



WHERE IS THAT BIRD SEED?

By Franklin Fong, OFM

The image of Francis in the Birdbath is probably the most common symbol of the Franciscan worldview in the USA. In my limited travels around Asia, the most popular image of Francis is of him feeding birds in a grassy field. I am certain both types of images are found in every part of the Christian world, but how does a local culture or context shape how Franciscanism is appreciated in that culture? Both of these images of Francis do give us a hint as to what it is about Francis that is always connected to the created world around us.

Francis' poem, "Canticle of Creation" (touted as the earliest example of Italian poetry), is more explicit. To appreciate this poem, we first need to appreciate that the 'world' has been understood from at least two major perspectives: 1) a theo-centric perspective or 2) a process-centric perspective (with geological and biological components).

From a Judeo-Christian perspective, we have the theo-centric view from the Old Testament (Genesis) that refers solely to the role of God in creating the world. In each of the seven sequential days of creation, God actively intervenes to create some aspect of the world. This perspective contrasts greatly with a "process" or "science" oriented perspective, through which the world around us is seen as dynamic: a product of both geological forces (physical and chemical processes) and biological forces (in which biological organisms interact with and thereby change their physical environments). This interplay of biological and physical forces gives rise to the range of diversity we see in the world. The two very different perspectives, theo-centric and process-centric, are represented in the ongoing debates on creationism and the Darwinian theory of evolution.

Excerpts from "Canticle of Creation" by St. Francis of Assisi

Be praised Good Lord
for Brother Sun who
brings us each new day.

Be praised for
Sister Moon: white
beauty bright and fair,
with wandering stars she
moves through the night.

Be praised my Lord for Brother Wind,
for air and clouds and the skies of every season.

Be praised for Sister Water: humble, helpful, precious,
pure; she cleanses us in rivers and renews us in rain.

Be praised my Lord for Brother Fire:
he purifies and enlightens us.

Be praised my Lord for Mother Earth:
abundant source, all life sustaining;
she feeds us bread and fruit and gives us flowers.



Francis, who had a primarily affective understanding of the world around him, was able to express his understanding of the world from a unique point of view – through the perspective of God's love. The metaphor of love in Francis' understanding was best seen in our 'familial' relationships. Francis used the language of Father (God), Mother (earth), brother (wind, fire), and sister (water) to convey these primary loving relationships. As in all relationships, there is not only the love that is received, but also the love that is given and shared with others in the "family." By whatever means the world was formed (or created), Francis believed that it was first and foremost a gift of a God whose love for us was boundless. The world was but the first sign of this love, which then unfolded in the life and death of God's son, Jesus.

Francis saw each part of the world around us – physical or biological – as pointing, first and foremost, to a loving God. Like family members with whom we may share time and space, it is only with the loving eyes of our hearts that we can 'see' beyond those annoying behaviors to appreciate each part of creation for its place in the world (family).

The image of Francis feeding birds in a fountain or on a grassy knoll exemplifies this generous spirit that he held in his heart. It is a reminder to each of us as part of the human species to ask ourselves how we have treated the other members (species) of the created world. How have we treated other humans who share our time and space? How are we sharing the physical parts of our world, (e.g., water, soil, and air), with others? This is the reason

continued on page 2

TEEN GROUP

By Ann Smith

The St. Francis Parish Teen Group was started in the summer of 2003 after a high-school parishioner asked Fr. Anthony "when are you going to do something for the teens?" With that simple question was born an effort to reach out to the more than 40 high-school-age teenagers (that we know about) in our parish. All high schoolers in the parish are welcome to participate in all or any of the Teen Group's activities.

The Teen Group gets together once or twice a month for a variety of activities that focus on the unique spiritual and social needs of adolescents. We develop these activities around the areas of spirituality, social service and socializing.

To provide opportunities for teens to explore and develop their maturing spirituality, we have gathered youth nights, movie nights, and retreats. Gathered youth nights weave activities, discussion, and scripture around particular themes, such as friendship, and living as a disciple of Christ. On movie nights, we select contemporary movies with underlying spiritual themes as a vehicle for initiating reflection and discussion about living a Christian life. Last Spring's retreat was "Experiencing Prayer" and culminated with a (re)writing of the Lord's Prayer. At this writing we are planning our first mountain retreat for Palm Sunday where, between snow play, we will take a personal journey with Christ on a contemporary Way of the Cross.

Central to our Catholic faith is love of neighbor. As a group, we encourage Christian service by providing a variety of opportunities for the teens of our parish to help those in

need. Service projects have included the #10 can food drive for Loaves and Fishes, making Christmas stockings/snack bags for the Parish Step Ministry, and the Stanford Settlement Bowling fundraiser. The Teen Group has also participated in collection projects for Grace Day home which provides low-cost day care, and for the Hmong refugees relocated to Sacramento last year.



