

ORDINIS FRANCISCANI SAECULARIS
St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity, Welland.
Newsletter #164 November 2019

Minister's Letter

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ and Francis,

The month of October was filled with color and spiritual blessings! It was a very special trip to Québec for the National Spiritual Conference with miles of orange and red trees on the way there and back. There is also much to share on the theme of Francis and the Sultan with you!

The National Bulletin will be coming out soon, and will reflect on the Spiritual Conference and the restructuring project that the National Fraternity has embarked upon. A consultation process is underway and there has been some feedback from a few Regional Fraternities on the topic already.

With November comes a time to remember our deceased loved ones and fraternity members. May God bless them and those who love them with peace in the light of the glorious promise of the resurrection!

Paix et joie!

Debbie

Coming Events:

~ Sun. Nov. 3rd Regular Monthly Meeting 1:30 p.m. in St. Kevin's Hospitality Room.

~ Fri. Nov. 22nd Formation Meeting 1:30 p.m. in St. Kevin's Hospitality Room.

Pope's Monthly Intentions: November

Dialogue and Reconciliation in the Near East

That a spirit of dialogue, encounter, and reconciliation emerge in the Near East, where diverse religious communities share their lives together.

Monthly Devotions: November

The Holy Souls

The month of November is dedicated to the poor souls in purgatory. All Souls day falls on November 2nd, which is when we commemorate all the faithful departed.

May the souls of the Faithful Departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Profession Anniversaries: November

Marcella Adamsson ~~~~~Nov. 17, 2007

Nellie Schouten ~~~~~Nov. 17, 2007

Louise Cowen ~~~~~ Nov. 17, 2013

Valerie Norris ~~~~~ Nov. 17, 2013

Congratulations! Love & Peace.

Gospel to Rule & General

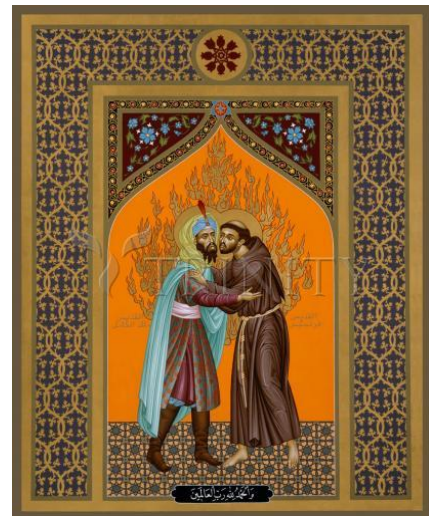
Constitutions Leaders

November 3, 2019 ... Anne

December 8, 2019 ... Monique

Birthdays

No Birthdays in November



St. Francis and the Sultan.

In 1219 St. Francis and Brother Illuminato accompanied the armies of western Europe to Damietta, Egypt, during the Fifth Crusade. His desire was to speak peacefully with Muslim people about Christianity, even if it meant dying as a martyr. He tried to stop the Crusaders from attacking the

Muslims at the Battle of Damietta, but failed. After the defeat of the western armies, he crossed the battle line with Brother Illuminato, was arrested and beaten by Arab soldiers, and eventually was taken to the sultan, Malek al-Kamil.

Al-Kamil was known as a kind, generous, fair ruler. He was nephew to the great Salah al-Din. At Damietta alone he offered peace to the Crusaders five times, and, according to western accounts, treated defeated Crusaders humanely. His goal was to establish a peaceful coexistence with Christians.

After an initial attempt by Francis and the sultan to convert the other, both quickly realized that the other already knew and loved God. Francis and Illuminato remained with al-Kamil and his Sufi teacher Fakhr ad-din al-Farisi for as many as twenty days, discussing prayer and the mystical life. When Francis left, al-Kamil gave him an ivory trumpet, which is still preserved in the crypt of the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi.

This encounter, which occurred between September 1 and 26, is a paradigm for interfaith dialog in our time. Despite differences in religion, people of prayer can find common ground in their experiences of God. Dialog demands that we truly listen to the other; but, before we can listen, we must see the other as a precious human being, loved by God. There is no other path to peace in this bloody 21st century.

The flames behind Francis and the sultan have a dual symbolism. In Islamic art, holy persons are shown with balls of flame behind their heads. The second purpose of these flames is to disarm a later medieval legend in which Francis challenged the Sufis to step into a raging fire to prove whose faith was correct. In this icon, the flames represent love. The text at the bottom is from the beginning of the Koran: "Praise to God, Lord of the worlds!"

The Francis-and-Islam Connection:

What is the connection between St. Francis of Assisi and Islam? In 1219, St. Francis traveled to what is now northern Egypt and paid a visit to the Muslim Sultan al-Malek al-Kamil. This was at the beginning of the Fifth Crusade, but Francis and his brothers did not make this trip as part of the battle to regain the Holy Land. Rather, they went in opposition to the mainstream theological and political orthodoxies of the time, to meet the Muslim people, and to live among them as "lesser brothers."

Francis and his brothers went to be present among this people who were being portrayed as evil

enemies of Christ, and, in his evangelism of presence, Francis found the spirit of God to be alive and at work within the Muslim people, then called "the Saracens". Francis admired their public, repeated acknowledgment of God and call to prayer, and he appreciated the deep reverence they showed to their holy book, the Qur'an.

While the main trend of the time was for Christian preachers to deliver strident, inflammatory sermons against Islam, Francis forbade his brothers to take part in these exercises. He demanded that his brothers be present first and foremost, living with and among the Saracens. They were to preach only if they felt that it would "please the Lord."

Francis worked to prevent the brotherhood from becoming embroiled in the grasp for civil and ecclesiastical offices and power, and kept the community's focus on serving their neighbors for the glory of God only.

—Based on Francis and Islam by J. Hoeberichts (Franciscan Press, 1997) Prepared for the Episcopal-Muslim Relations Committee of the Diocese of New York Ecumenical Commission by Mary O'Shaughnessy

Celebration of 60th Anniversary of Profession into the Secular Franciscan Order. St. Francis Fraternity, Burlington. Friday, October 4, 2019



Frank & Isobel Flood, ofs, with Fr. Peter Knaapen, OFM Conv. – Trillium Region Spiritual Assistant.

St. Mary of the Angels & St. Francis are 'sister fraternities,' both started at the same time in May 1949.

Frank & Isobel were both already professed for 20 years.

Love & congratulations from Anne Matyuska, ofs, 40 years professed in St. Mary of the Angels, as she talks to Frank at the party.



Pax et Bonum!

Editor's Note:

A special "Thank you!" to my grandson, Matt, for a telephone consultation which fixed my tiresome computer.