

The Spirit of Secular Franciscan Life

Newsletter for Secular Franciscans - Assumption BVM Province

December 2006 - No. 7



Piero Casentini, Limiti di Greccio, 2004

Christmas 2006

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The above artwork by Piero Casentini resides in the parish church of Santa Maria di Loreto in a little village called Limiti di Greccio. It is tender and evocative as it describes Francis' inspiration to offer humankind a visual description of the Incarnation of our God. In this dramatic re-enactment of the events of Bethlehem, Francis wished to recall the simplicity and poverty, the inconveniences and humility of the Christ Child. Most of all he wanted to celebrate the mystery of God's great love, a love that God made concrete in a little child wrapped in swaddling clothes, a love which had the power to remake us, a love that invited us to become new creatures, a love that summoned us to believe in the impossible, a love that asked us to forget all our sin and darkness and trust God's goodness, a love re-enacted by Francis through the visual picture of Bethlehem placed before the eyes of the people in Greccio's cave.

My wish for you this Christmas is that your hearts swell to bursting as you welcome God's love made Incarnate. Let it transform the journey of your life as once again we remember this tender mystery.

May you take time to ponder, like Mary, the wonder of God that the Child evoked within her. No other feast but Christmas could speak so clearly to Francis of God's great love.

A Blessed Christmas! A peaceful Christmas to all!

Fr. Roch Niemier, OFM

Contents of this Newsletter

There are three pieces of information I wish to share with all of you.

- ◆ Offerings of spiritual conferences on Franciscan topics.
- ◆ Information on a new book in Franciscan Spirituality.
- ◆ Another effort to promote a Franciscan Pilgrimage for Secular Franciscans to Assisi and Rome.

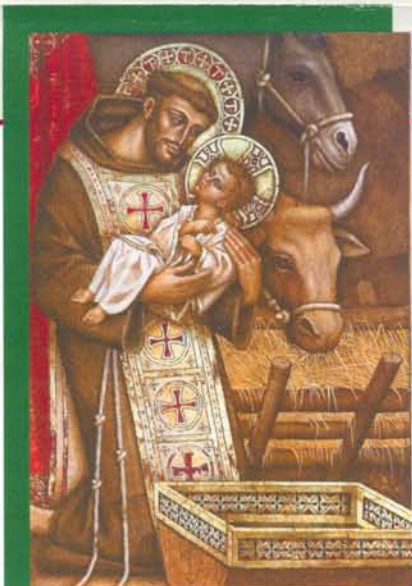
Offerings of Spiritual Conferences

As I continue to reflect on my responsibilities as Provincial Spiritual Assistant, it seems to me I can best serve you by making myself available for conferences in Franciscan Spirituality. Listed below are possible topics.

- ◆ Francis and the Experience of God
- ◆ San Damiano: Rebuilding One's Life
- ◆ Conversion to Non-Violence
- ◆ Encountering Beggars and the Poor
- ◆ Franciscan Prayer
- ◆ Francis' Experience of Solitude
- ◆ San Nicolo Missal: Francis's First Rule
- ◆ Francis and Mary
- ◆ Forgiveness and Reconciliation
- ◆ True Poverty vs. False Poverty
- ◆ Porziuncola: Heart of Franciscan Life
- ◆ Penance and Transformation
- ◆ The Cross: Source of Christian Identity
- ◆ Clare's First Step: Risking all
- ◆ Greccio: the Feast of Feasts
- ◆ Power, Beauty and Wisdom of the Cross
- ◆ Compassion and Fraternal Life
- ◆ Canticle of Brother Sun
- ◆ Francis' Pilgrimage to the Tomb of St. Peter
- ◆ The Significance of the Leper for Francis
- ◆ Prayer and Mountain Spirituality
- ◆ Francis's Spirit of Freedom
- ◆ Others

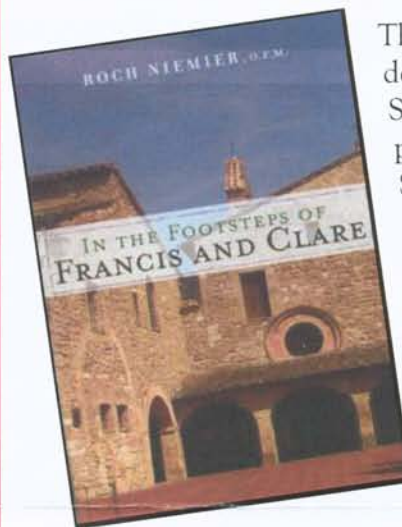
I will continue to send a Newsletter every two months.

Contact: Fr. Roch Niemier OFM
9230 W. Highland Park Ave.
Franklin, WI 53132
414-349-6851
roch@ofm-abvm.org



In the Footsteps of Francis and Clare

Roch Niemier OFM



This new book develops Franciscan Spirituality based on places in the lives of Sts. Francis and Clare.

It is a practical guide to inner transformation as one journeys into the sacred space of Francis and Clare.

The book sells from the publisher for \$19.95+ Shipping/Handling. You may, however, order directly from our office and receive a 20% discount and no shipping charges. Cost would be: \$16.00 total. A wonderful Christmas gift! (See Order Blank.)

SFO Pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome

A pilgrimage to Assisi for Secular Franciscans is enriching beyond imagination. Why? It deepens the spirituality of Francis and Clare by strengthening one's fidelity and commitment to SFO life (Gospel to life / life to Gospel). I am so convinced of this that I continually want to promote a pilgrimage for Seculars. Benefits far outweigh the cost.

Our programs consist of input by well-trained staff, wholesome meals served family style, visits to sacred Christian and Franciscan places, solid historical information, free time, good fun with companion pilgrims, daily prayer and Eucharist at holy places, spiritual conferences, opportunities to enjoy local cafes and restaurants, suggestions on where to shop, time to enjoy the beautiful countryside and culture and time for quiet.

(See Application Form.)