Members of the Teen Group

Bottom Front: Ryan Lang; Back L-R: Anthony Tavianini, Michael Spaulding, Austin Otto, Heather Spaulding, Sara Ortega, Chris Kentopp, Clare Teixeira, Jessica Kimball

Members of the Teen Group also find time to help our parish community in many ways: from serving coffee and donuts once a month, to serving as lectors, helping with Children's Faith Formation, and face-painting at the parish picnic.

Chris, a junior, says, "Everything we do is fun." Talking about their faith and living it out IS fun, and

so is just getting together, meeting friends and making new ones. Time is set aside for socializing and fun at our yearly fall flag football game and BBQ, Christmas party, car wash and summer camping trip, to name a few.

Young people face many daunting challenges in our culture, which encourages self-indulgence and cynicism. In a small way, the Teen Group stands with teens and their families to remind them of their goodness, encourage faithfulness and help inspire them to do the great thing they are called to do as followers of Christ.

Ann Smith and Chuck Teixeira, with the help of other parents, guide and facilitate the Teen Group. For more information and to join, contact Ann or Chuck at 451-3374 or ann7459@earthlink.net. ❖

WHERE IS THAT BIRD SEED? *continued from front page*

why Franciscan-ism is so closely aligned with ecology and eco-spirituality. Often times we forget or take for granted the visual image of Francis feeding the birds.

Say a prayer of thanksgiving for our brothers and sisters of the created world the next time you see an image of Francis in the birdbath! Now, where is that birdseed? ❖



Footnote: Dn. Franklin has served our parish for the past nine months through the Transitional Diaconate Program of the St. Barbara Province of Franciscan Friars. Dn. Franklin's transitional period is nearing completion; he will be ordained as a priest on Saturday, June 17, 2006 at St. Francis of Assisi Church at 7:30 PM. **All are invited to attend his ordination and the reception immediately following in Brunsmann Hall.**

MASS APPEAL

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St. Francis of Assisi Parish

A GOOD DAY OF CONVERSATIONS

By J.D. Warrick

In a sensational move this past January, reminiscent of John XXIII's call for "Aggiornamento" which led to Vatican II, seeds were planted and windows were thrust open with vigor as the Franciscan Friars of the St. Barbara Province met for their 2006 Chapter. For the first time since the Province was formed in 1915, lay people were brought into this important meeting and, for an entire day, were given a voice previously reserved only for those who were members of this unique fraternal organization.



Discussions during Chapter Meeting

For Father Mel Jurisich, the Provincial Minister, the inclusion of the laity in the work of the Order has been a priority. Through a process of invitation and questionnaires, twenty-five people were invited to the Chapter meeting this past January, including Judy Miranda from our parish. In a memo to the St. Francis Parish Council in April, Ms. Miranda stated:

"We each ... [attended the Chapter] to represent our faith communities in expressing ... our support, definitely our appreciation of all ... [the friars] do, our commitment to work ... [with the friars] in advancing the Franciscan vision of spirituality, and our hope for a future of even more collaboration."

While reflecting on the significance of the Chapter recently, Deacon Franklin Fong, OFM noted that "the hardest thing for anyone to do is to look at themselves." When asked for a Franciscan perspective of the meeting,

he remarked that it was "so obvious that the lay people are a part of us."



Breaking Bread

L-R: Fr. Anthony Garibaldi, Br. James Swan, Judy Miranda, another attendee

Ms. Miranda echoed that thought during her presentation at the Chapter when she stated that "the Franciscan vision is what we are all about, why we – both friars and laity – all say we share our love of Jesus Christ by following the teaching of Francis and Clare. Gentlemen, please be assured,

continued on back page

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

By Bob Reid, Parish Council Chair

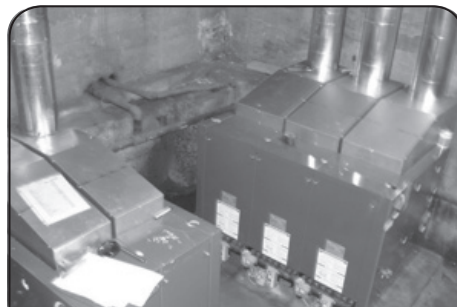
Parish Council elections were held after each Mass, May 20th and 21st, marking the end of the first full two-year cycle of the newly-created Parish Council. Seven of the original 14 members have completed their first two-year term and were eligible for one additional two-year term. Any Parishioner over the age of 16 and registered before April 2005 was eligible to run for the Council.

