

# Up to Now

Newsletter of the St. Margaret of Cortona Region of the Secular Franciscan Order

Covering the District of Columbia, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia,  
and portions of West Virginia and Pennsylvania



Fr. Philippus Philippus, OFMCap

Volume 14, Issue 2

*Let us begin again, for up to now we have done nothing.*

November 2010

## The SFO Regional Retreat at PriestField

It is hard to imagine a more peaceful location for a retreat than PriestField Pastoral Center, 75 miles from Washington, D.C., outside the pretty village of Middleway in West Virginia. This is where St. Margaret of Cortona Regional Fraternity held its retreat from October 8–10, 2010. The retreat center, dedicated in 1983, belongs to the diocese of Wheeling, -Charleston. It has chapels, conference and guest rooms, a separate dormitory and cabins, and is open to all groups. The ambiance is strongly Catholic and Franciscan. There are portraits of Saint Clare, Saint Anthony, and, of course, of Saint Francis in every hallway. The refectory is adorned with a giant Saint Damiano Crucifix. There is at least one crucifix in every room; often there are two. PriestField is nestled between woods and the little Opequon Creek, and is surrounded by trails frequented by deer and by the beautiful, rolling countryside of the Shenandoah Valley.

How PriestField came to belong to the Church is in itself a fascinating story, dating from the early days of the history of the church in the states of Virginia and West Virginia. The protagonist of this story was Adam Livingston, “an honest and industrious Lutheran.” In the early 1790s, Livingston and his family moved to what was then Virginia and acquired a large estate that included PriestField. According to eyewitnesses, Livingston immediately had difficulties. Cattle and horses died. At night, his house was haunted by odd noises: galloping of horses, knockings, passing wagons... Even during the daylight, lumps of fire shot across rooms, terrifying the family and servants. What unnerved them most, however, was the incessant clipping of invisible scissors. Every piece of leather and cloth in chests or in use was suddenly cut to shreds. Livingston’s place became known as Cleftown.

Livingston asked for the help of his minister, a Lutheran parson. The minister prayed and read the Bible, all in vain.



Next, Livingston called on magicians, again to no avail. At last, someone suggested a Catholic priest. Deeply distraught, Livingston accepted. The priest was Father Dennis Cahill of Hagerstown, Md. Father Dennis sprinkled holy water and said some prayers. The house was quiet for

(See “Retreat,” page 4)

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## Minister's Message



There is so much to share with you from the NAFRA chapter last month! I will try to capture the highlights here and look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting on Dec. 4 at Tau Fraternity in Herndon, VA (see agenda) to share even more.

Do you know what it's like to be part of a "big" and most of all loving

family? This was the true atmosphere of this year's chapter. The National Executive Council, as well as the host region, St. Thomas More, made me feel so welcome and appreciated that I was wishing you all could be there with me to experience this too. The International Visitors from CIOFS were in the family too! Tibor from Hungary and Fr. Amauel from Africa.

Important areas we will be addressing from the chapter include: JPIC - Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, Formation and Spiritual Assistants. There is a new national chair for JPIC, Kent Ferris, who will be providing great leadership in this area as we move from the basic commissions into this combined focus on Catholic Social Teaching. In our region, I expect we will

work closely with Franciscan Mission Association to better understand how we can support their outreaches both monetarily, playfully and with some active involvement. More to come.

As I am traveling around to visit you, I am realizing with every bone in my body that the key to dedicated SFOs who are committed to living their vocation is FORMATION. Not only is this a time for teaching about Francis and Clare but a spiritual journey where the candidate truly discerns his/her calling to live the gospel life. We cannot emphasize this enough. In May 2011, there will be a weekend Formation Seminar in Chicago (details forthcoming) where more training and direction and inspiration will be offered to you. Please plan to send yourself and your Formation Director. Scholarships are available to assist you.

And lastly, but certainly not the least, the need around the country for Spiritual Assistants from the various obediences is great. Br. Kip, OFM Cap has been appointed our Regional Spiritual Assistant replacing, Br. Mark Pattock, OFM Cap. Br. Kip is eager to work with us to maintain relationships with the friar obediences of the Franciscan Family to which we all belong.

