



Secular Franciscan Herald

St Francis of Assisi Fraternity

Website: www.queenofpeaceregion.org

Little Falls, Minnesota

Website for Liturgy of the Hours: www.divineoffice.org

April 2021

Francis of Assisi, The Easter Saint

For St. Francis, the spiritual Easter was not a one-time event, but a journey, a process. Like St. Paul, Francis could declare: *All I want to know is Christ and the power flowing from His Resurrection!* This knowledge and power enabled Francis to take the Cross-road which leads to glory: *sharing in Christ's sufferings by being formed into the pattern of His death*, Francis hoped that he too might attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Francis' road to Easter began with a profound encounter with Jesus Crucified. Praying before the crucifix in the church of San Damiano outside Assisi during the first years of his conversion, Francis heard Christ address to him the heart-shaking words: *Francis, rebuild My house!* The future saint *felt a mysterious change in himself, but he could not describe it*. This was the beginning of his spiritual Easter.

St. Francis journeyed to Easter transformation by contemplating and imitating Jesus in the mysteries of His poverty and humility. Seraphic love even compelled the Poor Man to ask Christ to grant him to feel in his body the pains of the Passion and to feel in his heart the love which urged Christ to die for sinners.

In September 1224, two years before the Seraphic Patriarch' death, God answered his prayer with the imprinting of the Sacred Stigmata, making Francis *an icon of the Crucified Jesus*.

Yet, Francis' immersion in the mysteries of the Passion did not make him sad or somber. Rather, the sorrows of the Lord opened Francis to a deeper, truer joy. The wounds of Christ's Passion which the Poor Man bore were in truth signs of spiritual resurrection, God visibly confirming Francis' passage through death to life.

Francis' Easter newness was the fruit of his union with the Crucified and Risen One. This union is the secret of the Little Poor Man's joy, his peace-making skills, his enthusiasm for the things of God, his unique relationship with creation. Illness, disappointment, pain, betrayal and misunderstanding still marked Francis' earthly pilgrimage. But, he saw these sufferings in a new light. He understood that through them, God was making all things work toward an eternal good, an eternal Easter. And so, *in Francis and through him an unexpected joy and holy came into the world*.

St. Francis' mission of newness did not end with death. Those present at his funeral services saw his body, adorned with the wounds of Christ, shining with marvelous brightness. In life, Francis bore in his body the likeness of the sufferings of Christ. In death, his body presaged the glory of the future resurrection: *The wounds he has, show forth/Gifts of a newer kind*. The power of this new life was also manifested in the wonders which occurred through his intercession: *he shone with the new light of miracles after his death*.

St. Francis of Assisi shows what can happen when the grace of Easter becomes effective in a Christian's life. He teaches us that every earthly suffering holds the seed of resurrection.

For Francis, Easter was a vibrant reality that gave light and hope and even energy for his daily journey with Christ to the Father. He teaches us *that the real saints* (The Easter saints) *are the quite human, quite natural people in whom, through the Easter purification and transformation, what is human appears afresh in its total originality and beauty*. (Pope Benedict XVI) reading taken from *poorclares-belleville*.

I found this reading quite inspirational during this Easter season. Continue on in the Easter journey with all those around you. God Bless. Janice Rybaski OFS minister.



Easter Blessings!

SFO Gathering March 9, 2021, Our Lady of Lourdes basement, 6:00 PM

Members present: Jan Rybaski, Kathy Hoffman Tax, Patty Commerford, Rita Vosen, David Czech and Janet Berendt. Excused: Pam Geyer, Sue Zenzen and Karen Gross. Absent: Charlotte Van Risseghem. We had a bag lunch and desserts provided by members.

Jan Rybaski led opening prayer from The Ritual at 6:30 PM. She also read a prayer from The Tracing, Queen of Peace Regional winter issue.

There was some discussion as possibly meeting in member's homes in the future.

Kathy led Liturgy of the Hours. We listened to a song, "As Christ is For Us".

Next gathering is April 13, 2021 at 6:00 PM in Our Lady of Lourdes basement.

Closing prayer from The Ritual at 7:20 PM.
Submitted by Janet Berendt, ofs secretary

The Divine Mercy Message and Devotion

The message of The Divine Mercy is simple. It is that God loves us – all of us. And, He wants us to recognize that His mercy is greater than our sins, so that we will call upon Him with trust, receive His mercy, and let it flow through us to others. Thus, all will come to share His joy. The Divine Mercy message is one we can call to mind simply by remembering ABC:

A - Ask for His Mercy. God wants us to approach Him in prayer constantly, repenting of our sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon us and upon the whole world.

B - Be merciful. God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. He wants us to extend love and forgiveness to others just as He does to us.

C - Completely trust in Jesus. God wants us to know that all the graces of His mercy can only be received by our trust. The more we open the door of our hearts and lives to Him with trust, the more we can receive.

This message and devotion to Jesus as The Divine Mercy is based on the writings of Saint Faustina Kowalska, an uneducated Polish nun who, in obedience to her spiritual director, wrote a diary of about 600 pages recording the revelations she received about God's mercy. Even before her death in 1938, the devotion to The Divine Mercy had begun to spread.

The message and devotional practices proposed in the *Diary of Saint Faustina* and set forth in this web site and other publications of the Marians of the Immaculate Conception are completely in accordance with the teachings of Church and are firmly rooted in the Gospel message of our Merciful Savior. Properly understood and implemented, they will help us grow as genuine followers of Christ.

Thedivinemercury.org

Calendar of Events

April 2021-month of the Holy Face and the Redemption

13th- Monthly Gathering-6 PM-bag lunch-Our Lady of Lourdes Church basement

13th-St Martin I, Pope, Martyr, died 655

16th-St Bernadette Soubirous, Virgin, died 1879

19th-profession anniversary-Rita Toenies

21st-St Anselm, Bishop, Doctor of the Church, died 1109

23rd-St Adalbert of Prague, Bishop, Martyr, died 997

29th-St Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church, Dominican Mystic, died 1380

30th-St Pius V, Pope, Dominican, died 1572

May 2021-month of the Holy Virgin Mary

1st-St Joseph the Worker

3rd-birthday-Ann Lochner

Sts Philip & James, Apostles

8th-Feast of Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces

10th-St Isidore the Farmer, died 1130

11th-profession anniversary-Rita Vosen

11th-Monthly Gathering-6 PM-bag lunch-Our Lady of Lourdes Church basement

13th-profession anniversary-Janet Berendt, Patty Commerford, Collette Peterson

14th-St Matthias, Apostle

20th-St Bernardine of Siena, Priest, Franciscan First Order, died 1444

21st-St Crispin of Viterbo, Capuchin Brother, died 1750

22nd-St Rita of Cascia, Augustinian, died 1457

30th-St Joan of Arc, Virgin, Franciscan Third Order Secular, died 1431

