** None

### Minister's Message:

The Sunflower always turns to brother sun; may our hearts and souls turn to God in the same way. We'll use this motif for a while, until I find something else with flora and/or fauna. Anyone have any ideas? Other Franciscan Saints I like to review: St. Maximilian Kolbe 8/14; St. Rose of Viterbo, Secular Franciscan 9/4; St. Joseph of Cupertino, 9/18; St. (Padre) Pio of Pietrelcina 9/23; See you all on September 9th!

### Fraternity Officers/Council Members (exp. Jan. 09, 2019)

Minister:	Fred Schaeffer, OFS
Vice-Minister:	Helen Caldarone, OFS
Secretary:	Jean McGovern, OFS
Treasurer:	Jack Reddy, OFS
Formation Director:	Donna Haro, OFS
Councilor-at-large:	Joanne Giordana, OFS
Spiritual Asst.	Deacon Richard Blake, OFS (when available)

St. Clare was born in Assisi (1194), the eldest daughter of Favorino Sciffi, Count of Sasso-Rosso and his wife Ortolana. Traditional accounts say that Clare's father was a wealthy representative of an ancient Roman family, who owned a large palace in Assisi and a castle on the slope of Mount Subasio. Ortolana belonged to the noble family of Fiumi, and was a very devout woman who had undertaken pilgrimages to Rome, Santiago de Compostela and the Holy Land. Later in life, Ortolana entered Clare's monastery, as did Clare's sisters, Beatrix and Catarina (who took the name Agnes).

As a child, Clare was devoted to prayer. Although there is no mention of this in any historical record, it is assumed that Clare was to be married in line with the family tradition. However, at the age of 18 she heard Francis preach during a Lenten service in the church of San Giorgio at Assisi and asked him to help her to live after the manner of the Gospel. On the evening of Palm Sunday, March 20, 1212, she left her father's house and accompanied by her aunt Bianca and another companion proceeded to the chapel of the Porziuncula to meet Francis. There, her hair was cut, and she exchanged her rich gown for a plain robe and veil.

Francis placed Clare in the convent of the Benedictine nuns of San Paulo, near Bastia. Her father attempted to force her to return home. She clung to the altar of the church and threw aside her veil to show her cropped hair. She resisted any attempt, professing that she would have no other husband but Jesus Christ. In order to provide the greater solitude Clare desired, a few days later Francis sent her to Sant' Angelo in Panzo, another monastery of the Benedictine nuns on one of the flanks of Subasio.

Other women joined them, and they were known as the "Poor Ladies of San Damiano". They lived a simple life of poverty, austerity and seclusion from the world, according to a Rule which Francis gave them as a Second Order (Poor Clares).

San Damiano became the center of Clare's new religious order, which was known in her lifetime as the "Order of Poor Ladies of San Damiano". San Damiano was long thought to be the first house of this order, however, recent scholarship strongly suggests that San Damiano actually joined an existing network of women's religious houses organized by Hugolino (who later became Pope Gregory IX). Hugolino wanted San Damiano as part of the order he founded because of the prestige of Clare's monastery. San Damiano emerged as the most important house in the order, and Clare became its undisputed leader. By 1263, just ten years after Clare's death, the order had become known as the Order of Saint Clare.

In 1228, when Gregory IX offered Clare a dispensation from the vow of strict poverty, she replied: "I need to be absolved from my sins, but not from the obligation of following Christ." Accordingly, the Pope granted them the *Privilegium Pauperitatis* — that nobody could oblige them to accept any possession.

Unlike the Franciscan friars, whose members moved around the country to preach, Saint Clare's sisters lived in enclosure, since an itinerant life was hardly conceivable at the time for women. Their life consisted of manual labor and prayer. The nuns went barefoot, slept on the ground, ate no meat and observed almost complete silence.

For a short period, the order was directed by Francis himself. Then in 1216, Clare accepted the role of abbess of San Damiano. As abbess, Clare had more authority to lead the order than when she was the prioress and required to follow the orders of a priest heading the community. Clare defended her order from the attempts of prelates to impose a rule on them that more closely resembled the Rule of Saint Benedict than Francis' stricter vows. Clare sought to imitate Francis' virtues and way of life so much so that she was sometimes titled *alter Franciscus*, another Francis. She also played a significant role in encouraging and aiding Francis, whom she saw as a spiritual father figure, and she took care of him during his final illness.

After Francis's death, Clare continued to promote the growth of her order, writing letters to abbesses in other parts of Europe and thwarting every attempt by each successive pope to impose a rule on her order which weakened the radical commitment to corporate poverty she had originally embraced. Clare's Franciscan theology of joyous poverty in imitation of Christ is evident in the rule she wrote for her community and in her four letters to Agnes of Prague.

In 1224, the army of Frederick II came to plunder Assisi. Clare went out to meet them with the Blessed Sacrament in her hands. Suddenly a mysterious terror seized the enemies, who fled without harming anybody in the city.

In her later years, Clare endured a long period of poor health. She died on August 11, 1253 at the age of 59. Her last words as reported to have been, "Blessed be You, O God, for having created me."

*Today, the Poor Clares form a worldwide Order of more than 17,000 sisters in 900 monasteries, 46 of which are in the United States. All follow the same Rule and share the same basic Constitutions.*



## The Franciscan Crown

The Franciscan Crown Rosary is a Rosary consisting of seven decades with each decade describing a particular joy from the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Seven Joys are:

- 1) The Annunciation
- 2) The Visitation
- 3) The Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ
- 4) The Adoration of the Magi
- 5) The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple
- 6) The Appearance of Christ to Mary after the Resurrection
- 7) The Assumption and Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven

The Franciscan Crown Rosary begins with the first Mystery and then praying one Our Father and ten Hail Marys while meditating upon it. This is then followed for the other six Mysteries. It is customary to finish by adding two Hail Marys in honor of the 72 years that Our Lady is said to have lived on earth, and one Our Father and Hail Mary for the intentions of the Pope.

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### The Canticle of the Sun by St. Francis of Assisi

Most High, all powerful, good Lord,  
Yours are the praises, the glory, the honor,  
and all blessing.

To You alone, Most High, do they belong,  
and no man is worthy to mention Your  
name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your  
creatures, especially through my lord  
Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you  
give light through him.  
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his  
splendor!  
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praise be You, my Lord, through Sister  
Moon and the stars, in heaven you formed  
them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother  
Wind, and through the air, cloudy and se-  
rene, and every kind of weather through  
which You give sustenance to Your crea-  
tures.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister  
Water, which is very useful and humble  
and precious and chaste.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother  
Fire, through whom you light the night  
and he is beautiful and playful and robust  
and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister  
Mother Earth, who sustains us and gov-  
erns us and who produces varied fruits  
with colored flowers and herbs.

Praised be You, my Lord,  
through those who give pardon for Your  
love, and bear infirmity and tribulation.

Blessed are those who endure in peace  
for by You, Most High, they shall be  
crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord,  
through our Sister Bodily Death,  
from whom no living man can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin.  
Blessed are those whom death will find  
in Your most holy will, for the second  
death shall do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord,  
and give Him thanks  
and serve Him with great humility.