You are in my daily prayers - please keep me in yours! See you on Dec. 4 at Tau Fraternity for our "special family time"

In the peace and joy of Francis and Clare,

Mary Thuman



## Mark Your Calendar

**December 4 — Regional Meeting.** Tau Fraternity, St. Joseph Church Parish Hall, 750 Peachtree Street, Herndon Va.

**March 5, 2011.** The St. Margaret Cortona Regional Lenten Workshop sponsored by St. Conrad fraternity will be given by Father André Cirino, OFM, on *The Geste of the Great King, the Office of the Passion*. It will be held at Our Lady of the Fields parish in Millersville, Md., from 9:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Details will be available in the February issue of *Up to Now*.

**April 2, 2011.** The St. Margaret Cortona Regional Candidates Retreat, Shrine of St. Anthony, Ellicott City, Md., from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Details will be provided in the

February issue of *Up to Now*.

**July 15-17, 2011 — Chapter of Mats.** National Conference Center, Leesburg, Va. accommodations will be single rooms only. Registration information will be provided in subsequent issues of *Up to Now*.



## ***Regional Formation Director's Message***

Greetings to all, my brothers and sisters in Francis and in Christ! The coolness and crispness of fall is up, and I hope the vigor of all of your fraternity formation programs is up as well! I had the opportunity to experience the warm hospitality of two fraternities since the last *Up-To-Now* issue. I attended the annual fraternity picnic of Our Lady Queen of the Angels Fraternity of Lancaster, Pa., in September and had a terrific time. I wish to thank minister Ken Giovanelli and all the fraternity council and members for their warm welcome and great food! I also had the opportunity to talk with their formation director, George Garbrick.

I also wish to thank minister Barbara Acri and the St. Thomas More Fraternity of Harrisburg, Pa., for such a great job in delivering the Rite of Admission to three of their candidates in Spanish: I was duly impressed. I also give kudos to the fraternity and the formation director, Steve Wolf, on a well-done presentation of initial formation to a few more of their candidates, as well as an alternating Spanish and English recital of the Crown Rosary. Terrific shows of true Franciscanism by both fraternities to say the least. I will be continuing my visits to more fraternities in the Pennsylvania area in the coming months.

I will be visiting, at their request, the St. Bonaventure Fraternity to participate in an on-going formation activity later on this month or next. As did St. Bonaventure, if any of your fraternities are having a special gathering or upcoming event that you would like to have me or one of my regional team come visit, let us know as far in advance as possible. We will be sure to put it on our schedule.

The regional formation team did meet informally and briefly during the regional retreat. We discussed mainly our fraternity contacts and visits.

We are still in need of a facilitator for the second annual Inquirer's and Candidate's day of recollection to be held on April 2, 2011. A registration form will be published in the February, 2011 *Up-To-Now*. If anyone would like to do this, or feel called to lead the day of recollection, or would like to recommend someone we can contact, please let me know as soon as possible. Time is growing short. We all have different kinds of gifts to share. We hope that one or more of you will step forward in spiritual servant leadership for this day. This event will again be held as the Shrine of St. Anthony of Ellicott City.

We hope to obtain more information on the National Formation Workshop, "Forming The Formators" at Our Lady of the Snows of Belleville. Ill. This information may be available at the general regional meeting of December 4. The workshop will be on May 12-15, 2011 (Thursday to Sunday).

As was mentioned in the last *Up-To-Now*, the regional team is still looking for ideas on the organization of a region-wide formation program for Franciscan youth (14-18). Especially if you work with youth in any way, if any fraternity member has any suggestions or ideas or wishes to be a part of this planning, please let one of the regional team know.

The regional formation team continues to send its prayers and condolences to our advisor, Ann Corro, on the passing of her father to his eternal reward. Ann could not be with us at the regional retreat, as she and her family needed to be at her dad's side during his last few days. Ann, always remember that your other family — your Franciscan family — is here to serve you and your family, especially now in this true time of special need.

