

# FRANCISCAN CELEBRATION OF ST. LOUIS IN ST. LOUIS

In honor of the 800th anniversary of the birth of St. Louis IX, King of France, a "Franciscan Celebration of St. Louis" was held on August 24, 2014, at St. Anthony Parish in St. Louis, Missouri. The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order (NAFRA) sponsored this gathering, which was organized and hosted by several local fraternities in St. Clare Region. The initial idea for such a celebration was planted at the 2012 NAFRA Chapter when International Vice-Minister Doug Clorey approached National Secretary Jan Parker and asked, "Wouldn't it be great to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the birth of our patron, St. Louis IX, in the city of St. Louis?" Jan took this idea home to St. Louis, Mo., and to her Region. The idea received enthusiastic support from St. Clare Regional Fraternity Minister Barb Morgan, who helped plan the event. Two local fraternities, St. Anthony of St. Louis, Mo., and San Damiano of O'Fallon, Mo., were instrumental in "making it happen."

The date for the "Franciscan Celebration of St. Louis" was chosen to coincide with the St. Louis Archdiocese's own celebration of their patronal feast on Sunday August 24, 2014. Providentially, this date also coincided with the National OFS Retreat. Secular Franciscans attending the National Retreat were invited to extend their stay and attend the celebration. Publicity included an article in the *St. Louis Review* (the diocesan newspaper) and a ten minute interview with Jan Parker, which aired several times on local Catholic radio stations. Seventy persons attended this celebration with good representation from First Order Friars, Third Order Religious Sisters, and OFS brothers and sisters. A dozen "non-Franciscans" came to learn about St. Louis, patron of their city, and they had the opportunity to learn a little more about the Franciscan Order as well.

The celebration began with a welcome from National Minister Deacon Tom Bello, OFS, and the beautiful prayer to St. Louis composed by our International OFS Council (CIOFS). The day included a meal "fit for a King," a presentation on the Franciscan spirituality of St. Louis IX, Evening Prayer and the singing of "St. Louis King" — a hymn composed in honor of the Jubilee year by Fr. Amando Trujillo Cano, General Assistant, TOR. Attendees received a specially designed holy card of St. Louis, a formation packet with copies of the CIOFS' ongoing formation lessons on St. Louis and information on the Secular Franciscan Order. The day was topped off with a delightful skit presented by the "Little Flower Players," who reenacted an episode from the Little Flowers of St. Francis entitled "How King Louis IX met Brother Giles." The Little Flower Players — Barb Morgan, Lou Helleny, and Deacon John Wainscott, all members of St. Clare Region — enlisted the talents of NAFRA Councilor Mary Frances Charsky of Binghamton, N.Y., and former Regional Minister Judy Haupt of Hilton Head, N.C.



Left to right: Barb Morgan, Lou Helleny, Jan Parker, Mary Frances Charsky, Deacon John Wainscott, Judy Haupt



Prince Louis de Bourbon and his wife, Princess Marie-Marguerite

Following the celebration, many of our OFS brothers and sisters attended the glorious Feast Day Mass celebrated by Archbishop Robert J. Carlson at the St. Louis Cathedral Basilica. Guests included Prince Louis de Bourbon, a descendant of St. Louis IX, King of France; Archbishop Thierry Jordan of Reims, France; Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, apostolic nuncio to the United States; and Cardinal Justin Rigali, former archbishop of St. Louis. Many other civic and religious dignitaries were in attendance, including those of other faith traditions. Among the many highlights of the Mass was a wonderful address by Archbishop Jordan, who warmed hearts with his joyful spirit and sincere love of God and God's people.