

NEWSLETTER

Immaculate Conception, Solemnity

December 8th



Hail, O Lady, holy Queen, Mary, holy Mother of God, who are the virgin made church and who are the one chosen by the most holy Father in heaven, whom he consecrated with his most holy beloved Son and with the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, and in whom there has been and is all the fullness of grace and every good.

Hail, His Palace!
Hail, His Tabernacle!
Hail, His Home!

Hail, His Robe!
Hail, His Handmaid!
Hail, His Mother!
And all you holy virtues who through the grace and illumination of the Holy Spirit have been poured into the hearts of the faithful, so that from their faithless state you may make them faithful to God.

The Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary - St. Francis

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LITTLE FLOWERS

Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

Rule 12

Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.



For Thought:

In what ways can Secular Franciscans be witnesses “to the good yet to come” during Advent?

What may God be asking of you to “be set free” from this Advent?

LETTER FROM OUR
MINISTER

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On November 19, 2011 Jan Pitts and I had a wonderful opportunity to share our Franciscan Spirituality at a workshop for the South Deanery Catechist Faith Formation Day which was held at St. Philip Benizi.

Jan presented a workshop titled “Franciscan Spirituality” where she shared the Twelve Elements of Franciscan Spirituality, which were written by our very own pastor, Fr. John Koziol, OFM. Conv. during his first assignment at St. Philip Benizi. Jan focused on the Incarnation, Eucharist and Scripture, which were instrumental in her journey toward the Catholic Church and then to becoming a Secular Franciscan. She shared how St. Francis had the first nativity at Greccio, and how important the Eucharist and Scripture were to St. Francis.

The topic of my workshop was “Living Simply”. St. Francis gave everything away and focused on nothing else but Jesus. As Secular Franciscans, living in the world, cannot just give

everything away, but we are called to live as simply as we can in our state in life.

Finding out what is distracting us from focusing on Jesus is our number one priority. Such distractions may include our attitudes, having too much “stuff” and being so busy that we do not have time to pray, spend time with family and those that matter to us.

On Sunday, Nov. 27, 2011 we celebrated the first Sunday of Advent, with the church beautifully decorated in purple. Advent is a time of hope, a time of anticipation, a time of waiting for the birth of Christ, as we celebrate his First coming, and we joyfully wait for his coming again. We are celebrating the Incarnation, the Son of God becoming human, becoming and being one with us, sharing totally in our human experience. Advent and Christmas remind us that Christ is with us in our lives every day. He is in our prayer, in the Scriptures, in the people we love, in the poor, in the Bread we break and share in the Eucharist.

What are we to do while we wait? While we wait, what do we learn about ourselves? Are we patient, impatient? Do we just care about ourselves, do we care about others? Do we keep

buying things, or do we give things away to those who need them more than we do? Do we care enough to slow down and look around us? What do we notice around us? Hopefully we come to a greater awareness of what is truly important in life, and gain a better appreciation for the things we wait for.

In the meantime, we can pray more, maybe in front of the Blessed Sacrament, read scripture and Advent devotionals. We can meditate on the new changes of the mass, help others, share our resources with others. Maybe we can cut back on our own expenses, spend time with family and friends, and attend mass more frequently.

Pax et Bonum

Rose Campbell SFO



FRANCISCAN PROFESSIONS

December 10th

On October 29th, members of the council sponsored a day retreat at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit for our Candidates preparing for profession. Each Candidate was interviewed about their Franciscan journey and commitment to the life time vocation as a Secular Franciscan.

We are pleased to announce the final professions of four of our Candidates - Dolores Proper, Helene Ward, Georgia Edwards, and Eleanore Lindelof. The Rite of Profession will take place during the 8:30AM Mass on Saturday December 10th at St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church. The Mass will be celebrated by our Spiritual Assistant, Fr. John Koziol, OFM, Conv. The Mass and Professions will be followed by a reception. Immediately following the reception we will have a brief meeting in the St. Francis Room of the San Damiano house.

Also, Inquirers Sharron Schreer and Elaine Greenwood were interviewed for their readiness to become Candidates. Their Rite will take place at our meeting in January.



Above photo of Helene, Georgia, and Eleanore on their day of Candidacy.



Left photo of Dolores serving in the kitchen at our "Assisi Comes to Jonesboro Italian Dinner."

Congratulations to these four ladies!



Most High, and glorious God,
Bring Light to the darkness of my heart!
Give me right faith, certain hope, and perfect Charity.

Lord give me Insight and Wisdom so I might always discern Your Holy and True Will.