I conclude with, once again, a quote from the Handbook of Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership (HSFSL), entitled, "The Beatitudes of a Leader" (Page 120):

BLESSED is the leader who has not sought the high places, but who has been drafted into service, because of his or her ability and willingness to serve.

BLESSED is the leader who knows where he or she is going, why he or she is going, and how to get there.

BLESSED is the leader who knows no discouragement, who presents no alibi.

BLESSED is the leader who knows how to lead without being dictatorial; true leaders are humble.

BLESSED is the leader who seeks for the best of those he or she deserves.

BLESSED is the leader who leads for the good of the most concerned, and not for the personal gratification of his or her own ideas.

BLESSED is the leader who develops leaders without leading.

BLESSED is the leader who marches with the group, interprets correctly the signs on the pathway that leads to ground.

BLESSED is the leader who considers leadership an opportunity for service.

*Author Unknown*

Have a blessed, joyous, and peace-filled Thanksgiving and Christmas, and a prosperous New Year!

Mike Huether  
Regional Formation Director  
mhuether1@cavtel.net

(“Retreat,” from page 1)



a while, but soon the supernatural events started all over again. At last, Father Cahill said Holy Mass at the house, and all manifestations ceased. The family converted, and in 1802, Livingston, in appreciation, donated 35 acres of his land to the church, for “favors granted.”

The nearly 90 attendees at the SFO regional retreat were very, very lucky

to catch Father Jude Winkler, OFM Conv., of the Saint Anthony of Padua Province. Until now, Father Jude has been doing parish missions, retreats and workshops for the laity, seminarians, priests and deacons and for religious communities. But in December, Father Winkler will be taking a big job as Assistant General of the order, a move he likened to an assistant pastor becoming a cardinal. As Father Jude commented, he was not even “on the list.” The Holy Spirit moves where it will, without a doubt.

If you have not seen Father Jude, picture a tall, Polish-American with Alan Alda’s voice — a little graver, actually — an infectious smile, a joyful spirit, deep scholarship at the tip of his fingers, all liberally sprinkled with lots of humor and stories galore. Check out his blog:



*The Good News Note: Reflections from the Road* at: <http://blog.companionsofsaintanthony.org> and prepare to be amazed at the books he devours (small wonder he packs a kindle). And, yes, he also writes.

**The Lessons:** From October 8th to the 10th, Father Jude presented the subject of the retreat: “Introduction to the Psalms,” “Wisdom Psalms,” “Lamentations,” “Psalms of Praise,” and “Messianic Psalms.” It is impossible to convey in a few pages what we learned in those fully-packed sessions. So allow me to give a brief summary, with this proviso: the mistakes are all mine. For a deeper study, visit The Companions of Saint Anthony site. Look for Father Winkler’s CDs. Believe me, they are worth it.

As Franciscans, we pray the psalms daily during the Liturgy of the Hours. In praying or reading the psalms, it is easy to misunderstand them. Father Jude explained that they are

poetry written in ancient Hebrew. We are separated from the psalmists by centuries, language and culture. Father Jude told us that in Hebrew there are no present, past or future tenses. The context is given by adverbs. Also, the same word often has different meanings. For instance, the same word is translated as “to” and “by.” You can see how this can lead to errors. A psalm dedicated to King David may also be wrongly attributed to him. Additionally, poetry techniques or imagery affect how we understand the psalms. Take a psalm of praise, written in lofty language. If the internal rhyme in Hebrew is, in modern terms, that of a funeral march, the meaning changes. Father Jude said it is impossible to catch these nuances in translation, or to replicate them perfectly in another language.

All throughout the sessions, Father Jude gave a sweeping overview of the evolution of belief amongst the Jews, from the early henotheism — worshipping a single god while accepting the existence of other deities — to the covenant with Abraham, taking us through the hardships of the exile to the “river-to-river empire” of King David. Along the way, the questions and answers were fascinating. Did a pagan prayer become part of the Old Testament? Yes, it did. Read the beautiful Psalm 29. Marvel at Psalm 22, which seems written as a reflection of Good Friday. As we pored over Psalm 110, Father Jude expounded on the mysterious Melchizedek, king and priest, who prefigures Jesus. Now and then, Father Jude highlighted the psalmists’ bold manner in addressing God, what he called *chutzpah* (pronounced *hutspâ*). In Hebrew it means “insolence” or “audacity.” The relationship between the psalmists and God, he stressed, is personal and intense. The psalmists, we also learned, as other Old Testament writers, belonged to a culture close to nature. They were graphic, much more than we would be comfortable with, our presenter observed.

