

Padre Pio Fraternity – Newsletter

Secular Franciscan Order
Brother and Sisters of St. Francis Region



ARG AUGUST11-12 RIDGECREST, NORTH CAROLINA

Brother Bill Short OFM was the keynote speaker at ARG this year. The highly anticipated talks were a burst of joyful light from the humble friar. In the first talk on Friday, August 11, the feast of St Clare of Assisi, Br Bill focused on the spirituality of Clare and the development of the interior life through "the gaze". He brought to light the imagery of the mirror that Clare uses in her writings. A mirror in the thirteenth century, he pointed out, would be most likely known only to women of the upper classes. Mirrors were fascinating to them. The mirrors of that time would only reflect fuzzy, cloudy images. "The gaze" was not only taking in the image, but looking past it in meditation and contemplation. Clare would have attended this way before the Crucifix every day from the time she entered her cloistered life at San Damiano. In this state she would take in the Perfect Love of the absolute poverty of the crib and the cross. Her soul burned in union with the Creator who dwelt within her. She attended before God at all times in work and prayer.

Br Bill's talks on Saturday were dedicated to living our vocation of gospel to life and life to gospel. He shared that Francis lived the gospel by taking the Word and putting into action. The action is the Word becoming flesh through him. The written word was sacred and revered by Francis. The hand was the guardian of the word, the quill was plucked from a created creature and spilled blood onto the parchment made from the sacrificed flesh of a lamb. The Word became flesh through Francis when he danced in ecstasy before Honorius III in the Lateran Palace and all were moved by the joy of the living Word before them. The Word became flesh when Francis ventured into enemy territory on a mission of peace during the Fifth Crusade and met with Sultan Malik al-Kamil. The mission did not yield the peace and conversion that Francis had hoped for, but when a peace agreement was made al-Kamil returned the Christian relics and the sacred site of the Church of the Sepulcher to the Christians under the condition that they be placed in the custody of "The Holy Men who wear the white knotted cords". Today the Franciscans maintain the church of the Sepulcher and a local Muslim family keeps the keys unlocking it every morning and locking it every night. Brother Bill closed by reminding us that Francis and Clare lived in the 13th century and are now dead. They can only pray with us and for us. They did what was theirs to do in their time, and we must do what is ours to do in our time. To live our vocation, we must take in the Word and allow it to become flesh through our action. *By S. Lynn Oeser, OFS*



Above left is Monsignor Richard Bello from Charlotte who graciously offered to celebrate the masses when Father Louis Canino, OFM had heart surgery and was unable to attend. Monsignor Bello used to be a Franciscan but is now a diocesan priest for personal reasons. His sense of humor and Franciscan spirit added much to his sermons. In the center is a picture of the Parade of Banners. To the right is Frank and Marie with Brother Bill Short, OFM who was the Retreat Facilitator for the weekend. (Most photos by Louis Coker, OFS . Banner Parade above by Ellen Ferrone, OFS)



Above to the left is Suzie with Monsignor Bello lighting a candle for the late John Polich, OFS at the ceremony remembering our deceased Franciscans from the past year . Msgr. Bello was a good friend of John. The other three pictures are our social time for solving the problems of the fraternity and the world.