- Prayer of St. Francis before the Crucifix of San Damiano



IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Prayerline - email prayer requests to icfsfoprayer@gmail.com

Newsletter - contact Jan Pitts, SFO by the 23rd of the month to submit items for the following month

Fraternity Web Site - <http://rhinoweb.org/immaculate-conception-fraternity>

ADVENT REFLECTION



Advent & Christmas reflection from Our Sunday Visitor Online

Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of the Christ Child, but in the midst of the pre-Christmas frenzy, it's easy to lose sight of the profound spiritual importance of the Advent season. Your greatest temptation during Advent will be scrimping on your spiritual needs because there are so many other things going on!

There are presents to make or buy, cookies to bake, cards to mail, parties to plan, gifts to wrap and trees to decorate. Even your parish can put demands on your time with choir practices, pageant rehearsals, candy sales, food collections for the poor and Advent evenings of reflection.

There's nothing wrong with pre-Christmas preparations. But it's important to balance the sacred part of the Advent season with all of the other things you are doing. If you don't make time for quiet reflection, prayer and conversion of heart, you will find yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually exhausted by Christmas Day. Your Christmas

celebration will look perfect on the surface, but will feel spiritually unsatisfying. You will have a hard time experiencing the joy and peace that the Babe in Bethlehem brings.

[Read more at Our Sunday Visitor](#)

THE PRAYER OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, prepared a worthy dwelling place for Your Son, we request to You that, as by the foreseen death of this, Your Son, You did preserve her from all stain, so too You would permit us, purified through her intercession, to come unto Your. Through the same Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, world without end. Amen.



December Birthdays

- 1st - Jason Medlock, SFO
- 8th - Dcn Dennis Arcand, SFO
- 13th - +Christine Sampson, SFO
- 17th - Dennis Mallon, SFO
- 21st - Eugenia West, SFO
- 29th - Jan Pitts, SFO

December Hospitality

The reception following the Professions will take the place of our potluck. No one needs to bring anything this month.

Formation

CONTINUING CONVERSION



Last month ongoing and initial formation was combined as we celebrated our 3rd annual memorial service to remember our deceased members and loved ones who have passed during the last year. In a special way we remembered Art Mendoza who was in final preparation to become a Candidate. Those remembering someone were invited to select a Christmas ornament (photo left). We also spent time reflecting on our busy October -- Transitus, Italian Dinner, and Silent Auction. We agreed that we grew in faith in God in our endeavors.

VOCATION



Inviting God, we yearn for life and desire to see good days, but find it difficult to recognize you and listen to your voice.

Awaken our hearts to your presence in the people and

circumstances that we meet each day.

May we take time to listen to your presence within us.

Bless women and men with the grace to listen to your invitation and the courage to commit themselves to seeking and serving you in the Franciscan way of life.

May they together with us, witness to your presence in the world. In Christ's name we pray.

Amen.

NEXT FRATERNITY MEETINGS

Saturday, December 10

Located in St. Francis Room of the San Damiano House of St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church, 591 Flint River Rd., Jonesboro, GA 30238-3452

We meet the 2nd Saturday of every month. Members are encouraged to begin by attending the 8:30Am Mass. Fraternity gathers at 9:15Am. Regular meeting closes around Noon. Meeting continues for Initial formation until approx. 1Pm.

At our December meeting we will celebrate 4 Professions at the

8:30 AM Mass, followed by a reception. Following the reception, we will hold a brief meet to reflect on Advent and short business information.

Saturday, January 14

At our January meeting, we will celebrate the Candidacy of Sharron Schreer and Elaine Greenwood. We also have our annual extraction of Saints and selection of prayer partners.

FRATERNITY RETREAT FEBRUARY 17 - 19



We will hold our next fraternity retreat on President's Day weekend, February 17 - 19. We will return to the Carmel Retreat Center in Hoschton, GA. Fr. John Koziol, OFM Conv. will lead our retreat. Sharon Loiselle's daughter will be coordinating our meals again.

Please sign up if you plan to attend. **We need a \$50 non-refundable deposit if you plan to attend.** We need to know how much space we will use as the retreat house has two sides and can accommodate a large group and a small group. Cost is ~ \$120 per person for the weekend. Our deposit is due January 1st.

2011 Calendar

December 2nd

Fast & Pray for Franciscan Vocations

December 8th

Immaculate Conception, Solemnity

December 10th

Fraternity Meeting - Professions at 8:30 AM Mass

December 16th

Fast & Pray for Monastery of Holy Spirit

December 25th

Solemnity of Christmas

SFO Stewardship



TIME AND TREASURE

Please remember our Common Fund. Active membership calls us to participate with our presence and financial support as we are able.

Contributions may be mailed to Lori Moran, SFO, 103 Bay Point, Peachtree City, GA 30269 or placed in the basket at the monthly meeting.

If you are unable to attend a meeting, please notify a member of the council so that we may properly notate our attendance records. The Council is responsible for accurate report on membership status.