We think in linear fashion, but the psalmists thought and composed in levels. With Father Jude as our guide, we went through these levels, as our presenter put a particular psalm in a historical context, as he taught us how it fit within the period, evaluating the symbolism, and finding how it resounds in the Gospels. Father Jude told us to spiritualize the psalms. “Crushing the enemy’s heads” means to conquer pride, fear, to defeat our demons. Moreover, in exploring each psalm, our presenter ended with examples of when to pray it. For example, Psalm 72, which speaks about the ideal king, is perfect just before casting a vote.

(See “Retreat,” page 5)

(“Retreat,” from page 4)

Or take Psalm 134. On the surface Psalm 134 is written for night watchmen. But it has many other applications. Pray it for those who work at night, or for those who suffer from insomnia, those who are on call such as firefighters, policemen, nurses... or when things are dark in your life.

For the duration of the retreat, Father Jude sprinkled his talks with spiritual advice. Turn a moment of crisis into an opportunity for grace. Remember others. Take in the marvel of God’s creation—easy to do at PriestField. We are “spirit-filled dust,” he said. Set your eyes on the beauty around you, on the colors blue, yellow, red, blue... And give thanks to God for everything, everything, even for stinkbugs. Yes, stinkbugs. Father Jude’s carefully thought out explanations put me in mind of the awesome foundation of the Church, Scripture and Apostolic Tradition, and how in these talks we were watching it unfold before our eyes: the Secular Franciscans from everywhere in the re-

gion absorbing, and this learned Franciscan friar digging up the very roots of our faith, elucidating, pointing out, and celebrating, exhorting us over and over:

**LOVE, PRAY, SURRENDER. †**



— by Adelaida Lower  
Reprinted from Troubador,  
Monthly Newsletter of  
Holy Family Fraternity  
Manassas, Va.

### ***What Are We Reading?***

THE SAINT AND THE SULTAN

The Crusades, Islam, and Francis of Assisi’s Mission of Peace

Paul Moses

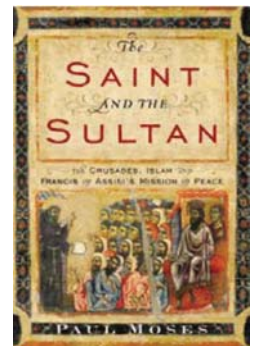
Doubleday Religion [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

ISBN: 978-0385523707 / Price: \$17.16

*An intriguing examination of the extraordinary and little known meeting between St. Francis of Assisi and Islamic leader Sultan Malik Al-Kamil that has strong resonance in today's divided world.*

For many of us, St. Francis of Assisi is known as a poor monk and a lover of animals. However, these images are sadly incomplete, because they ignore an equally important and more challenging aspect of his life — his unwavering commitment to seeking peace. In *The Saint and the Sultan*, Paul Moses recovers Francis' message of peace through the largely forgotten story of his daring mission to end the crusades. In 1219, as the Fifth Crusade was being fought, Francis crossed enemy lines to gain an audience with Malik al-Kamil, the Sultan of Egypt. The two talked of war and peace and faith and when Francis returned home, he proposed that his Order of the Friars Minor live peaceably among the followers of Islam — a revolutionary call at a moment when Christendom pinned its hopes for converting Muslims on the battlefield.

*The Saint and the Sultan* captures the lives of St. Francis and Sultan al-Kamil and illuminates the political intrigue and religious fervor of their time. In the process, it reveals a startlingly timely story of interfaith conflict, war, and the search for peace. More than simply a dramatic adventure, though it does not lack for colorful saints and sinners, loyalty and betrayal, and thrilling Crusade narrative, *The Saint and the Sultan* brings to life an episode of deep relevance for all who seek to find peace between the West and the Islamic world. Winner of the 2010 Catholic Press Association Book Award for History.