Look for the results of the election and candidates' bios and pictures in the weekly bulletin and on the parish website at www.stfrancisparish.com.

Betty Podzius was appointed to fill the term of Ryan Rose through June 2007. Betty served for five years (2000-2005) as Director of Faith Formation for St. Francis Parish. She will serve as Co-Chair of the Children's Faith Formation

standing committee, working with staff member Georgie Saydak.

By the time this *Mass Appeal* is in your mailboxes, we will have heat again in our church and school. Joe Prassa, parish Plant Manager and Jerry Hollis, Parish Council Buildings & Grounds Co-Chair, did a wonderful job gathering information, recommendations and securing competitive bids.



New Two-Boiler System

Father Anthony, in consultation with the Parish Council, the Finance Council, and the School Advisory Commission, decided to replace the old boiler with a two-boiler system servicing both the church and school (see photo), replace our old sump pump and holding tank, and make a number of repairs that will bring us up to code compliance. This system, while initially more expensive, will afford us added efficiency and long-term savings.

We were very fortunate to have adequate funds set aside in the parish Building Fund to cover the entire cost of the installation. We urge you all to continue to use those Building Fund envelopes once a month to help us restore our crucial Building Fund balance, so that we are prepared for future emergencies. ❖

MASS APPEAL



St. Francis of Assisi Parish
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“Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.”
Ecclesiastes 1:4

A GOOD DAY OF CONVERSATIONS

continued from page 3

the laity who are with you here today are carrying the message that you’re not doing this alone, and you don’t have to do it all!!”

We all know that great things can also blossom from small beginnings. Jesus taught us about the mustard seed in Matthew 13:31, and about the grain of wheat in John 12:24. In many traditions the germination of seed is used as a way to understand the development of spirituality: the ground begins to slowly break apart and crumble, making room for the tiny shoot which emerges from the seed casing. Eventually this bit of plant breaks through the surface and stretches out into the sunlight. Moving from darkness into light is the way of our faith.

Indeed. The seeds are planted and there is gardening to be done. ❖

Information: Ministries & Events

Please check the weekly bulletin on our website at www.stfrancisparish.com, or call the parish office at (916) 443-8084 if you would like more information about, or would like to become involved with, one of our ongoing ministries, or for information about any of our scheduled events.

Mass Schedule

- Saturday Vigil—5:15 PM
- Sunday—7:30 AM, 9:30 AM, 12 NOON
- Daily Mass Monday-Friday—12:10 PM in Chapel
(Monday & Friday are Communion services)

Reconciliation

- 2nd & 4th Saturdays—4:00-5:00 PM
and by appointment

MASS APPEAL

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Where Is That Bird Seed?
- Teen Group
- A Good Day of Conversations
- Parish Council Update

ST. FRANCIS WELCOMES NEW PARISHIONERS

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| - Sarah Athey | - Sinead & Daniel Klement | - James & Bonnie Simonelli |
| - John & Anastasia Bartle | - Steven Kollars & Theresa Brown-Gall | - Michael & DeAnn Splinter |
| - Anastasia Baskerville | - Denise Koscielniak & Sharon Marshall | - Mark Stegner & Elizabeth Scherer |
| - Cathryn A. Calfo | - Jovy M. Lapid | - Shauna Stoll & Ian Pittman |
| - Jennifer Carey | - Karen & Teala Leon | - Michael Streit |
| - Jessica Chapman | - Lisa & Dave Levasseur | - Ken Tedesco |
| - Helen Chieu | - Amy Mangan & Traci Lemas | - Rosanna & Joaquin Thompson |
| - Jim & Debra Clingsmith | - Elisabeth Martinez | - Jeff & Colleen Uhlenhop |
| - Pat Conlan | - Fallon Mitchell & George Vallejo | - Marisa Isabel Urteaga |
| - Edward & Lynn Day | - Denise & Marco Montano | - Lawrence & Sannon Van Dermersch |
| - Lucille Donahue | - Roberta Morse | - Amalia Villafan |
| - Ritz Donahue | - Aleta & Jahmal Prudhomme | - Anthony Wilk |
| - Francis Gisla Eugene | - Joe & Prathima Puli | - Jessica Yersak |
| - Marco Farias | - Erik Purcell & Nicole Rector | |
| - James & Mera Gajewsla | - Stella Rebello | |
| - Alfredo & Evelyn Gomez | - Bill Barnaby & Kristine Reed-Barnaby | |
| - Robynn & Brian Goodell | - Stephania & Craig Seelig | |
| - Therese Hazelroth | | |
| - Melissa Hernandez | | |
| - Terry Jennings | | |