

Franciscan Retreats and Franciscan Solitude Experience

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André Cirino, OFM, a Franciscan itinerant preacher, worked at the Little Portion Retreat House for the poor for 8 years. André has ministered in parishes, formation, education. He is co-author of TEENS ENCOUNTER CHRIST and edited a journal on the writings of Francis, IN THE WOMB OF THE CAVE. Since 1984 he has conducted pilgrimages with the FRANCISCAN PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMS to Italy, California Missions and Prague. He and Josef Raischl have jointly published an anthology on FRANCISCAN SOLITUDE, another on the writings of Eric Doyle, MY HEART'S QUEST, and also THREE HEROES OF ASSISI IN WORLD WAR II. André and Laurent Gallant, OFM have published St. Francis' *Office of the Passion*, THE GESTE OF THE GREAT KING. André lectures at the Franciscan International Study Centre, Canterbury, England.

Josef Raischl, SFO, a native of Germany, lives with his wife Bernadette and their children in Dachau. Josef is employed by Hospice as a social worker. He completed studies in theology at the Catholic University of Eichstätt and at the Franciscan International Study Centre, Canterbury, England, a student of the late Eric Doyle, OFM. Josef studied in Rome at the Capuchin Franciscan Institute where he collaborated with André and developed this retreat on St. Bonaventure's JOURNEY. Josef and André have published their work on the Journey in German—*Auf Gott Zugehen* in English—THE JOURNEY INTO GOD: A FORTY-DAY RETREAT WITH BONAVENTURE, FRANCIS AND CLARE. Josef composed the music and produced the CD for St. Francis' *Office of the Passion*, THE GESTE OF THE GREAT KING.

BRINGING FORTH CHRIST: ON SAINT BONAVENTURE'S FIVE FEASTS OF THE CHILD JESUS

The theme of this retreat is spiritual motherhood. The doctrine of spiritual motherhood invites us, men and women alike, to fashion our spiritual lives on the model of Mary, Mother of Jesus and image of the Church, and to develop the maternal element in our nature. Spiritual motherhood sets free the living and life-giving forces within us and fosters the loving and caring side of our nature which is the antidote to every form of violence. In this little work Bonaventure invites us to discover how we could spiritually conceive the Son of God, give birth to him, name him, seek and adore him with the Magi and then finally, present him to God in the Temple.

Length—6 days. Presenter: André.

THE PRAYER OF FRANCIS AND CLARE

This retreat is dedicated to examining the prayer experience of Francis and Clare and incorporating that experience into our own lives. Five approaches to Franciscan prayer constitute this retreat's program:

1. Meditative prayer based on the guidance we find in the life and writings of Francis.
2. Contemplative prayer as cultivated by Clare and mirrored in her writings.
3. Biblical/liturgical prayer typified by the rich text we know as the Office of the Passion.
4. The creation of personal prayer forms and texts in the Franciscan tradition.
5. Prayer of solitude and silence as proposed in the Rule for Hermitages.

All of these forms are explored through conferences and experiential activity.

Length—5, 6, or 7 days. Presenter: André.

THE JOURNEY INTO GOD

This retreat is an exploration of the content of this classic work of spiritual theology written by St.Bonaventure. The retreat seeks to recover this often-neglected source of Franciscan spiritual wealth. Each day of the retreat is dedicated to one of the chapters of the JOURNEY offering a balance of instruction on the text, periods for reading and personal prayer and community participation in eucharistic liturgy, morning and evening prayer. The liturgical and para-liturgical prayer is especially designed by the presenters to disclose the profound themes in a contemporary experience. Andre and Josef presented this unique retreat experience in Italy, Canada, the Philippines, the United States and soon England.

Length—8 days. Presenters: André and Josef.

THE SAN DAMIANO CRUCIFIX

Francis of Assisi had a decisive experience before the crucifix of San Damiano when the voice of Jesus asked him to rebuild the church. The first day of the retreat will explore the significance of this icon. Each of the following days will center on a theme from The Prayer Before the Crucifix. Stories from Franciscan sources as well as the writings and witness of Francis, Clare and their early companions will help expand the themes of this prayer. A prominent place will be given to the theological virtues of faith, hope and love which figure so prominently in this text.

Length—5 ½ or 6 ½ days. Presenter: André

THE DOCUMENT ON SOLITUDE OF ST. FRANCIS: AN EXPERIENCE

From the earliest days of his conversion, Francis spent time praying in caves in solitude. From the very beginning he was accompanied by a companion. Being with brothers and sisters in solitude is a unique characteristic of the Franciscan Hermitage tradition.

When the Order grew into thousands of brothers, he wrote down his manner of spending time in solitude. More recently this *Document On Solitude* has been named his "Rule For

Hermitages." An opportunity is offered to experience solitude in much the same way Francis did with the early friars.

Length—a week-end or longer. Presenter: André

A PILGRIMAGE OF THE HEART

This retreat has been developed for those Franciscans--retired or infirm brothers and sisters--unable to make a pilgrimage to Assisi. After an introduction to the city of Assisi on the first evening, the "pilgrims" travel to San Damiano, Porziuncola, Carceri, La Verna, and the Basilicas of St. Francis and St. Clare. The retreat is built on the **spirituality of place** and makes extensive use of audio/visuals to make this pilgrimage retreat.

Length—6 days. Presenter: André

OFFICE OF THE PASSION

Both Francis and Clare prayed the *Office of the Passion*, she frequently and he daily, and yet, among Franciscans down through the centuries, the *Office of the Passion* seems to have fallen almost completely into disuse. This Little Office has been published in a prayer-book format, containing a literal translation and commentary for meditation, a poetical-inclusive translation for prayer, with music and art to accompany the text. Communities wishing to introduce their members to this Franciscan treasure can do so by contacting André.

Length—a day or a weekend. Presenter: André

*To schedule any offering, write or call:
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