Reprinted from The Tau Signature  
Tau Fraternity, Herndon, Va.

## ***Around the Region***

### **RECEIVED AS CANDIDATES**

- Jorge Class, St. Thomas More Fraternity, Spanish Cell, Harrisburg, Penn., October 17, 2010
- Tana Dale, St. Thomas More Fraternity, Harrisburg, Penn., September 19, 2010
- Richard Fairfax, St. Thomas More Fraternity, Harrisburg, Penn., September 19, 2010
- Fred Fischer, St. Thomas More Fraternity, Harrisburg, Penn., September 19, 2010
- Marianne Fischer, St. Thomas More Fraternity, Harrisburg, Penn., September 19, 2010
- Maria Santos, St. Thomas More Fraternity, Spanish Cell, Harrisburg, Penn., October 17, 2010
- Guadalupe Sidhu, St. Thomas More Fraternity, Spanish Cell, Harrisburg, Penn., October 17, 2010

### **NEWLY PROFESSED**

- Bonnie Cote, sfo, St. Clare Fraternity, Milford, Del., October 14, 2010
- Mary Hannon, sfo, St. Conrad Fraternity, Severna Park, Md., September 18, 2010
- Denise Mianta, sfo, St. Conrad Fraternity, Severna Park, Md., September 18, 2010
- Maury Robb, sfo, St. Clare Fraternity, Milford, Del., October 14, 2010
- Mary Rita Rossi, sfo, St. Conrad Fraternity, Severna Park, Md., September 18, 2010
- Doris Tippet, sfo, St. Clare Fraternity, Milford, Del., October 14, 2010
- Genevieve Wilbourne, sfo, St. Conrad Fraternity, Severna Park, Md., September 18, 2010

### **NATIONAL PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER**

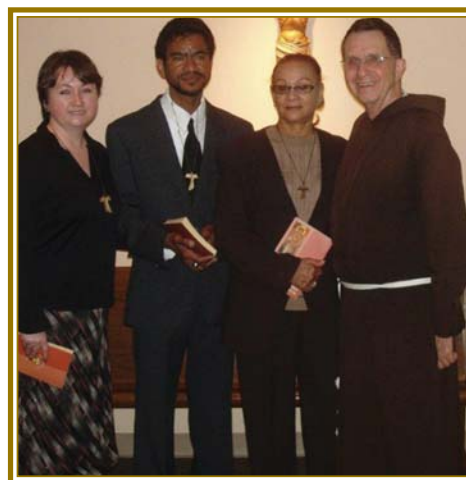
O, Good and Gracious God,  
God of mercy, compassion, generosity, and love,  
As we live our lives today in the model of St. Francis,  
choosing daily to live the Gospel life,  
Help us to help others hear Your call.  
Help us to help others to recognize  
their vocation as a Secular Franciscan  
that You have already planted in their heart.  
Help us, so that together we all may work  
to bring the Gospel to life. Amen!

*Marian R. Crosby, SFO*



*St. Conrad Fraternity, Severna Park, Md., welcomes four newly professed members at Capuchin College, September 18, 2010. Fr. John Pavlik, OFMCap, celebrated the Mass.*

*From left: Formation Director Judith Tyrrell, Mary Hannon, Mary Rita Rossi, Denise Mianta and Genevieve Wilbourne; Minister Emily McGeady, with back to camera.*



*October 17th Rite of Admission Spanish Cell, St. Thomas More Fraternity, Penn. From left: Guadalupe Sidhu, Jorge Class, Maria Santos, Fr Leon Leitem, OFMCap.*



*Rite of admission September 19th, St. Thomas More Fraternity, Penn. From left: Minister Barbara Acri, new candidates Fred Fischer, Marianne Fischer, Tana Dale, Richard Fairfax, Father Leon Leitem, OFMCap, Andy Gubicza, Formation director.*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY ELECTED

### St. Bonaventure Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.

Minister: Dong Hun (John) Kang, sfo  
Vice Minister: Sang Tae (John) Park, sfo  
Secretary: Maria Gibson, sfo  
Treasurer: Soon Woo (Rosa) Cho, sfo  
Formation Director: Ki Nam (Teresa) Han, sfo

