

The Transforming Power of The Eucharist



The Power To Serve

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October 3, 2005, the women of the Tabernacle Society gathered in our parish hall for their monthly meeting. Their purpose is to care for the sacristy and the sanctuary areas of our church. As they gathered, I wondered whether or not they were aware of their medieval counterparts, Sts. Francis and Clare.

The Fourth Lateran Council, 1215, called for the care of the churches and the sacred species. St. Francis took upon himself, and the brothers, the responsibility for carrying out this call of the Council: *Moreover, at one time he wanted to send throughout every region some brothers who would carry many beautiful and decorated pyxes. And wherever they would find the Body of the Lord carelessly lying around, reserved unworthily, they were to place It fittingly in them.* 2MP 65

To the places where he could not send friars, St. Francis sent letters. To the clergy, he wrote: *Let all those who administer such most holy mysteries, however, especially those who administer them illicitly, consider how very dirty are the chalices, corporals and altar linens upon which His Body and Blood are sacrificed...*

...Wherever the most Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ has been illicitly placed and left, let It be moved from there, placed in a precious place and locked up. . . LICI 4, 11

St. Clare was also known to have aided in this campaign to make the churches, in which the Eucharist was consecrated, worthy. In her Process of Canonization, it is noted: *She spun (thread) so from her work she could make corporals and altar linens for most all the churches of the plains and hills around Assisi.* Proc 1.11

I wonder if those gathered for the meeting of the Tabernacle Society that morning were aware of the wonderful Franciscan tradition they are carrying on?



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It is clear that we as Seculars are called to assume positions of servant leadership within our Order. Why do we need leaders and what do we hope to accomplish through leadership? Francis and his brothers did not rebuild the Church alone. They did it with the collaboration of the Poor Clares and other members of religious and secular institutes, but, especially, through the Secular Franciscan Order. From our Franciscan history, we can see that what was done fulfilled an obligation to a need. This need is still present in the Church today.

When Francis was rebuilding San Damiano, he called out to the lay people to help him. This involvement was, perhaps, the beginning of what would become the great movement, which is known today as the Secular Franciscan Order. We are called now, as then, to help rebuild the Church, not with stones, but with Gospel lives.

We need leaders for all areas of our lives. Seculars have three outstanding examples of leadership: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Ss. Francis and Clare of Assisi, true followers of Christ and co-founders of our Order. When we try to discern our call to leadership as Secular Franciscans, Jesus, Francis, and Clare are our ideals, guiding with word and example. *Jesus modeled leadership!* He taught values that were very different from the prevalent ones of the times, such as, *"The last shall be first,"* at a time in history when children, at best, were just, plain ignored. Christ called the young to his side, and used their honesty and purity as examples in His parables.

Franciscan Youth /Young Adults of the SFO-USA had an exhibitor's booth in the Vocation Area of the National Catholic Youth Conference attended by 20,000 youths and 4,000 adults on October 27-30, 2005, in Atlanta, GA. Kathy Taormina, SFO, National Y/YA Chair was in attendance.

To read the complete article, go to:
<http://www.franciscanyouthusa.com/formation/index.html>