### Our Lady of the Rosary Fraternity, Williamsburg, Va.

Minister: Dennis Thiel, sfo  
Vice Minister: Jay Madigan, sfo  
Secretary: Judith Johnson, sfo  
Treasurer: Edward Gerhard, sfo  
Formation Director: Glenn Davis, sfo

### Companions of Francis and Clare Fraternity, Salem, Va.

Minister: Vicki Hubbard, sfo  
Vice Minister: Lynne Lonquist, sfo  
Secretary: Jane Snyder, sfo  
Treasurer: Russ Beimler, sfo  
Formation Director: Suzanne Tardif, sfo

### Sacred Heart of Jesus Fraternity, Warrenton, Va.

Minister: Fred Duca, sfo  
Vice Minister: Charles Rowzie, sfo  
Secretary: Ramona Hrusa, sfo  
Treasurer: Doris Rowzie, sfo  
Formation Director: William Daly

## CANONICAL ESTABLISHMENT

It is with great joy that we welcome our newest fraternity, St. Bonaventure Fraternity in Fairfax, Va. The fraternity was canonically established during a Mass performed at Holy Name College in Silver Spring, Md., on September 12. Please keep our new family members in your prayers

as they continue their spiritual journey in the footsteps of Francis and Clare.

## LOSSES IN THE FAMILY

**Charles Ferrara, sfo**, February 21, 2010, after a long illness. Charles and his wife Mary were original members of the St. Joseph of Cupertino Fraternity in Ellicott City, Catonsville. They transferred from Mary Our Queen Fraternity, where Charles had made his profession in 1950. Charles and Mary were married for 64 years and they raised seven children. Jean Singleton remembers that Mary and Charles provided the inspiration and “transportation” that allowed her to become a Secular Franciscan. (*Information provided by Jean Singleton and Jim and Jean Manning, also original members of the Fraternity.*)

**Wanda Huboky, sfo**, November 2009, Our Lady Queen of the Angels Fraternity, Lancaster, Pa. Wanda was originally professed in 1965!

**Jim Inners, sfo**, August 29, 2010, St. Francis Fraternity, Washington, D.C. Jim and Jackie went through formation and were active in St. Joseph Fraternity in York for a number of years. They were professed on January 20, 2006. At the time, Jackie had pulmonary fibrosis and Jim was her care giver. She succumbed to that in January 2009, and in July, 2009, Jim moved to Washington and transferred to St. Francis Fraternity. He was diagnosed with lung cancer early in the spring, underwent chemo and was optimistic. He died surrounded by his family. He had suffered a massive stroke. He was a very committed and giving man and a true Franciscan in every way!

(See “Losses, page 8)



Members of the newly canonically established St. Bonaventure Fraternity in Fairfax, Va., and guests from around the region celebrate the long-awaited end of one phase of their spiritual journey and the start of a new phase in the journey.

("Losses," from page 7)

**Michaela Lee, sfo**, November 2009, St. Clare Fraternity, Washington, D.C. Michaela was professed on September 14, 1997. She died November 2009. She was 70.

**Teresa Lee, sfo**, February 3, 2010, St. Clare Fraternity, Washington, D.C. Teresa was professed in 2001. She was 83 years old at her death. She was the mother of Margaret Lee and Clare Choe, both inactive members of the fraternity.

**James Schoen, sfo**, St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity, August 21, 2010. He was 82 years old. It is always sad to lose a friend and a brother, but Jim goes way back with the Secular Franciscans. James was a Secular Franciscan for 48 years. He was a member of the Assumption Fraternity until it was deactivated in 2000 and then transferred to St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity. He was a devoted father, a dedicated Secular Franciscan and a faithful member of the Knights of Columbus, Rosensteel Council and the Holy Name Society of Jesus. He will be missed for his kindness, sincerity and compassion.

## Websites of Interest

### Earth911

<http://earth911.com/>

Earth911 is an environmental services company that addresses solutions for products' end-of-life for both businesses and consumers. Its website offers many helpful articles on ecologically-sound activities.

### Franciscan Action Network

<http://www.franciscanaction.org/>

The Franciscan Action Network is designed to bring a coordinated and effective voice to matters of Justice, Peace and Care for Creation in our world. The particular focus of the Franciscan Action Network's advocacy is the U.S. Government and related Washington, D.C.-based institutions (e.g., World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organization of American States...).



## What Are We Doing?

Members of St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity, Ellicott City, Md., had an opportunity to visit The Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, where they had the beautiful experience of seeing and touching the lectionary used by our Holy Father Francis.



Front row, from left: Lita Maisel, SFO, Lynne Float, SFO and Jean Singleton, SFO.

Back row, from left: Bob Longo, SFO, Kevin Corcoran, SFO, Sheila Solomon, SFO, Bill Hubbard, Molly Hubbard and Carolyn Niebauer.



## Newly Canonized Franciscan Saint

**O**n October 17, 2010, the Poor Clare mystic from Camerino, Italy was declared the newest Franciscan saint in St. Peter's Square in Rome by Pope Benedict XVI.

Camilla was the name given to the girl born (illegitimately) on April 9, 1458 to Giulio Cesare of Varano, the powerful duke and lord of Camerino. Just the same, she was loved by the duke's wife who raised her together with her own children. As a child, she was vivacious and playful. She grew up immersed in the high culture typical of the splendid Renaissance court: she was exposed to poets, historians, philosophers, and painters; she learned Latin and read the classics; she learned how to dance, paint, and play musical instruments. Her future was destined to an arranged marriage to strengthen the family dynasty, but when Camilla was eight years old, her life took an unexpected turn.

A Franciscan friar preached a sermon during Lent exhorting his listeners to shed a little tear on Good Friday in memory of Christ's Passion. An enthusiastic little girl, Camilla vowed to shed a tear every Friday, a devotion she maintained for many years. By doing so, the Holy Spirit entered her soul and she began to perceive something in the Cross of Jesus much more valuable than the worldly pleasures and intrigues around her. She later discovered a booklet with a meditation on the Passion of Christ. She prayed and meditated, fasted frequently, mortified her body, confessed often, and met friars for spiritual direction.

In 1481, Camilla felt called to enter a Poor Clare convent. Notwithstanding the objections of her powerful father, whom she later described as her Pharaoh in some of her writings, she donned the veil in Urbino, 50 miles north of Camerino. There the Poor Clares lived a more ascetic life associated with the Franciscan reform of the Strict Observance. Camilla made her profession and took the religious name, Battista (Baptist).

Two years later, Sr. Camilla Battista returned to Camerino to found a Poor Clare community of the Strict Observance. She spent the remaining forty years of her life in her native city praying and meditating deeply within the enclosure where at times she served as Abbess. However, after a political squabble involving her father and the pope's son (from the notorious Borgia family), her father and brothers were assassinated, likely at the hands of papal soldiers. Sr. Camilla Battista was forced to flee south to the Abruzzo region for safety. With the election of Pope Julius II, she was allowed to return to Camerino, where she remained

until her death from the plague in 1524. Despite the cruelty of these crimes, she makes no mention of them in her writings; on the contrary, she always maintained steadfast obedience to her superiors and Church authorities.

Camilla Battista wrote extensively in the Italian dialect of the Marches region, using Latin for scriptural quotations. As a mystic who spent much time focusing on the cross, it is fruitful to read her works after periods of prayer and even fasting. Her best known work is the *Mental Sorrows of Jesus*, in which she narrates the various sufferings of Jesus. She wrote *Memories of Jesus* ten years after her novitiate as if Jesus were speaking to her while she was a novice. She wrote an in-depth letter to a spiritual director, in which she recounts her life story; this is now known as her autobiography. She also wrote various letters, prayers, and poems.

Camilla Battista was beatified in 1843. Although there are many miracles attested to her intercession, the miracle approved for her canonization involved the healing of a child named Clelia Ottaviani in 1877. Afflicted with rickets, Clelia's bones were severely deformed and she could not walk. A relative brought her to her tomb of Camilla Battista for three consecutive days of prayer. On the third day, the little girl straightened her legs, stood up unassisted, walked, and then ran almost two miles to her home. A local doctor who examined her condition before and after the intercession documented that there was no medical explanation for her healing. However, due to powerful anti-Catholic masons in Camerino, his examinations were kept secret until finally released many decades later. Camilla Battista will be proclaimed a saint on October 17, 2010 in St. Peter's square.

For more information on the life of St. Camilla Battista, the sisters of Camerino, and some of the saint's writings in English, please visit the sisters' website at:

[www.saintcamillabattista.it](http://www.saintcamillabattista.it)



By Bret Thoman, SFO  
St. Francis Pilgrimages

<http://www.stfrancispilgrimages.com/index.html>

## Franciscan Saints, Blesseds and Feasts

(Click on the name to go to a Web link)

### NOVEMBER

- 17 **St. Elizabeth of Hungary**, widow, Patron of the Third Order
- 18 **Bl. Salome**, virgin, II Ord.
- 19 **St. Agnes of Assisi**, virgin, II Ord.
- 25 **Bl. Elizabeth of Reute**, virgin, III Ord.
- 26 **St. Leonard of Port Maurice**, priest, I Ord.
- 27 **St. Francis Anthony Fasani**, priest, I Ord.  
**Bl. Umile de Bisignano**, religious, I Ord.
- 28 **St. James of the March**, priest, I Ord.
- 29 **All Saints of the Franciscan Order** (We pray the **Franciscan Litany of the Saints**)



The Charity of St. Elizabeth of Hungary by Edmund Blair Leighton (1895)

### DECEMBER

- 2 **Bl. Maria Angela Astorch**, virgin, II Ord.  
**Bl. Rafal Chylinski**, priest, I Ord.
- 8 Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patron and Queen of the Franciscan Order
- 10 **Bl. Peter Tecelano**, III Ord.



Crypt, St. Francis Basilica

- 13 **Finding the Body of St. Francis**

- 15 **Bl. Mary Frances Schervier**, virgin, III Ord.

### JANUARY

- 3 Holy Name of Jesus
- 6 **Bl. Diego José of Cádiz**, priest, I Ord.
- 7 **Bl. Angela of Foligno**, religious, III Ord.
- 8 **Bl. Eurosia Fabris**, III Order
- 12 **St. Bernard of Corleone**, religious, I Ord.



The Triumph of the Name of Jesus  
Giovanni Battista Gaulli

- 14 **Bl. Odoric of Pordenone**, priest, I Ord.
- 16 **Sts. Berard**, priest, and companions, protomartyrs of the Order
- 18 **St. Charles of Sezze**, religious, I Ord.
- 19 **Bl. Thomas of Cori**, priest, I Ord.  
**St. Eustochia Calafato**, virgin, II Order
- 20 **Bl. John Baptist Triquerie**, priest, martyr, I Ord.
- 24 **St. Francis de Sales**, bishop, doctor, III Ord., founder
- 27 **St. Angela Merici**, virgin, III Ord., founder
- 29 **Bl. Roger of Todi**, religious, I Ord.
- 30 **St. Hyacinth of Mariscotti**, virgin, III Ord.
- 31 **St. John Bosco**, priest, III Ord., founder

### FEBRUARY

- 1 **St. Veridiana**, virgin, III Ord.  
**Bl. Andrew of Segni**, religious, I Ord.
- 4 **St. Joseph of Leonessa**, priest, I Ord.
- 6 **Sts. Peter Baptist, priest, and companions**, martyrs (Martin of the Ascension, Francis Blanco, priests; Philip of Jesus, cleric; Francis of St. Michael, Gonsalvo Garcia, religious; 17 tertiaries), I and III Ord.
- 7 **St. Colette of Corbie**, virgin, II Ord.
- 8 **St. Giles Mary of St. Joseph**, religious, I Ord.
- 15 **Transfer of the Body of St. Anthony of Padua**



**May you have a blessed Advent and a holy and joyous Christmas season. Peace and all good to you from the entire Regional Executive Council.**